

# DECISION LEADER REVIEW

*A monthly resource to help you achieve better decision outcomes*

June 2009

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## What is the Decision Leader Review?

This monthly publication brings you current research and information in the area of business decision making. You'll find new concepts and ideas you can put to use immediately to improve the quality and speed of your strategic and tactical decision making activities.

Word count: 891 - Time to Read: 3.5 min.

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### Decision Framing - *Getting off to the Right Start* - part 2

Last month we discussed the second element of Decision Quality - Appropriate framing of the decision. If you missed this article, click [here](#) to access it. This month we address the second part of decision framing - *involving the right people in the decision*.



Anyone who has participated in a high stakes decision knows that involving the right people is critical to a successful outcome. What can go wrong if this is not done?

- Conflicts surface over how to approach the decision.
- Sudden vetoes emerge from unlikely sources.
- Decision "re-do's".
- Additional approvals that delay the decision.
- Lack of buy in for the decision outcome.

One of the best ways to determine who should be involved in an important decision is to be clear on the *key roles* needed in the decision process. In their Harvard Business Review article entitled *Who Has the 'D'?*, authors Paul Rogers and Marcia Blenko outline an approach for defining decision roles called "RAPID". The letters in RAPID stand for the primary roles performed in any business decision making situation (The authors point out that decision roles are not usually carried out in the R-A-P-I-D chronological order, but some liberties were taken to create a useful acronym).

#### R - Recommend

People who *recommend* are responsible to make the proposal or submit the decision for approval. Recommenders are the "engine" of the decision process. They create decision criteria, gather input and data, analyze alternatives, and develop a proposal for a course of action that is compelling and defensible.

#### A - Agree

People who *agree* to a recommendation are those who need to sign off on it before it can move forward. If they veto the proposal, they must work with the recommender to develop an alternative option. If a suitable alternative cannot be agreed on, the issue must be elevated to the person with the "D". Only a few people should have veto power in any important decision. These may be legal or regulatory executives, or business unit heads whose operations may be significantly affected by the decision.

#### I - Input

People with *input* responsibilities are consulted about the decision recommendation. Their role is to provide relevant facts, information and perspective. The recommendation team has no obligation to act on the input received, but is expected to take it into account. People who provide input, however, are very important, because often they are among those who must implement the decision once it's made.

#### D - Decide

Eventually, one person will *decide*. The decision maker is the single point of accountability who must bring the decision to closure and commit the organization to act on it. This person has the authority to resolve any impasse in the decision making process.

#### P - Perform

The final role involves people who will perform the decision. They see to it that the decision is executed effectively. In some cases, the people responsible for implementing the decision are the same people who recommended it.

We find this model very useful in clarifying decision roles. Discussions regarding roles should happen very early in the decision process - this creates alignment among stakeholders regarding who is occupying each role. It also allows the team to work out role disagreements before they cause damage to the decision analysis process.

If a decision process does get bogged down, it's often due to these difficulties related to roles:

#### *Lack of Clarity Over Who Has the "D"*

If more than one person thinks he/ she has the ultimate decision maker role for a decision, the decision will get caught up in a tug-of-war.

*No one has the "D"*

If no one has the "D" role, the process will flounder while various people test the waters over who might assume this responsibility.

*Too many people have veto power (the "A" role)*

This makes life very difficult for the Recommenders and bogs the decision making process down greatly. This can also be a sign that decisions are not pushed down far enough in the organization.

*Too many people in the input role*

This means some are not providing meaningful data, or the Recommenders are seeking input from far too many people.

### **The Idea in Practice**

Think of a high stakes decision you are currently involved in. Ask yourself:

**R** - Who are the Recommenders for this decision?

**A** - Who is/are the Agree-ers (or Veto-ers) for this decision?

**P** - Who is responsible to implement this decision?

**I** - Who are those in the Input role for this decision?

**D** - Who has the "D" (Decider role) for this decision?

What opportunities arise from these roles and people who fulfill them? What actions can you take to maximize those opportunities?

What risks and potential problems arise from these roles and the people who fulfill them? What actions can you take to prevent those problems from happening?

Next month we focus on the third element of Decision Quality: *Applying a logically correct decision analysis process.*

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## **News**



### **Decision Leadership Executive Coaching**

This one-on-one coaching series focuses on the most critical area of leadership effectiveness - ability to effectively analyze strategic issues and develop sound decisions and strategies. Click [here](#) to learn more

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## **Quote of the Month**

*"Once you make a decision, the universe conspires to make it happen."*

*-Ralph Waldo Emerson*

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