

### Ten Ingredients for Good Decision Making

- 1) Focus on the most important things. Of all the things you are judging, one factor is the most important and must be given greater weight than anything else.
- 2) Don't decide until you are ready. Don't act on impulse or succumb to decision panic.
- 3) Look for all the good things that can happen. Make your decision as if you were afraid of missing a wonderful opportunity.
- 4) Consider the decisions sitting on the back burner. "The best decision you'll ever make is the one you've been putting off."
- 5) you've been putting off."
- 6) Base your decision on self-acceptance. Look at yourself in the mirror and ask: What about me needs to be true for this decision to work out? If you understand and accept who you really are, decisions will work out.
- 7) Look ahead. Decide how your decision will play out over time.
- 8) Turn big decisions into a series of little decisions. Instead of doing something because you think it's "the best thing to do", take small steps, get more information, and then make your decision.
- 9) Don't feel you are locked into only one or two alternatives. There are always more if you look for them.
- 10) Get what you need to feel safe. Identify your safety needs related to the decision at hand.
- 11) Do what you really want. People who make good choices ask themselves what they want and give a lot of weight to that.

### The Problem-Solving Model

#### Step One: Problem Identification and Definition

Identify apparent problem  
↓  
Seek and analyse the causes  
↓  
Define the real problem



#### Step Two: Decision Making

Identify alternative solutions  
↓  
Choose the best solution



#### Step Three: Planning and Organising

Plan a course of action  
↓  
Implement

### How Will You Solve This Problem?

- ✓ You can stall or delay until a decision is no longer necessary, or until it has become an even greater problem.
- ✓ You can make a snap decision, off the top of your head, with little or no thinking or logic.
- ✓ You can use a professional approach and solve problems based on sound decision-making practices.

### Win-Win Decisions

In order to find sustainable solutions to our problems, we will:

- Encourage everyone to participate
- Encourage new ideas without criticism, since new concepts come from outside our normal perception
- Build on each other's ideas
- Whenever possible, use data to facilitate problem solving.
- Remember that solving problems is a creative process—new ideas and new understanding often result.

In order to reach win-win decisions, we will:

- Make decisions based on data whenever possible
- Seek to find the needed information or data
- Discuss criteria for making a decision (cost, time, impact, etc.) before choosing an option.
- Encourage and explore different interpretations of data.

## Decision Making Traps

### Misdirection

When we go on fishing expeditions, trying to get information without revealing its purpose, we may very well get the right answer to the wrong question.

### Sampling

There is also danger of making a decision based on too small a sampling.

### Bias

Every moment we have lived and every experience we have had has in some way contributed to our own biases and these will be reflected in our actions and our opinions. Usually it is enough to know we each have a built in bias, and adjust our thinking accordingly..

### Averages

The ubiquitous "average" can be deceiving. Averages can bury extremes.

### Selectivity

We have to demand ALL the facts, not those that have been swept under the rug. We mustn't correlate the frequent with the normal.

### Interpretation

We should never forget that facts and information are always open to interpretation. Remember the old adage that figures lie and liars figure.

### Jumping at Conclusions

This is a trap you set for yourself, and nobody has to spring it for you.

### The Meaningless Difference

"Sell the sizzle, not the steak," says there isn't a lot to choose between when you've got a good steak.

### Connotation

It is natural to draw out all the meaning in a remark, but our emotional state may determine our connotation. Connotation, emotional content or implications can all be added to an explicit literal meaning.

### Status

Status can limit communication in ways we never intended. This is a barrier between supervisor and employee which limits communication in either direction for fear of disapproval on one hand or loss of prestige on the other.

## Where to Start?

Perception  
Definition  
Analysis

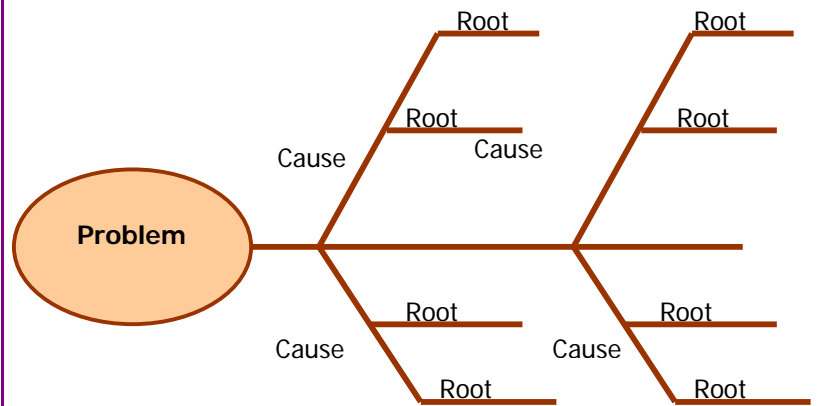
Most of the group's  
time/energy should be  
spent here.

GO/NO GO

Alternative  
generation  
Evaluation  
Decision Making

Group may want to jump  
here prematurely.

## Fishbone Analysis



## Your Problem-Solving Toolkit

### The Lasso

We can use a "Lasso" technique to tighten up our definition of the real problem.

- "How can we improve communication in our group?" Let's tighten up that word communication. What do we mean by it?
- "How can we get our work done more efficiently?" What do we mean by efficiently?

### Is/Is Not

The Is/Is Not technique lets us eliminate assumptions and emphasize facts. For example, someone says "the telephone system isn't working." You might ask them to list what isn't working and list what is working. Perhaps all functions are affected, or perhaps only incoming calls have been affected.

### Graphics

These can be depicted visually as well as verbally. A diagram allows us to see things visually. Graphs and lists can also be used to help you organize information.

### Basic Questions

Who, what, where, when, why, how?

### Break it Up

Breaking a problem down into mini-problems or sub-problems lets you eat the elephant one bite at a time. Then we can deal with each issue separately.

### Force Field Analysis

Force field analysis will examine restraining forces (forces that discourage the problem) vs. sustaining forces (forces that encourage a problem).

### Generalise/Exemplify

This allows us to move from the general to the specific or vice versa to make certain we are seeing the situation from all sides.

### Expert

Avoid rumours and don't reinvent the wheel. Ask "Who can we invite in to talk about this?" or "Who has dealt with this before?"