



GLOBAL INITIATIVES
& SOLUTIONS



TRAINING MATERIALS

SESSION 2

DECISION MAKING



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GLOBAL INITIATIVES & SOLUTIONS

Global Initiatives and Solutions (G.I.S) takes a unique approach to the industry of consultancy, applying a holistic approach to modern business problems.

Our approach to problems is based on the interdisciplinary philosophy of “Four Corners of the World” that connects the cornerstones of our society, business, progress, and wellbeing into a solid, practical, and multi-functional structure that delivers across all fields.



Environment
Wellbeing

WHAT THIS WILL TEACH YOU?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. How to approach decisions with the correct mindset.
2. What can negatively effect the decision-making process and how to overcome it?
3. In what order should decisions be formulated and executed?



DECISION MAKING

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INTRODUCTION

Decision making is very complicated. Or reverse it, is decision making very complicated?

Why is decision making a problem for you and for others? It doesn't need to be. We all make decisions all the time. In order to put it into perspective jot down columns 1, 2 and 3.

+	+/-	-

Column 1: What decisions do you take easily and well? (+)

Where is your proficiency in decision-making? Make this column long, later you will understand why.

Column 2: You know how to take some decisions and you do not know how to take some decisions? (+/-)

You are hesitating between yes or no, that's why it's a plus or minus because you might not be sure.

Column 3: You cannot make the decision (not able, do not know, don't know how to).

You do not know how to approach the problem; you don't know what to do with it.

APPROACHING DECISIONS

So, let's approach it from the old decision-making process from the very beginning. There is a decision-making process for everyone personally. Also, there is the managerial decision-making process.

Think about it, how many decisions do you make and how many decisions do you make everyday? You wake up in the morning. *Waking up is a decision. Getting up from the bed is a decision. You decide to go to the bathroom, it's a decision-making process, you decide to brush your teeth, change your clothes, do makeup etc. These are all decisions.*

You opening the fridge to make breakfast is also a decision. You make these decisions very proficiently, very well without any hesitation. These are your everyday tasks of life. Our life is based on everyday tasks and these tasks are nothing but a string of decisions.

Many people made their careers on writing PHDs and volumes of books about decision-making. Most of these books have a little truth in it, one scholar looking at what another scholar did which tends to over complicate the issue. So why are we overcomplicating it?

What do you think others will write in those columns? Every person is making decisions. We all do.

People will write things that are given to them, that preconditions them to believe that they are not able to make decisions. Therefore, all types of consultants make a lot of money from making decisions for others. Are you going to ask a consultant what time I have to get up from bed or can I go to the bathroom? No, you do not need them, you do not need anybody to consult in your decisions.

You can ask them to consult on other things but not on the decision-making process. We are very efficient on making these decisions. When we have profound problems that are extreme, you may get help from others. Apart from this exception, everyone is capable to make and take decisions on their own.

Why do we fail to notice the decisions we make? why we you have such a mush in our heads in the process. This is because we make too many decisions everyday. *Many decisions seem harder than they usually are because we overthink them* and it puts preconceived notions (an opinion formed beforehand without adequate evidence) in our heads and we think too much about everything that could possibly go wrong.

Everything we do, every step and every action is a reaction or a result of a decision-making process. Decisions are intuitive, it's part of us. We all definitely do and will make mistakes along the way by taking decisions, however the point is to make the decisions that are less costly. For example, you can compare life to university. University is attached with tuition fees. Similarly in life we must pay for all actions you do.

We are naturally preconditioned to make decisions. Therefore, just go naturally with it. Do not try to think of too many variables because they are not necessary. Things are not black and white, there is always a grey region and the function of our process is to engage with it.

Then why is the decision-making such a big problem? Why do we make it such a huge problem? Where is it growing into a problem? *Well, the answer is, it grows in your head. You are the one who is actually making the process complicated.*

“ *I could say that I'm generally good at decision-making, well at least this is what I want to believe, however in my life I made four of the same decisions, none of them were perfect and yet I made them based on exactly the same mindset. I got married four times, I made these mistakes even though I shouldn't have.*

However, its ok because I'm making them for a different sake. I cannot say it was a hard decision because I was not, it was a very easy decision to make, however what is hard is to sometimes live with consequences from the decisions if we over complicate the decision-making process.

- Margaret G. Walsh, GIS Director & CEO



These problems occur because we tend to remember, not just of our own but even the mistakes of others. This can paralyze us, and we say to ourselves 'oh no I am not able to do this' but you absolutely are capable. You just have to engage with yourself.

The actual decision-making process is very quick and simple. If you want to look at something, what options do you have. Well, there are options A, B, C or D. You have to analyse which option is best for you today to be in such and such a situation.

Make sure to not to blindly copy the decisions of others because they are not in your shoes. This is your process. You have to free yourself to believe that because you are making literally thousands of decisions consciously and subconsciously a day, that you are capable of making every decision.

However, some of them you will have to give a tiny bit of thought. But do not go into a huge mine field of scholarly methods, that will just complicate things. Just be natural.



The first decision you make is usually the best one because it is instinctive and intuitive. There are all types of proverbs in every culture that say 'the first decision is always the best one'. When you go into 'complicated thinking mode' you will, most of the time, arrive exactly at the same place.

Also, the decision-making process is a huge problem because society makes you think that it is a problem. **For example, some parents stop their children from making decisions because they do not trust them.** However, by stopping children from making decisions, they are taking their individuality away, suffocating their character and making them handicapped for the future.

If we discard and ignore all decisions we take daily we will end up discarding the entire decision-making process and by doing this we do not learn from actions that we do well and efficiently.

You have to **trust yourself**. You have to know that you are right. You are an adult now and you are taking steps. Learn from the actions you do well and efficiently everyday. Say to yourself 'this is what I do everyday therefore I am capable of making decisions.' So why do we ignore all these decisions we make efficiently? Because we have a preconditioned thought to pay attention only to the things we are bad at.

You have to be happy about the decisions you make. Be proud about what you decide because it'll help you to value yourself.

What's wrong with this classic management decision-making process?

This way of the decision-making process has too many steps and is too long:

1. **Identify the decision.** How will you identify the decision? Once you have identified the decision you have already made it? This is nonsense.
2. **Gather information.** They are saying to gather information after deciding.
3. **Identify alternatives.** After that they want you to find alternatives. (For example, the milk has already spilled, what alternatives are there, you have to just clean it up)
4. **Weigh the evidence.** What evidence? It is all too late.
5. **Choose among alternatives.**
6. **Take action.** The action was already taken. You already decided in step one.
7. **Review your decision.** There is nothing to review. It is done.

So, this is in every type of management model on decision-making. This is how foolish it is.

Now let's try to change the order and numbers of this list so that it makes sense. It should be:

2, 4, 3, 5, 7, 1, 6

EXTRA POINTS:

- The rational way to decision making is to just go with the first decision.
- The best decisions to make are the rational ones because they are quick and in sync with what is inside you.
- If you have too much work, don't work hard – **work smart.**
- We are preconditioned by society to think that decision-making is so difficult and complicated. But you have to tell yourself, no, this is not difficult, I make thousands of decisions everyday that are successful.



RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING & REFERENCE SOURCES

COGNITIVE STYLES

Optimising/ maximising vs satisficing:

- Maximisers tend to take longer to make decisions and often regret their decisions because they are always looking for other options/ what could have been better - **Herbert A Simon**.
- People are generally happier with irreversible decisions, yet maximisers tend to prefer reversible decisions - **Shiner**, 2015.
- Maximisers experience more regret about their decisions - **Parker et al.**, 2007.

Combinatorial vs positional:

- A combinatorial style is clearly defined, primarily material goal and a program that links the initial position with the final outcome in mind. A positional style is a positional goal, a formation of semi-complete linkages between the initial step and final outcome, increases flexibility, creativity. Figure out which style would suit the workplace, in business a market share strategy is positional, some complex situations may require a combinatorial strategy. - **Aron Katsenelinboigen**.
- A phenomenon that occurs when the desire for group consensus overrides peoples common sense desire to present alternatives, critique a position, or express an unpopular opinion. It can stop good decision making, focuses on group cohesion over creating optimal decision - **Irving L. Janis** 1972.

OTHER

How to improve collective decision making - Avoiding social loafing:

- The phenomenon of a person exerting less effort to achieve a goal when they work in a group than when working alone - **Cohen and Baily**, 1997 and **Kerr & Bruun**, 1983.
- Replication of **Ringelmann's** original rope-pulling study and found similar results—dyads pulled at 91% of the sum of their individual capacities, trios at 82%, and groups of six at only 78%.- **Ingham et al.**, 1974.

GOFER – **Janis & Mann** (1977)
Goals clarification, options generation, facts finding, consideration of effects, review and implementation.

DECIDE – **Kristen Guo** (2008)

Define the problem-solving.
Establish criteria.
Consider all alternatives.
Identify the best alternative.
Develop and implement a plan of action.
Evaluate and monitor the solution and examine feedback when necessary.

How are decisions taken in moments of crises?

Improving decision making in crisis. Journal of Business Continuity & Emergency Planning, 7(1), 65-76. - Higgins, G., & Freedman, J. (2013).

Abstract goals vs concrete goals:

- Abstract goals involve broad outcomes that transcend specific situations and behaviours for example 'be a good employee.'
- Concrete goals involve specific outcomes or behaviours e.g. 'complete this assignment by tonight.'
- Concrete goals aid goal attainment. This is linked to the idea of **SMART goals** by **Latham** (2003)
- **Latham and Yukl** (1975) found that logging crews assigned to set a difficult but attainable goal produced more wood than those told to do their best, this shows a concrete goal produces better results than the abstract 'do your best'

Approach vs avoidance goals:

- Approach goals involve securing desired outcomes, they involve specific endpoints, and progress is easy to assess e.g., ‘make a good impression on my co-workers.’
- Avoidance goals involve averting undesired outcomes. The endpoint is less clear and progress is hard to assess e.g., ‘avoid making a fool of myself in front of co-workers’
- **Elliot and Sheldon (1997)**, 145 undergrads picked 8 goals from a list including both approach and avoidance goals.
- Higher proportion of avoidance goals predicted worse goal performance, and indirectly predicted lower wellbeing.

Making plans

- People often don’t make good plans.
- The plans people make are often so vague that they are basically useless (**Lee et al, 2013**).
- The less specific the plan, the greater the chance of failure (**De Vet et al, 2011**).
- Knowledge of the steps that are required to reach a goal is necessary in order to make effective plans (**DeWitte et al, 2003**).
- Self-reported planning behaviour predicts success in achieving goals (**Mistry et al, 2015**).

Intentions vs implementation intentions

- Intentions are specifying what one intends to do ‘I intend to achieve goal x’ Implementation intentions involve specifying the when, where, and how of what one will do.
- **Gollwitzer and Sheeran (2006)** implementation intentions is valuable both in understanding the processes of goal attainment and in providing a self-regulatory strategy to help people reach their goals.

RESEARCH

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SUMMARY

- The decision-making process is a natural and instinctive process all humans have.
- We are preconditioned by society to think this process is very difficult and hard.
- We make thousands of decisions everyday that we do efficiently and very well.
- We don't notice many of the decisions we make because we make too many decisions everyday. We take them for granted.
- Many decisions seem harder than they usually are because we overthink them and we remember our own actions and actions from others, who have made mistakes, which makes it seem harder.
- The actual process of decision-making is very simple and quick.
- If we are having a hard time, we should remember all the times we were happy and all the time we made decisions quickly and efficiently.
- The first decision we make is usually the best decision because it is natural and it is not contaminated by overthinking.
- We don't need consultants to make decisions for us.
- The managerial decision-making process is rather silly and does not make sense. However, if you rearrange the order, it is fine.

SESSION 2 - WORKSHEET

Task 1

What is your personal experience with decision making?

Task 2

- Now, write a list of decisions you make and take.
- What decisions do you take easily and well? (+)
- You know how to take some decisions and you do not know how to take some decisions? (+/-)
- You cannot take decision (not able, do not know, don't know how to).

+	+/-	-

