

Quick Guide: Decision Making

Decisions are an essential part of life, whether at work or in our personal lives, and this means making a judgement between two or more alternatives. But this can be difficult. Almost any decision involves some conflict or dissatisfaction. The hard part is to pick one solution where the positive outcome outweighs possible losses. So here are the **top ten tips** to help you improve your decision making:

1. **Do your decision making on paper.** Make notes and keep your ideas visible so you can consider all the information.
2. **Get out your OAR.** Define the **O**bjectives (the purpose) of the decision, list the **A**lternatives that are available and all the **R**isks of each alternative.
3. **Write down the pros and cons** of each line of action. This clarifies your thinking and helps you choose a rational alternative.
4. **Consider those affected by your decision.** If possible, get them involved to increase their commitment to implementing the decision.
5. Alternatively, **consider making the decision yourself** in lieu of a group, but recognise the potential for less commitment by those affected.
6. **Determine alternative courses of action** based on the objectives, budgets, people and impact of the decision. This will help you to decide on a "plan B".
7. **Consider how the decision is to be implemented.** Will it meet deadlines, client needs, business needs and budgets? Who will be responsible for implementing each step? Do you have the skills, knowledge and influence available to you?
8. **Assess the risk** before implementing what appears to be the best choice, by asking "What can I think of that might go wrong with this alternative?". Then plan to deal with it. Build in regular monitoring and reviews with your team or yourself.
9. Once the decision has been made, **don't look back.** Never regret a decision. Instead, focus on your next move.
10. **Remember:** not making a decision is a decision not to take action.

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