From Stakeholder Management to Decision Leadership:
Improving the Quality of Real Estate Decisions

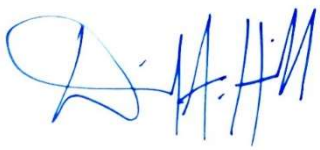
Real estate leaders rarely make decisions with complete information, unlimited time, or perfectly aligned stakeholders. Instead, they navigate internal and external stakeholders, each bringing different priorities, knowledge, incentives, and assumptions to the table. The challenge is not simply **getting stakeholders involved**; it is creating the conditions for stakeholders to make **better decisions together**.

I have been an architect, builder, and developer for about 40 years, and my focus is now on research. My doctoral study examines human behavior and decision-making in the AEC and real-estate environment, investigating how timely, inclusive, data-driven stakeholder consideration of alternatives with performance feedback influences project decisions. The research uses qualitative investigation and decision-making experiments with industry professionals evaluating realistic alternatives to consider information on **People, Planet, and Profit** impact. And it suggests an important shift in leadership practice: **stakeholder engagement should evolve from a process of managing people to a process of facilitating better decisions.**

1. **Who needs to influence the decision—and why?**
   Leaders can identify stakeholders by their actual relevance to a particular decision, including those with specialized knowledge, influence, or direct experience of the project's outcomes.
2. **What information will improve the decision?**
   Research on cognitive load and confirmation bias suggests that leaders must determine what information is useful, how it is presented, and when and to whom it is introduced.
3. **How can leaders challenge assumptions without creating resistance?**
   Stakeholders interpret information through their experience and beliefs. Structured feedback can help groups make more informed choices without turning disagreement into conflict.
4. **How should competing goals be made visible?**
   Making tradeoff consequences visible – through simple information rather than highly technical data – can help diverse stakeholders understand impacts and participate more meaningfully.

This presentation will introduce a practical Decision Leadership approach, and will demonstrate how seemingly technical real-estate choices can become better-informed, more transparent, and more collaborative decisions when the decision process itself is intentionally designed. It will offer CREW members a practical, research-informed framework for improving one of the most fundamental activities in real estate: **making better decisions that create lasting value for investors, communities, occupants, and the built environment.**

I thank you for your time and consideration, and look forward to hearing back from you.



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