



Decision Making Styles

Every day we have to make decisions - small and large, at work and at home. Your decision making style can have a significant impact on the people around you, the outcomes achieved and your ongoing confidence in making decisions. Understanding your decision making style and its drivers, as well as evaluating its effectiveness, is a key component to developing good decision making skills.

Stress arising from decisional conflict is a major factor leading to failure to achieve high quality decision making.

Difficulty deciding, and the resultant stress, occurs in situations where there is:

- Concern about personal, material and/or social losses that might occur regardless of the chosen alternative
- Loss of reputation and self esteem if the decision outcome is adverse

There are 4 main recognised decision-making styles associated with situations involving decisional conflict and we have all 4 in our decision-making repertoire. However, there is usually one we tend to fall back on most commonly (our default setting).

Decision Making Styles

- **Procrastination:** Avoid making a decision or significantly delay examining the issue and making a decision. This leads to last minute decision making which can result in incomplete processing of information and faulty decision making.
- **Buck-passing:** Shifting responsibility for the decision to another person.

- **Hypervigilance:** A state of impulsive decision making because of time pressure or anxiety/stress. Full range of choices and consequences is overlooked because of panic or limited attention. Usually associated with emotional stress.
- **Vigilance:** In this style, the decision maker carefully seeks out, analyses and evaluates relevant information about an array of options before making a decision in an appropriate time frame. This is regarded as the only style that facilitates consistently good, rational decision making.

Your style will be influenced by:

- Anxiety and/or stress
- Sensitivity to time pressure
- Where we are on the optimism/pessimism spectrum.
- Openness to new information
- Information gathering and analysis styles
- Appetite for risk
- Priorities
- Interest in the issues
- Relationship to others involved
- Information processing capability at the time (which in turn is influenced by decision making load, decision making environment and wellbeing factors like sleep and exercise).



How to improve your decision making:

- Become more aware of your pre-dominant personal style.
- Allow enough time for important decisions.
- Get feedback from a trusted friend or colleague whose decision making skills you respect.
- If anxiety or stress inhibit decision making learn to manage these more effectively.
- Get 7 hours of sleep.
- Exercise regularly.