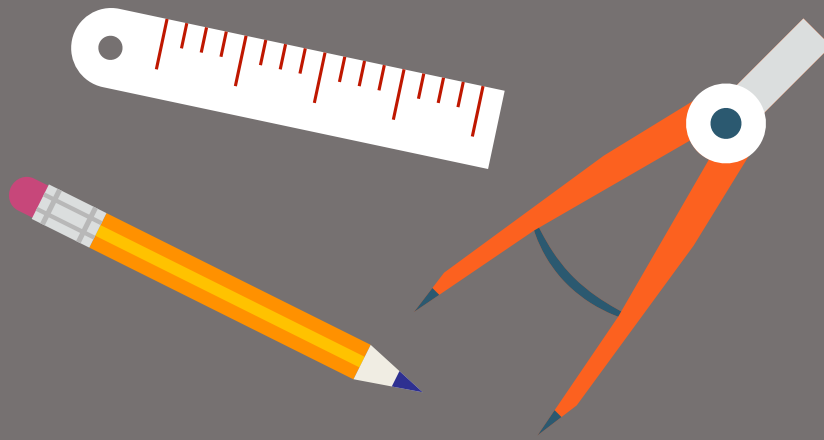


Decision- Making Checklist



PRACTICAL TOOLS

A Guide to Help You Through the Decision-Making Process



Here's a checklist for decision making adapted from "Leadership and Decision Making," by the Boundless management consulting firm.

It applies especially to group decisions but can be useful for other types of decisions as well:

- 1. Is the nature of the decision critical? Are there technical grounds or quality requirements for choosing one solution over another?

If the answer is yes, you may need to do some more analysis. If it's no, it's probably a routine decision not worth spending too much time on.

- 2. Do we have sufficient information to make a high-quality decision?

If yes, don't be afraid to go ahead; if no, try to get the missing information but don't wait forever. You'll never have everything you wished you had.

3. Do we have known methods for evaluating the various alternative courses of action?

If yes, you should have solid grounds for proceeding to the decision. If no, risk assessment is critical; try to come up with best- and worst-case scenarios and decide how much risk your organization is willing to tolerate.

4. Is acceptance of the decision by subordinates critical to its implementation?

If yes, you're probably dealing with a group decision. If no, a faster method for decision making may be preferable.

5. If I were to make the decision by myself, is it reasonably certain that it would be accepted by subordinates?

If yes, again, involvement by the group does not need to be extensive. If no, follow the slower group decision-making process.

6. Do the subordinates share the corporate goal that this solution is designed to achieve?

If yes, don't be afraid to lay it all out for them. If no, proceed with caution. For example, if the ultimate goal of the decision is to reduce staff and gain savings and efficiencies from some form of automation, you're not likely to get buy-in from staff.

7. Is conflict among subordinates likely if it is decided to implement the preferred solution?

If yes, conflict management becomes an essential part of the process. There are several ways of doing this, like co-opting the oppositionists, persuading them, neutralizing them or letting them fight it out. In any event, you have to anticipate it and decide on a strategy to deal with it beforehand. If no, go ahead with caution, but still be prepared for conflict to surface at a later date. People don't always react in logical, rational and predictable ways.