

Decision Making 201



Decision Making Matrices and Navigating Conflict in the Process

This Tipsheet overviews decision making matrices, navigating common problems with them, and how to optimize participation and minimize conflict in the process.

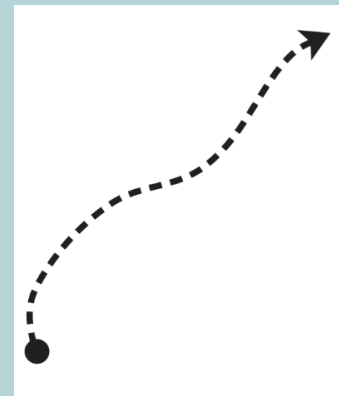
A **decision making matrix** is a tool to define roles and responsibilities on a project or team.

Signs that you need a matrix:

- **Lack of clarity** around who is responsible for carrying out tasks and moving projects forward.
- **Feedback loops** are holding up the process.
- **Increased accountability is needed** to move the project forward.
- **Labor is going unacknowledged** and leading to burnout and resentment.

As you pick a system consider:

- **Engagement levels** and commitment to the group.
- Group **familiarity and understanding** of the process.
- **Time-frames and flexibility.**
- The **perceived importance** of the decision.



Eisenhower Matrix

A four quadrant framework to simplify to-do lists and narrow task focus. The matrix categorizes the decisions are:

Do it Now, Schedule It, Delegate It, and Eliminate It

Use when:

- The group can't prioritize decisions or tasks.
- Everything feels urgent.
- There are a lot of feedback loops.



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Description	Who is Needed	Timeline	End Date
Understand the principles behind the matrix map to guide an effective process in creating one for the organization.			
Identify strategic issues facing the organization			
Articulate intended impact			
Identify mission-specific and fund development programs			
Define and tailor mission impact criteria			
Determine methodology for assessing impact: in-person or through an e-survey			
Gather background data on mission-specific and fund development programs			
Determine profitability of programs			
Assess initial mission impact, discuss results and finalize mission impact assessment			
Create matrix map			
Analyze matrix map with strategic inquiries and facilitate initial discussions			
Present to board for strategic decision-making			
Present to staff			

Task Force Matrix

Decisions are broken down into tasks. Timelines, a clear end date, and necessary people are selected.

Use when:

- There is a lack of clarity in roles.
- Projects repeatedly fall behind or are incomplete.
- Capacity is a concern.
- Work is being repeated.

Rubric Matrix

Opportunities are scored in relation to how well the evaluation criteria is met.

Use when:

- The group can't narrow down options.
- High tension over decisions.
- The group just likes more structure.

RUBRIC	SCORE					
EXEMPLARY Expectations exceeded	4					
ACCEPTABLE Expectations met	3					
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT Guidelines met	2					
INADEQUATE Guidelines somewhat met	1					
UNACCEPTABLE Incomplete; Information not available	0					

CRITERIA HEADING					
Criteria description					
CRITERIA HEADING					
Criteria description					
CRITERIA HEADING					
Criteria description					
CRITERIA HEADING					
Criteria description					
COLUMN TOTALS	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL SCORE	0				

SCORING SCALE	TOTAL
EXEMPLARY	25 – 28
ACCEPTABLE	21 – 24
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	16 – 20
INADEQUATE	0 – 15

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Decision Making Matrices and Navigating Conflict in the Process

Navigating Problems in the Process

It's important that people feel informed and engaged in the decision making process because:

- Decisions affect the group and the campaign.
- Decisions show group values.
- Decisions set an example.
- Not making a decision is still making one.

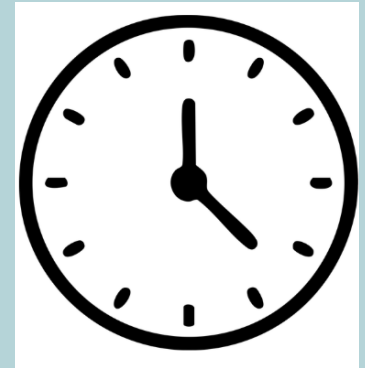
Time

Problems

- People don't have enough time to prepare.
- People are missing information and background.
- Deadlines aren't clear.
- Work is repeated.

Solutions

- The group can't narrow down options.
- High tension over decisions.
- The group just likes more structure.



Accountability

Problems

- Lack of follow through.
- Lack of understanding of roles and responsibilities
- Different ways of not following through
- People aren't completing their assignments.
- Decisions or actions are out of alignment with group values

Solutions

- The group can't narrow down options.
- High tension over decisions.
- The group just likes more structure.

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Participation

Problems

- Lack of understanding of roles and responsibilities.
- People don't have enough understanding to make decisions.
- The work itself feels unclear.

Solutions

- Repeat backs or check out questions at the end of meetings.
- Implement standing check ins with the matrix and status updates. Make it a collective process.
- Set markers to be a voting member of the group.
- Go back to the decision making drawing board.



Conflict Strategies

- Fairness looks different for everyone.
 - Ideas: have an outside facilitator, set objective standards or data.
- Avoid escalation and threats during disagreements.
- Stay away from the "us" vs "them" mindset.
 - Highlight shared goals and interests at the beginning of discussions.
- Example conflict model: SCARF

SCARF MODEL – Domains of Human Social Experiences

	Definition	Reward Response	Threat Response
S STATUS	Sense of respect and importance in relation to others.	Recognition for work, Opportunity for input, Reassurance of importance	Embarrassment, Getting unsolicited advice, Public critique
C CERTAINTY	Sense of clarity to predict future outcomes.	Clear expectations, Specific plans or next steps, Making the implicit explicit	No expectations, Unpredictability, Prospect of change
A AUTONOMY	Sense of control over events that impact the future.	Giving choice, Offering any flexibility, Options for self-organizing	Loss of choice, No way to make change or impact their situation
R RELATEDNESS	Sense of connection with others in your groups.	Inclusion, Chance to belong, Taking time to get to know someone	Exclusion, Isolation, Not involving certain people in groups or decisions
F FAIRNESS	Sense of non-biased and just treatment between people.	Transparency, Creating group or relational norms, Treating people equally and equitably	Unfair processes, Inconsistent application of rules/policy

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Worksheets & Resources

- [Watch this training in our Resource Library](#)
- [Tipsheet - Decision Making 101](#)
- [The Decider App](#)
- [Fixes That Fail in Collaborative Innovation:](#) The dynamics of conflict, decision-making speed and time pressure.

Decision Making Matrixes:

- [MOCHA Framework](#)
- [Eisenhower Matrix](#)
- [Task Force Matrix](#)
- [Rubric Matrix](#)

