



# DECISION LEADER REVIEW

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

March 2009

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## What is the Decision Leader Review?

This monthly publication, offered to clients of Focus Performance Systems, Inc. (FPS) and users of Decision Focus, 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 impact the quality and speed of your strategic and tactical decision making activities.

You know FPS as a leader in business decision making concepts, software and tools. The Decision Leader Review is positioned as a monthly coaching tool - from FPS Senior Consultants to you.

Another document to read? Who has time? We carefully edit each issue for number of words. Our "must" limit is 930 words, or 3.5 minutes. So we hope you'll choose to spend 3.5 minutes with us, every month!

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## Emerging Role of the *Decision Leader*

When it comes to making important strategic or tactical decisions, many leaders fall into the hidden trap of adopting an approach that's designed to produce poor outcomes. In their Harvard Business Review article about decision leadership, authors David A. Garvin and Michael A. Roberto describe the pitfalls of this flawed approach to decision making:

*"Many leaders get decisions all wrong. The reason? Most businesspeople treat decision making as an event - a discrete choice that takes place at a single point in time. The fact is, decision making is not an event. It's a process, one that unfolds over weeks, months or even years; one that's fraught with power plays and politics and is replete with personal nuances..."*

*Our research shows the difference between leaders who make good decisions and those who make bad ones is striking. The former recognize that all decisions are processes, and **they explicitly design and manage them as such. The latter persevere in the fantasy that decisions are events they alone control.**"*

What are the effects of poor decision leadership?

- Inability to make timely decisions - missed opportunities.
- Failure to involve the right people.
- Lack of appropriate decision frame and criteria trade-offs.
- Failure to understand what information is relevant.

- A poor decision or high cost of decision execution.

The study and education of leadership, as a general topic, occupies the attention of many senior executives and human resources professionals today. However, there seems to be little recognition of, specifically, the *decision leader*, as a critical role. For those familiar with Decision Focus, we believe the role of a decision leader is much more than knowing the core tools and processes.

The primary role of a decision leader is to ensure the quality of the decision. What does it mean to have high decision quality? In our experience, it means:

1. Accurate **assessment** of the decision situation.
2. Appropriate **framing** of the decision, including involving the right people.
3. Logically correct decision analysis **process**.
4. Relevant, accurate, reliable **information**.
5. Commitment to **action**.



Next month kicks off a series of issues addressing each of the five areas of decision quality. Look for the first one in the April feature article: "Accurately Assess the Decision Situation - what does that mean?"

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### Question to Ponder:

As a leader, how do you assess the quality of your decisions?

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### News

The next version of Decision Focus Software, 7.0, will be released 2nd Quarter, 2009. Look for details on the new features in April issue of Decision Leader Review.



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### Quote of the Month

*We look for lessons in the actions of great leaders. We should instead be examining what goes on in their heads - particularly the way they creatively build on the tensions among conflicting ideas.*

*-Roger Martin, author, How Successful Leaders Think*

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