

The Manager's Decision-Making Playbook

Why Decision Making Feels So Hard

Managers make hundreds of decisions every week—some tiny, some massive with big impact. But here's the truth: it's not always the complexity that exhausts us. It's the volume, the ambiguity, and the pressure to get it right. This guide is your shortcut.

What if you had a simple process to:

- Slow things down (without stalling)
- Understand the type of decision you're facing
- Choose the right approach—not just the fastest one?

First, Know What You're Deciding

Before you even *start* weighing up options, ask:

What kind of decision is this? - *Inspired by the Cynefin Framework*

Type of Decision	Description	Best Approach
Clear	Straightforward, few variables, low stakes	Delegate or decide quickly
Complicated	High stakes, multiple options, but a clear answer exists	Use data, get expert input
Complex	Unclear path, multiple right answers, unpredictable outcomes	Test & learn; co-create solutions
Crisis	Urgent, emotionally charged, high risk	Decide quickly; regroup later for reflection



THE PROCESS - Use This 4-Step Decision Framework

1. Clarify the Context

- What problem are we solving?
- What's the real impact if we do/don't act?
- What's the outcome we are looking for or willing to compromise on?

2. Consult the Right Voices

- Whose insight, not just opinion, will improve this decision?
- At what point do I need to involve them?
- Are they aware I need their support?

3. Choose the Decision-Making Style

- Directive: I decide.
- Consultative: I'll decide, but I want input.
- Collaborative: We discuss & decide together.
- Delegated: You have authority to decide.

4. Communicate Clearly

- What's the decision + why was it made this way?
- Who do I need to inform that the decision was made?
- What method of communication am I using - Email, call, in person?
- Be transparent, especially if some input wasn't used.



Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- **Analysis Paralysis:** More info doesn't always = better decisions.
- **Decision by Consensus:** Useful sometimes, but not always efficient.
- **Avoiding Accountability:** Delegating doesn't mean dodging ownership.
- **Rushing the Process:** Urgency isn't an excuse for poor thinking.

When You Need to Revisit a Decision:

Ask yourself:

- Have any key facts changed?
- Was the decision made under pressure or with limited input?
- Is there clear feedback that it's not working?

It's OK to shift. Just explain why.

BONUS: A 10-Minute Team Exercise

At your next team meeting, try asking **“What’s a decision we’ve delayed? Why?”**

Discuss it using the 4-step framework above. You might be surprised by what unblocks.



READY TO MAKE DECISION-MAKING EASY?

Making important decisions can feel like a lot of pressure, but with the right approach, it doesn't have to be difficult.

Want to get better at making decisions?

Let's connect for a no-obligation coaching chat.

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