



## Make Better Decisions



### Quick Tip:

Make a call. Contact one or two people impacted by your decision and ask about the consequences of various solutions. This helps you determine if you have what you need to successfully implement.

### *What is your decision-making track record? Are you getting better?*

As a business leader, you make a lot of decisions. It can be overwhelming if you don't have everything you need to make great or even good decisions. Being a leader that makes great decisions doesn't happen overnight. It requires strong character, experience and a competent team to provide you the information you

need. Over time, you can create the personal ability and team environment to make better decisions and to accelerate the decision-making process.

An experience I had really drove home the importance of growing in decision making and recognizing situations where existing capabilities aren't enough. Our team had been sustaining a complex, yet stable environment for several years. We were skilled at implementing new technologies but not at completely transforming a platform and migrating data into a new environment. In the midst of this major program, we realized that we were an order of magnitude off where we needed to be in terms of technology development and change management. Simply said, we didn't know what we didn't know. It was a painful experience and a very difficult conversation with senior leaders.

Great decisions require good information, good judgement, and the wisdom to recognize when something is missing.

## **Clarify the problem and decision timeframe**

A business leader can lead their organization into dangerous consequences if they don't have complete facts and critical expertise for making decisions. Leaders need to balance decision-making speed with the collection of information. Decisions that don't meet the organization's needs, create conflict between organizations, or confusion about business direction produce an unproductive work environment. In contrast, decisions that aren't made in a timely way can waste people's time and company investments. This is where a great team helps give you clarity on issues and potential solutions, as well as, communicating a timeframe for the needed decisions. My prior blogs give you some tips:

- Collect enough information to have a good understanding of the problem and root cause. Be open to learning from experts, especially if technology or policy changes are required. Understand the urgency and specific consequences for not making a timely decision. Find a helpful framework in my blog **Get Action From Your Sponsor**. Specific information is important because you may be willing to delay and accept some consequences in exchange for a better decision.
- Always consider different perspectives for the best decision, especially from people closest to the action. See my blog **Seeking Contrary Opinions**.

## **Use good judgement**

To make great decisions, you need to ask good questions and synthesize information effectively. Your team continues to play an important part in this step. Providing options and alternatives is a great way for your team to engage

in solving problems and accelerating decision-making.

- Ask critical questions. Consider multiple options to solve a problem and understand who has been involved in developing recommendations. Has the team engaged experts? Have they solicited information and feedback from impacted organizations?
- Understand the practical impact and consequences of various solutions by talking to people that need to implement the decision. Consider potential risks and obstacles that need to be addressed. Do you have what you need to successfully implement your decision?
- Be objective and grounded in what's best for the organization. A level of detachment from alternate solutions is important for a leader.

Once you have collected information, you need to rely on your intellect and personal experience to synthesize everything you have and make the right decision. Be prepared to be accountable for whatever decision you make.

## **Grow in Wisdom**

In my transformation experience, we were faced with problems that we collectively didn't have the expertise to handle. We were about to get a lot of help. An external consulting organization came in with personnel that had implemented multiple large transformation programs. It was an expensive, but necessary, decision that gave the company a more timely and effective result. As a leader, you need to acknowledge when your team may be working hard, working at their best, but not able to execute at the required level. This level of wisdom is developed over time.

- Recognize your level of experience and knowledge in a situation and any gaps in your capabilities. Can you consult with experts to help fill those gaps? Are you being overconfident?
- Develop a process for making decisions by creating a checklist of information and perspectives that you consistently seek out. Like building a house with a solid foundation, then walls and a roof, a process leads to better decisions. It also gives you a framework to evaluate and improve your performance over time.
- Evaluate your track record. Have you made good decisions? Where were you overconfident? When did you move too fast or too slow?

As you grow in wisdom, you will know when to trust yourself and when to seek help. Did you find this tip helpful? Subscribe to my [Transformation Tips](#) newsletter!

## **Additional Resources:**



A fun read “**Thinking in Bets, Making Smarter Decisions when you don’t have all the facts**” by Annie Duke; shares decision making stories and strategies from her experience as a World Series of Poker bracelet winner. She merges her poker expertise with her cognitive psychology graduate work to provide practical tips to improve your decision-making ability.

If you are leading projects, get some tips for **Getting Action from Your Sponsor** and a helpful template to make your status reporting more actionable for decision-makers.

Read this helpful Harvard Business Review article about eight elements of decision making in **How to Make Great Decisions Quickly**.

In another HBR article, **The Elements of Good Judgment**, the author walks through six basic components of good judgment and offers suggestions for how to improve your judgment and decision-making.

## Share this newsletter with colleagues!

[Subscribe](#)

### *About Annette*

*Annette is a business transformation coach focused on supporting better leaders, more effective operations and greater business value. Both vision and execution are key to transform work. She guides leaders to develop transformation vision and strategy, structure implementation roadmaps, and mentor teams to be successful. Her blog and newsletter share transformation tips, resources, and best practices.*



[Like](#) [Tweet](#) [Pin](#) [+1](#) [in](#)

[Web Version](#) [Preferences](#) [Forward](#) [Unsubscribe](#)

Powered by  
**GoDaddy Email Marketing**®