

## ***Decision Making Process***

Capt Sury Pullat

It is silly to assume that the decisions we all make under whatever circumstances, are of our own volition: using our will power, analytical, logical, reasonable, sensible, with maturity, subjective, objective, inter-subjective, confidentially, what else not. Sadly it is not, shows research over time.



Technically, the more the inputs, data, variables, their sensitivity etc, the more difficult it will be. Ideally one would want to be objective, at least in important decisions at home, in life, board rooms etc. However, we may not be, is the truth averred, considering variables and circumstances!

Then what does, or what all do drive one is the perplexing question. Quite unsurprisingly, as in the medical field, genetics seem to play a part. Is it that then at least in India, the caste/class system is embedded and we are tolerant of the feudal system, letting not only the professionals -right from farming- but also the politicians pursue such vocation and avocations as in a family tree.

Further, whatever is learned right from young formative age and impressionable years -bereft of one's own direct experience too- as imbibed and instilled from/by others seem to go into decision making process quite involuntarily, it has been found.

How do we overcome such autosuggestions to be in charge of circumstances, individually, teamwork and destinies? Perhaps not that possible, as we compromise to get things done! Those who don't like dictators haven't proven to be erudite, correct or good for the masses in the long run. On a macro scale, democracy is a bad choice as seen in India especially with coalitions, accommodative the systems have become, abandoning principles and policies.

In board rooms, it is another kettle of fish. There is always a leader, a vision, plan and track record with don't rock the boat, don't dig out unpalatable history, pursue change holistically in one shot, or in fits and starts to carry the naysayers. It is obviously paramount with too many shareholders, close knit interested groups and stakeholders too. It takes an individual with gumptions, guts, foresight, vision and follow up drive to alter course rapidly. As such, are 'boards' supportive is a question.

Back to team building. A visionary chief would continuously build teams down the stairs, not just with yes men, but those conducive to new ideas and tracks to be laid out and followed. Does HR play a vital part in it? Yes and no! HR has been fighting for Board seats, woman too to break the glass ceiling; but changes to accommodate them haven't been that racy or pacy! Kind of stalemate occurs when such changes are pushed and ushered.

What then is the effective methodology –for decision making- to prepare for the future in an ever changing world, when nothing can be taken for granted in a globalised world? Follow the leader or the pack when the first mover advantage itself may be a burden of disadvantage. There is no gainsaying for or against facts. One must be bold enough to burrow, plough and sow seeds. Thus the evolution of driven entrepreneurs, overshadowing corporates, becoming trendsetters and laying out new rules of the game, creating micro and mega markets out of niche ones.

Back to square one. Mentoring like programming hard disk with software is a proven method, but not all may be lucky to be a potential mentee under a mentor. One has to be in the right place and time to start with; and definitely not in the adversaries' camp or tutelage.

How to communicate at different levels, people, cultures, bossing or persuasively and develop a ploy and skill for negotiations are a must to begin with. It changes all the time, as one deals with varying problems and issues with varied people and groups. What has worked in one environment and in one situation in a specific country or region may not work elsewhere that smoothly. Thus cross border transitions are paramount. Life is a rather steep learning curve through one's tenure. The evolved Company Culture, perhaps sets rules for acceptable patterns.

In old age -whether corporate or individual- when one wants to get best cooperative care/assistance from those helping/attending, it is a challenging task, if the people serving so are in daily grind. Adapt, adopt and modify has become more critical as time moves on. Reputation and funds may not suffice; they may carry reservations too. Adjustability is the norm, to get things done, even under command, it is said.

Where do mariners fit into these? They are special isn't it? Having lived in isolation, away from usual societal norms with less crew members and social interaction, it is challenging indeed. Automation and autonomous on the horizon creating nervousness of mind blocks!

Incidentally, in closing, AI (artificial intelligence) or ML (machine learning) is all about capturing a process in a mathematical form called algorithm that gets coded into a self-learning programme. So long as sympathy, empathy, gut feeling, hunch, 6th sense, premonition and similar attributes cannot be captured by a mathematical expression, AI or ML will remain incomplete; please rest assured.

***Caveats but:*** all decision making are inadvertently influenced by philosophies, ideologies and religions including secularism and newfound liberalism kept in check by conservatism.

Now that 'free will' has been disproven by biochemical tests and liberalism has lost to technology over a century, what drives homo-sapiens in their decision making skill remains elusive!