



DECISION  
QUALITY

# Prologue

*No sensible decision can be made any longer without taking into account not only the world as it is, but the world as it will be...*

*Isaac Asimov-Russian-born American-Jewish author and biochemist*



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# The Map

- Life and work a series of big and small decisions followed by action in line with decisions
- Good decisions based upon mixture of data, analysis, intuition, wisdom, experience and judgement

# Unskilled

- ◇ Goes first with quick statements, solutions and conclusions before analysis
- ◇ May rely too much on self--doesn't ask for help
- ◇ Making decisions may trigger emotions and impatience
- ◇ May not use orderly decisions methods, models or ways to think
- ◇ May jump to conclusions based on prejudice, historical solutions or narrow perspective

# Unskilled

- ◇ Doesn't take the time to define the problem before deciding
- ◇ May have trouble with complexity
- ◇ May wait too long, agonise over every detail to avoid risk or error
- ◇ May go for the big elegant decision when five little ones would be better

# Skilled

- ◇ Makes good decision based upon a mixture of analysis, wisdom, experience and judgement
- ◇ Most of their solutions and suggestions turn out to be correct and accurate when judged over time
- ◇ Sought out by others for advice and solutions

# Overused Skilled

- ◇ May see self as overly wise or close to perfect, as someone who can't or doesn't make mistakes
- ◇ May be seen as stubborn and not willing to negotiate or compromise
- ◇ May get frustrated when advice is rejected
- ◇ May not relate well to less data based people



# Some Causes

- ◇ Arrogance; excessive emotionality; avoiding risk and exposure
- ◇ Faulty thinking
- ◇ Impatient; doesn't wait for the data
- ◇ Narrow perspective
- ◇ Perfectionist; wait too long for all of the data
- ◇ Prejudice; preconceived solutions; rigid
- ◇ Want to do it all yourself; won't ask for help



# Let's Consider Some Remedies

# 1. Attitudes in Play?

- ◇ Be clear and honest about your attitudes, beliefs, biases, opinions, prejudices and favourite decisions
  - Are any of your biases affecting this decision?
  - Do you play favourites, deciding quickly in one area, but holding off in another?
  - Do you avoid certain topics, people, groups, functional areas because you are not comfortable or don't know?
- The key is not let them affect objective and cold decision making

## 2. Making Hasty Assumptions?

- ◇ Check for common errors in thinking
  - Do you state as facts things that are really opinions or assumptions?
  - Are you sure these assertions are facts?
  - Do you generalise from a single example without knowing if that example does generalise?
  - Do you attribute cause and effect to relationships when you don't know if one causes the other?
- If sales are down, and we increase advertising and sales go up, doesn't prove causality

### 3. Do You do Enough Analysis?

- ◇ Thoroughly define the Problem
  - Figure out what causes it; Keep asking WHY
  - Look for Patterns in data, don't just collect information
  - Analyse Patterns and Causes to come up with Alternatives
  - Think out loud with others; see how they view the problem
- Define the Problem and take relevant Action to break out of Analysis Paralysis

## 4. What is Your Track Record?

### ◇ Consider Your History

- Do an objective analysis of the decisions made in the past and what percentage was correct
- Break the decisions into thematic or areas of your life
- We make better decisions in some areas than others
- Identify areas where decision making skills need help
- Thematic: decisions about people, career, politics, technical etc.

## 5. Eager to Act?

### ◇ Hold Your Horses

- Life is a balance between waiting and doing
- Discipline self to wait just a little longer than you usually do for more, but not all, the data to come in
- Instead of just “doing it”, ask what questions would need to be answered before knowing which way to go
- Identity areas where decision making skills need help
- We jump to solutions based on what has worked in the past

## 6. Hesitant?

- ◇ Find one more alternative solution
- Play out the consequences in your head to see how the decision would play in real life
- Test out a number of decisions
- Best decision isn't always the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Highest quality decisions are somewhere between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> decision arrived at
- May be hesitating because the little voice in the head is saying something isn't right



## 7. Can't Decide?

- ◇ Sleep on it!
  - The brain works on things even when not thinking about them
  - Take some time, do something completely different, and return to the decision later
  - Let a night sleep go by and return to it in the morning

## 8. Need Input?

- ◇ Use others to help
  - Delegate the decision
  - Create a group or task force, present the decision and all available information and let the group decide
  - Find a group which faced similar problem or consult history
- Up your odds through others

## 9. Have a Guru in Mind?

- ◇ Study Decision Makers
  - Whom do you admire?
  - Read biographies and autobiographies of people you respect and pay attention to how they made decisions in life and careers
  - Write down things they did you can do
- Churchill always slept on important decisions no matter what

# 10. Know Someone Effective at Making Decisions?

- ◇ Go to a Model Decision Maker
  - Find someone around you who makes decision in a way you think you ought to
  - Figure out with the person what questions they ask and what principles they follow
  - See how much they rely on advice, consult history for parallels, check with various constituencies and how they get familiar with unfamiliar areas
- Go through several decision processes



## Making Good Decision

- Being patient enough to collect available information
- Being humble enough to ask for other people's opinions and thoughts
- Coldly making the decision

# Epilogue

*When you approach a problem, strip yourself of preconceived opinions and prejudice, assemble and learn the facts of the situation, make the decision which seems to you to be the most honest, and then stick to it.*

*Chester Bowles- American diplomat and politician*

**Thank You!**

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