



Listener Quiz – Improving Your Organizational Decision-Making

When making major decisions, do you most likely:

- Q 1**
- tend to make all key decisions yourself based upon past experiences & technical knowledge;
 - facilitate dialogue amongst colleagues that may be affected (involved), clarifying outcomes the organization is trying to achieve related to the decision;
 - retain outside counsel/expertise to study the situation & provide recommendations.
- Q 2**
- create a grid of pros/cons or benefits/costs, risks in taking vs. not taking the decision;
 - discuss the ‘values’ of the organization that are involved and review ethical implications;
 - search-out case examples or experiences of other organizations facing similar decisions/challenges.
- Q 3**
- focus on the most expedient elements/way to drive towards the results you are trying to achieve;
 - sketch-out a mental or physical ‘mind-map’ of all the related systems/network components involved and their relationship or dependency to the decision aspects;
 - discuss the issue with your mentor, ‘boss’ or coach to see what they think/recommend.
- Q 4**
- consider best-/worst-case scenarios and make appropriate trade-offs;
 - listen to your ‘gut feel’ or personal intuition in the situation;
 - ‘Google’ the decision aspects to see what advice the web might suggest or recommend.
- Q 5** When you make a mistake (as we all inevitably do)
- take it in stride, chalk it up to experience and press-on with other challenges – “few have perfect batting average”;
 - debrief the situation with key people involved and pull-out the learning – discuss what to do differently the next time;
 - Point to recommendations of others, successes of similar examples, perhaps blaming the complexity, unforeseen factors or poor advice.

So, how many A’s, B’s and C’s did you score?

By now you may have realized that there are no “correct” answers! Any and All answers are valid approaches in different circumstances & situations. However, there are some potential patterns in your answers:

Predominantly A's –

Your locus of decision-making is INTERNAL, and you generally place a high degree of confidence in your own experience and knowledge.

- This might be appropriate for straight-forward and/or 'emergency' decisions, but when addressing complex, large decisions, few people have all the knowledge & experience themselves.
- Also, be careful, this might indicate your 'ego' or 'pride' is driving your actions.

Predominantly B's –

You try to see things from a SYSTEMS-NETWORK perspective and are likely comfortable facilitating input or seeking other perspectives prior to making decisions. More and more of today's executive challenges address complex or changing or new environments and call for added perspective.

- Also, when you engage others in decision-making processes, they are more likely to support the final and help the implementation.
- A caution here; engaging others and mapping out complexities can add extra time to the process. Get this kind of engagement going at the outset and use deadlines to avoid getting in to a jam.

Predominantly C's –

You have a tendency to look EXTERNAL and rely on other's advice in your decision-making. This might be prudent if you are into an unfamiliar area or limited experience/technical knowledge.

- However, you will still need to make the decision and remain accountable. Be sure to ask good and penetrating questions of your advisors to assist you in making your decisions.
- Too many C responses could indicate a tendency toward procrastination or avoidance of making the tough decisions!