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Make better decisions: Part 2 of 2

Change your focus

Looking at problems from another perspective can help you reach a resolution

ACCORDING to research conducted by scholar Luda Kopeikina, author of *The Right Decision Every Time: How To Reach Perfect Clarity On Tough Decisions*, decision-making is hindered by a lack of clear objectives, constraints and perspectives, and difficulties in selecting the right option and dealing with emotions.

Decision-makers can deal with their predicaments with novel and effective means by using the Clarity State Decision Making (CSDM) methodology.

Identify your objective

Your decision objective starts with the decision question ("Should I purchase this property or not?") and asking yourself why it is important. This will lead to the decision objective.

If the main objective for the decision question was "to create a conducive work-play environment" then, the decision objective might be expressed as "what is the best way to create a conducive work-play environment given the availability of this property?"

Initially the question was only whether to buy or not. But now, more options such as rental, co-ownership or relocation have opened up, which leads to the prospect of making a better decision.

Guide your decision

It is important to work with constraints positively and use them as guidelines for a positive decision. Start with the phrase "provided that I/we can..." Phrasing it in this manner forces you to act on the constraint.

For example, your boss gave you a budget constraint of \$100,000. The constraint could be phrased as "Provided that I/we can work within \$100,000". This will spur you to find innovative ways to work within the budget.

Apply this method to all the situations that require you to work with constraints.

Make emotions work

Having strong emotions – positive or negative – will affect the decision. First, name the emotion and identify its cause.

Then, ask yourself: "Why is this making me feel this way?" Probe until you get to the root of the matter.

For example, you may identify fear as your main emotion when considering a property purchase. Applying the technique of asking questions to identify its cause, you face up to the fact that your budget will be over-extended and you could be exposed to fluctuating interest rates.

Turn this into a decision constraint

– "provided that I can limit my interest exposure to no more than \$1.5 million". This will give you a better perspective of your emotions and how they can be used positively for a better decision.

Change your viewpoint

A good decision-maker will deliberately shift his focus. In CSDM, there are several ways to frame-shift, such as converting emotion into constraints or looking at the decision in a broader perspective.

Taking the \$100,000 budget constraint example, you can change your viewpoint by asking: "What would you do if this were your only constraint?" You could come up with options like "get sponsors" or "sell advertising space". This opens up new perspectives and options, and does not seem so limiting.

Or you can take a longer time to assess the impact of this decision. You may come up with new options and perspectives.

When it is time to make the decision, choose the option that will satisfy all of your remaining conditions and constraints.

Be prepared

Making the right decision is never easy. Outcomes will never be as they

are predicted. People usually back themselves heavily as favourites to win in the decision-making toss-up.

But events in history and sports prove otherwise. Even when people appeared to have made the right decision, the outcome was unsatisfactory.

Does that necessarily make the final decision wrong? No, because it was believed to be the best decision at the time it was made.

Remember that when conditions change, so must decision-makers. Decision-making is a continuous process. You have to apply and re-apply what you know, not because of your success in decision-making but in spite of it.

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