



September 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.

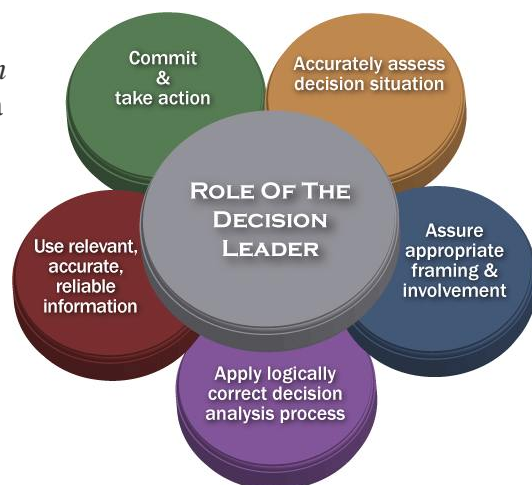
Word count: 712 - Time to Read: 3.5 min.

Decision Quality – *Gaining commitment and taking action*

Last month we discussed the fourth element of Decision Quality - Using relevant, accurate and reliable information. If you missed this article, [click here to access it](#). This month we address the fifth element of decision quality: *Gaining commitment and taking action*.

A decision is defined as "*the passing of judgment on an issue under consideration*". As such, a decision is not a decision until there is a commitment to act on the judgment.

Much of our consulting work involves aligning those who present decision recommendations with the Executive Decision Maker (EDM) who has the power to approve the decision and commit organizational resources to make it happen.



Presenting Decision Recommendations

If you are presenting an important decision recommendation, watch out for these signs of trouble:

- The EDM picks apart your data (or lack of). You're not prepared to answer some deep, probing questions. You are sent "back to the drawing board". The result? Delay.

- "I want to think about this some more" is the response. This often means there is one or more objections that the EDM wants to ponder on his own time and schedule. The result? Delay.
- The EDM disagrees with your logic or has a different view of the decision objective or frame (for more on this topic, see the [May 2009](#), issue of Decision Leader Review). The result? Delay.
- There is an alternative option, identified by the EDM, that you didn't consider in your analysis. The result? Delay.

How does the astute decision recommender avoid these delays? Read on.

When it comes to approving important decision recommendations, executives have a specific and defined set of needs. Understand these and you'll stand a much better chance of gaining a positive decision outcome.

Receiving decision recommendations

Executive decision makers need these things, when they see/hear a decision recommendation:

1. **A timely recommendation.** Nothing happens until plans turn into action. The sooner a decision is made, the sooner its positive outcomes become reality.
2. **To believe in the quality of the decision.** This means that sound facts and assumptions are used, multiple alternatives are evaluated, risks are assessed and the analysis is complete and correct.
3. **To be heard.** This means that their inputs are included and represented in the analysis, and that their questions are addressed and answered. Consider a few informal meetings, prior to the final presentation, to get the EDM's perspective on 1) decision objective 2) criteria 3) alternative options 4) risks.
4. **Confidence in the approach, but not bogged down in the details.** Executives vary in the amount of information and documentation they require. However, the common denominator that links them together is lack of time to pour over reams of data. We strongly recommend the one page approach - summarize your analysis and conclusions on one page. Have additional documentation available upon request, but keep the essence of the recommendation to one page. Users of Decision Focus have a distinct advantage here, because the worksheets are a perfect way to distill important information and analysis on one page.
5. **Collective commitment to the selected course of action.** This means communicating the decision logic and conclusions to the organization with clarity and transparency, and having clear action plans in place to mobilize the implementation teams to move forward with expediency.

The Idea in Practice

The next time you present a recommendation, start first with your one-sentence decision objective or statement. Follow it with your list of criteria. Then, and only then, identify your options and discuss how each meets (or doesn't meet) the criteria. Finish with a discussion of risk and mitigation actions for the recommended option.

Next month we begin a three part series on personal styles and decision making. No matter what your style, you'll benefit from this insider's look at the topic.

News



Decision Focus 7.0 Software - Now Available

Decision Focus 7.0 comes with powerful new features to help you handle complex problems and decision situations with ease. These include linking and attachment capabilities, new graphical tools, "one-click" management summaries and reports, and more. [Learn more...](#)

Quote of the Month

"An expert is someone who has succeeded in making decisions and judgments simpler through knowing what to pay attention to and what to ignore."

-Edward de Bono
