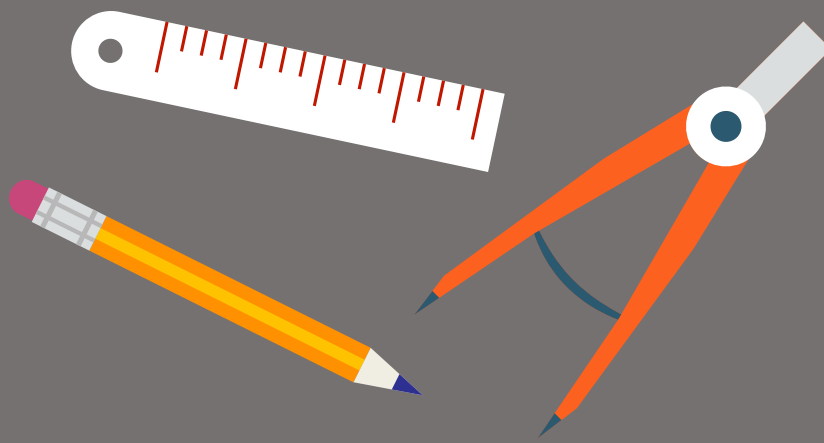


The Ultimate Guide to Decision- Making Styles



PRACTICAL TOOLS

The Ultimate Guide to Decision-Making Styles



There are several different styles people use to make decisions. Every style of decision making has its pros and cons. Here is a description of 10 different styles, with their pros and cons:

1. Consensus building

Some people feel most comfortable gathering a group of opinions before making an important decision. For these people, the desire for group consensus and buy-in from everyone affects each step going forward.

Pro: If buy-in from the entire team is essential to the implementation of the decision, this is the way to go.

Con: It may take longer to build this consensus, and in some cases, you may not have the time.

2. Reliance on data

Other people prefer to make decisions based on hard data only, especially numbers. These decision makers take a lot of time to research, gather and organize data before moving forward.

Pro: There'll likely be less second-guessing if things don't turn out right – at least you had the numbers to back up your decision.

Con: Data-driven people may tend to be perfectionists, waiting until they get every last piece of potentially relevant information. At some point, information overload may also become a problem.

3. Intuitive

Other people mostly trust their gut for making important decisions. They are confident in their intuitions, which have been formed by experience.

Pro: Decision making tends to come easy to these people, and they have no trouble making up their minds.

Con: Intuitions have been known to be wrong, and these people sometimes have trouble making a quick course correction when the decision turns out to have been a mistake. Don't let your ego stick to a wrong decision too long.

4. List making

Some decision makers draw up lists of advantages and risks for every possible decision. They are methodical and eliminate alternatives as it becomes evident that for some of the alternatives, the benefits aren't big enough or the risks are too great.

Pro: Having analyzed the risks in advance for every possible decision, it should give you a head start on making course corrections when things don't turn out quite as had been expected.

Con: There's a danger of paralysis by analysis here. Too many alternatives to consider can drown people in the decision-making process.

5. Living to create lore

Some people make decisions based mainly on the kind of story they'll be able to tell their co-workers, their successors, their friends or their family. They visualize the story they'll have to tell afterward and love a sense of drama. They are adventurous; they want to go new places and tell the world about them.

Pro: This style of decision making will zero in on the ultimate goal to be achieved, probably more so than other styles.

Con: The sense of drama that's necessary to make these people feel satisfied with their decision may not be good for everyone else. A simpler decision with less drama may work just as well and gain broader acceptance.

6. Meditative

Some people prefer solitude and meditation – or prayer – to help guide them to a decision. They need to create a “quiet zone” around them to function best in the decision-making process.

Pro: It may be the only style that works for spiritual people; that’s what they’re comfortable with.

Con: This style of decision making can drive other people bonkers. It may seem like escapism and inaction to them. You may need to do some serious damage control with key members of your team.

7. Risk aversion

Some people fear losses more than they value potential gains, which leads these types of managers to make decisions chiefly based on risk avoidance. They tend to weigh the potential for negative outcomes more heavily than their actual potential costs.

Pro: Decisions made by risk-averse people will probably be the “safest,” avoiding catastrophic losses.

Con: The greatest opportunities may be missed altogether.

8. Passive

Some people shy away from having to make decisions so much that they’re happy to let others make decisions for them. They don’t like conflict and are happy not to have to confront others about imposing their decisions on anyone else.

Pro: As long as other people on the team are willing and capable of stepping into a vacuum, conflict will be avoided. Key members of the team may be satisfied because they got their way.

Con: People making the decision by default may not have as much experience; therefore, the decision may not be as sound as possible.

9. Directive

The directive style of decision making is the polar opposite of the passive style. The directive decision maker is aggressive, takes charge of the situation, makes quick decisions, and expects those under him or her to carry out orders immediately with no questions asked.

Pro: Decisions will be made quickly, and short-term results have a high chance of being achieved.

Con: Long-term goals may be overlooked and neglected; team morale may suffer and there's little team development and training going on.

10. Combinations

Most people aren't all one way or another. They apply a combination of styles. For example, they mostly trust their gut, but they also gather numbers to seek confirmation of their intuition.

Pro: Combinations may work best as long as people recognize their own strengths and weaknesses, build on their strengths and try to compensate for their weaknesses.

Con: Some people may be confused because they don't see a consistent attitude on the part of their leaders. One moment they tend to lean one way and then they switch and seem to favor a contrary solution. Consistency has its advantages, too.