

Decision Making Handout

The decision making matrix allows for an organization or team to list the key decisions that are being made and clarify who is Responsible for making the decision, who has authority to Approve or Veto who should be Consulted, and Informed, and who will Support the implementation of the decision.

- * **Responsible:** The person(s) who is/are responsible for making the decision.
- * **Approve or Veto:** The person(s) who has the right to approve or veto
- * **Consult:** Person(s) who should be consulted when gathering information and making the decision.
- * **Informed:** Person(s) who needs to know what the decision is.
- * **Supports:** Person(s) who support the implementation related to the decision.

This tool is a useful and effective decision making tool that helps to define roles and responsibilities, eliminate role confusions, identify inefficiencies of organizational roles, and help resolve any functional issues that arise within departments or between individuals.

Following are **benefits** using this tool in your organization:

- Identifying the workloads that have been assigned to specific employees or departments
- Making sure that processes are not overlooked
- Ensuring that new recruits are explained their roles and responsibilities
- Finding the right balance in responsibilities
- Redistributing work between groups to get the work done faster
- Open to resolving conflicts and discussions
- Documenting the roles and responsibilities of the people within the organization

Decision Making MATRIX (sample organization)						
<i>R=Responsible (for making the decision); A or V = (right to veto); C=Consult (those whose advice/opinions are needed to make decision); I=Inform (those whom are kept updated); S= Supports (those implementing decision)</i>						
Decision	Board	Executive Director/CEO	COO	Department Director	Caseworker	Volunteer Tutors
Area of responsibility: Communication						
How to do annual strategic planning	R	R	C	C	I	I
What grants to apply for	I	R	R	R	S	S
What fundraising to do	I	R	C	C	I	I
What eligibility requirements are for participants	I	R	C	C	C/S	C/S
How to best provide support services	I	R	C/S	C/S	C/S	C/S

A decision making matrix helps resolve organizational confusion by addressing misconceptions employees have regarding:

- Role perception: The attitude or thinking of people towards their work roles
- Role expectation: The expectation of a person with regards to another person's job role and involvement in decision making.
- Role behavior: The activities of people in their job function.

Although **role confusion** regarding critical decision making can be helped by using this decision making matrix, it is always a good idea to identify the reasons behind such confusion. This helps the organization to avoid such situations occurring in the future.

Following are some of the reasons for role confusion regarding decision making:

- Confused as to who makes the decisions
- Resentment or bad feelings from lack of clarity around decisions made in the past
- Ineffective communications when decisions have been made and are being presented in a way that appears as if staff are asking for input, or staff asking for input but not being open to changing anything
- Lack of clarity in orientation of new employees
- Rapidly changing circumstances in and outside the organization

A decision making matrix can be successfully used under the following conditions:

- For employees to get a clear understanding of the role and responsibilities around a decision making process.
- To improve the understanding of function between departments and responsibilities within one's department, across departments, and between the staff and Board.
- To clearly define the roles and responsibilities of team members, who are working on a project.

Questions to Ask When Consulting and/or Informing

Communicating when making decisions is vital for leaders, and communication is one of the most frequently raised issues within organizations. A leader's effectiveness in consulting stakeholders and/or informing them can be improved by thinking ahead and being able to answer the following questions:

- What is our intent in reaching out?** Managers and leaders need to know the phase of decision making in which they are seeking input or informing. If a decision has already been made, then seeking input to the decision is moot (and will cause frustration among stakeholders). If the discussion is just beginning and you are not attached to an idea, that is a very different discussion than if you have mostly made up your mind and are just consulting with others to see if you've overlooked something or can be convinced otherwise.
- How is the decision connected to organizational vision, mission, goals and values?** Hopefully this is a question you ask yourself on a regular basis to help guide you in making decisions. It is equally important to share that information with people who may not feel connected on a daily basis to the vision, mission, goals and values. For people who are focused on the day-to-day, getting help in connecting things to the bigger picture is necessary and exciting. The decisions you make, how you make them, and how you communicate them also affect your organizational culture and should reflect the values you have articulated towards the kind of culture you strive for.
- What are the key points/messages you want to communicate? And to whom?** Know what you really want to communicate about the decision and to whom you need/want to communicate. Document them and get everyone who might be communicating the message on the same page.
- Why is this decision being made?** Stakeholders need to know why a decision is being made or has been made. Hearing the reason(s) behind it builds trust, helps people open up and hear, creates context for better understanding, and increases buy-in.
- Who is making the decision?** You can use a RACI(D) matrix to help you determine who should be making what kind of decisions (see previous pages). This also helps others understand what their relationship is to a decision.
- Who, when, and how will the decision be communicated?** Is one person going to announce the decision? Will it be announced to everyone at the same time? When does it need to be done? What medium should it be communicated through (this may be different depending on the audience and weight of the decision)?
- How can we ensure that people understand the decision?** Communication is a two-way street. Thus, your stakeholders need to know how they can find out more, participate in the decision making process (if appropriate), ask questions, etc. They also need to know who they can communicate with if they need help understanding or want to engage.