



TriMetrix®HD Decision Making

Decision Making

Utilizing effective processes to make decisions.

Why is this skill important?

One characteristic that good managers and exceptional employees share is the ability to make sound and timely decisions. The best decision makers are able to synthesize a variety of factors, such as personal opinions, team needs and corporate directives, and make decisions that at least come close to satisfying the major requirements of all involved parties.

People who are good at Decision Making do not suffer from an imbalance in the amount of focus they place on any one factor. They will most likely make decisions that place equal emphasis on all involved parties or concerns, therefore, making decisions that are more likely to satisfy all needs.

People whose Decision Making skills need work typically don't place equal importance on all aspects of a situation and don't utilize proven processes. Instead, they make decisions that satisfy some, but not all, of the factors or people involved.

Let's say that a corporate directive has mandated that your department cut 20% of its operating costs, without performing any layoffs. A bad decision maker might just arbitrarily reduce all budget line items by 20%. A good decision maker would probably meet with the staff, both individually and as a group, to communicate the directive, discuss priorities, hear suggestions and reassure fears.

Good, balanced decisions must be based on deliberate, accurate analysis of problems with a focus on resolving them in the best possible way. Good decisions are rarely, if ever made in a vacuum. Rather, good decision makers ask for and respect the input of other people in their decision making process.

What are skills associated with Decision Making?

Someone who has mastered skills associated with Decision Making:

- Demonstrates an ability to make difficult decisions in a timely manner.
- Gathers relevant input and develops a rationale for making decisions.
- Evaluates the impact or consequences of decisions before making them.
- Acts decisively despite obstacles, resistance or opposition.
- Accepts consequences of decisions.
- Is willing to correct erroneous decisions when necessary.
- Defends rationale for decisions when necessary.

How do you develop your own skills in Decision Making?

- Don't make hasty decisions unless the situation requires some type of immediate reaction.
- If the situation requires you to make a quick decision, consider implementing a temporary solution and revisit the issue, incorporating all relevant factors and individuals, when the immediate crisis has passed.
- Don't always get bogged down in details. Force yourself to look at the situation from a big-picture perspective.
- Practice being a good communicator. Share information as often as possible and be open to suggestions, comments and opinions from others.
- Be sure that everyone who will be affected by the decision you are trying to make has an opportunity to state an opinion about it.
- If you determine that a decision should be made with the help of others, create formal opportunities for the decision-making group to discuss and analyze options.
- Brainstorm to create a variety of potential solutions for each problem you face.
- Don't be afraid to change your decisions if new information clarifies issues or presents new options.
- Look for creative ways to approach the situation by determining how others have handled similar situations in the past.
- Carefully evaluate the options you have identified based on relevant criteria. How well does each option address the issue at hand? What resources does each option require to be successful? Which options can be completed within the relevant time frame? Is each option a realistic, workable solution?

- Be sure to create potential solutions that are easily put into place. The solution or decision should make things easier, not harder!
- Be educated about the consequences of your decisions. Try to determine how each option you have identified affects others, the budget, the goal of the program or company, and even people outside the organization such as clients or suppliers.
- If you don't feel that you have enough information, determine what is the worst possible thing that could happen if you made a decision right now without getting any new information. This may help you feel better about making a decision, or it may strengthen your resolve to gather more data.
- If a course of action is unclear and you cannot make a truly informed decision, choose what seems to be the best solution and implement it temporarily. The temporary solution may work well, or it may help you determine an alternate course of action.
- If you make an erroneous decision, be willing to improve it or take corrective action to solve the problem in a more effective manner.
- If others are affected by your decision, not only involve them in the planning process, but also keep them informed of your final decision as well as the results of your decision.
- Always behave ethically. Don't let stress, time pressures or other people convince you to make decisions that don't fit within your value system.

Decision Making

Activities

Activity 1: Thinking About Decisions

We all make small and large decisions each day. But how often do we consider the impact our decisions make on other people or other systems? Take a few minutes to consider the steps involved, who makes the decision and the organizational level required for each of the following topics. If you don't know, see if you can do a little research so you can understand the process better.

Decision Topic: Hiring a new manager

Step 1: _____

Step 2: _____

Step 3: _____

Who makes the decision? _____

What organizational level is required? _____

Decision Topic: Developing a new corporate brochure

Step 1: _____

Step 2: _____

Step 3: _____

Who makes the decision? _____

What organizational level is required? _____

Decision Topic: Buying word processing software for the company

Step 1: _____

Step 2: _____

Step 3: _____

Who makes the decision? _____

What organizational level is required? _____

Decision Topic: Making a corporate investment

Step 1: _____

Step 2: _____

Step 3: _____

Who makes the decision? _____

What organizational level is required? _____

Activity 2: Developing Solution Options

For a current or upcoming decision you need to make, carefully define the problem:

Determine if a decision needs to be made, then work toward creatively determining several possible solutions.

Option 1: _____

Option 2: _____

Option 3: _____

Activity 3: Analyzing the Options

For each option you discovered in Activity #2 above, complete the following questions:

Option 1: _____

How easy is it to implement (1-5 scale)? _____

What human resources are needed? _____

When can it be completed? _____

How much does it cost? _____

Questions/outstanding issues: _____

Option 2: _____

How easy is it to implement (1-5 scale)? _____

What human resources are needed? _____

When can it be completed? _____

How much does it cost? _____

Questions/outstanding issues: _____

Option 3: _____

How easy is it to implement (1-5 scale)? _____

What human resources are needed? _____

When can it be completed? _____

How much does it cost? _____

Questions/outstanding issues: _____

Activity 4: Who Will Be Affected?

Determine who will be affected by each option you identified in Activity #2 above and describe how they will be affected.

Option 1: _____

Who will be affected? _____

Will they be affected positively? If so, how? _____

Will they be affected negatively? If so, how? _____

Describe potential effects. _____

Option 2: _____

Who will be affected? _____

Will they be affected positively? If so, how? _____

Will they be affected negatively? If so, how? _____

Describe potential effects. _____

Option 3: _____

Who will be affected? _____

Will they be affected positively? If so, how? _____

Will they be affected negatively? If so, how? _____

Describe potential effects. _____
