



EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING

"I must have a prodigious amount of mind; it takes me as much as a week, sometimes, to make it up!" — Mark Twain

Good businesses are built on wise decisions taken confidently and consistently over time. But even if you don't own a business or run an organization, the biggest part of your day likely still goes in making decisions. And with making decisions, comes stress. That's because decisions almost always need to be made under time pressure, along with many distractions. But following this month's InfoPays' tips, you can ensure decision-making with confidence:

1. Have a clear picture of what the decision aims to achieve. Ensure that you are taking a big picture approach. Avoid solely focusing on the immediate result of the decision, and spend some time reviewing the impact on long-term goals as well.

2. Identify the right information to support the impending decision. Give yourself as much time as you can to do your research and resist the temptation of promising a quick decision. Identify the sources of information you will need and make sure they are available. Get advice from experts and colleagues and be honest about areas in which you might not have all the answers.

3. Outline alternatives and their respective consequences. Making a list of possible solutions is a way of winnowing down your options. Write these options down and then explore the pros and cons associated with each. Pay special attention to the consequences that might arise, especially if you are considering a course of action that has not been tried before.

4. Judge each alternative by your goals. Keep your priorities top of mind. This will ensure that you consider your long-term goals when making short-term decisions. Measure the merits and problems in each alternative. This involves a forward-thinking process of visualizing the outcome. Lastly, compare the alternatives, and decide which would be the best one available.

5. Implement the decision.

Make sure everyone involved is informed about the decision you have made. You will usually need to inform the more senior team members first, but getting



the information across all those affected in a timely manner is just as important. Plan your timing carefully and control the process firmly. Explain why the decision was made and outline what benefits you expect as a result, as well as any other implications that the business should anticipate.

6. Get the best people in the job, ideally right at the implementation stage. If your workforce is large, you might want to appoint two or three people as a project team. Ideally, the champions should have good communications, project management and delegation skills.

7. Review the consequences of your decision.

Estimate how long it will take before a decision will have an effect, and plan an assessment at that time to review the outcome. Make sure that some measurement is being made as you go along and that the project team can help you gather the information you need. Lastly, try to involve as many people as possible in the review process because this will help you leverage and document any lessons learned, and having "lessons learned" is an important aspect of organizational learning.

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SUCCESSFUL CONFLICT RESOLUTION

"The most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and be understood. The best way to understand them is to listen to them." R. Nichols

Conflict happens in all of our lives. It happens at home, school and work. But in order to deal with conflict successfully, you have to have good understanding of what might have caused it. It could be a difference of opinion, conflicting ideas, unrealistic work expectations or problematic working conditions, to name a few. Following, we give you nine tools and tips on how to successfully manage conflict.

1. Recognize conflict. To handle conflict, one must spot it first. Remember, it may come from an obvious or identifiable cause or it can be a result of a less obvious or seemingly unrelated cause. For example, a less obvious reason is when employees feel a supervisor is giving special privileges to a particular individual.

2. Monitor the climate. Constantly monitoring the climate for early signs of conflict may save much stress later on.

3. Look into the situation. Take time to find out the real cause of the conflict and information about who is involved, what the key issue is, and what are the effects.

4. Plan your approach. Do not take sides. Instead, encourage the parties to explore the interests behind their positions. Based on the previous investigation, decide what result you want to achieve, keeping in mind that it may not be the desired outcome for both parties.

5. Handle the issue. Stay in control of the situations. Handling conflict is a difficult process that can create extreme emotions. Remember to stay calm and impartial.

6. Be assertive. This means avoiding being either passive or aggressive. An assertive approach involves acknowledging the views and rights of all parties, encouraging the parties to find the causes of the conflict and suggesting constructive ways to move forward.

7. Let everyone have a say. If you have managed to get the parties around the table for discussion in a climate in which exchange is possible, reaching a compromise may be feasible. Remember that the solution needs to hit a wide range of targets:

- Help build good working

relationships.

- Be legitimate, non-discriminatory, and compatible with organizational practice.
- Help to generate a lasting commitment for the solution.

8. Find a way forward. The most important aspect of handling conflict is to find an acceptable way to move forward. Examine the options and define what is next. Make sure everyone knows what the conclusion is and what each person is expected to do.

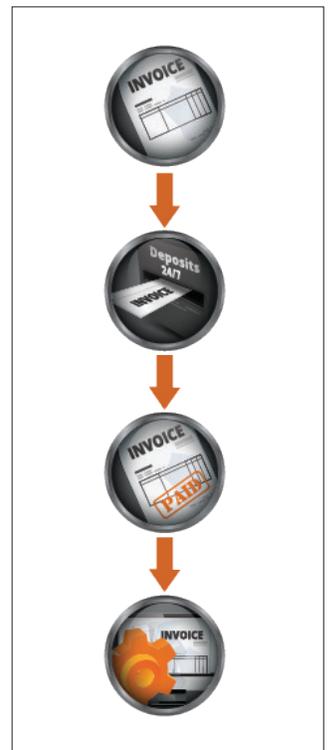
9. Appraise. It is important to learn from conflict situations and move forward. Appraise the conflict and the way it was handled to see what you can learn. How can similar conflicts be avoided in the future? Learn from the experience and keep your eye on what has been resolved to prevent it from flaring up again.

Created by the IPS Business Owner Success School (BOSS)



IPS RECOMMENDS:

- Tackling conflict early to prevent it from escalating.
- Trying to avoid instinctive reactions.
- Refraining from offering your opinion before understanding the full picture.
- Avoiding to take things personally.
- Handling the conflict in private.



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