



The Decision Maker

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**“Organizational leadership
is in the hands
of those who
gather, sort, judge,
feel, and decide.**

**Understand them.
Become one of them.”**



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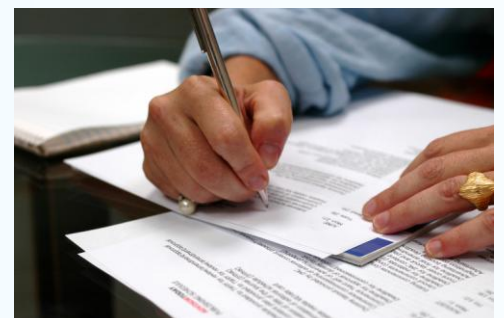
The Decision Maker's Context

Organizational life is often demanding and sometimes inspiring.

The success or otherwise you experience will be determined by the quality of your decisions.

That is why it is crucial to understand exactly how decision makers do their work. Only then can you help them to make better decisions faster yourself.

And, of course, the decision maker is the most powerful organizational role to which you can aspire.





It may be your boss. It may be their boss. It may even be you. Somewhere in the chain of command and control of successful organizations, there is a decision maker. Probably there are lots of them, if the organization is well structured and functions well.

For some people, making decisions is second nature. They work with confidence and self-assurance, understanding and deciding in a professional, effortless manner.

For others, decision-making is a tangled, stumbling affair, in which there is often a desire to avoid responsibility and to duck accountability. Before, during, and after, there are waves of doubt, the precursor to regret.

If you fit either category, you are certainly within the realms of normality. Even the most powerful and skilled managers and leaders often agonize about decisions. When a decision is made, they want to and sometimes do, backtrack and disregard the new path they have chosen.

For those who idolize decision makers, who believe them to be above the normal, organizational life can be a frightening and exasperating experience. The decision maker flies down corridors, snaps meetings shut, waves off hectoring staff, and strikes ahead in their career with bewildering speed and power.

However, it may be that it is you who is the decision maker.



Possibly, you are rather good at it: taking the risks and the responsibilities. In fact, it can become so natural that you hardly realize what you are doing, and you may be suddenly struck with the need to teach or mentor someone else about decision-making. Or, to understand yourself better.

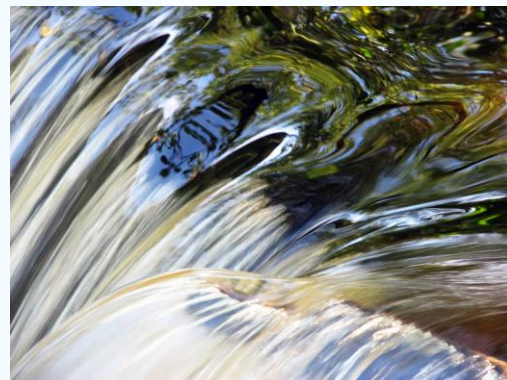
There is no doubt that leaders make decisions.

They carry the burden. They take the prize. Whether the decision relates to a minor administrative matter taken well down the chain of command or a signal, strategic judgment taken at the highest level, you can be sure that decision-making is at the heart of leadership. In fact, it probably defines leadership.

A decision may be good or bad. The actions or situations that arise afterwards will show that to be the case. And, a decision may be made lightly, emotionally or carelessly. Those types of decisions are not our concern here. We need to know the true character of good decision-making. From that foundation, you can judge yourself and others. You can improve your abilities and, if needed, you can help others to decide well.

Most decision makers follow a predictable pattern. They individualize their decision making with some elements of their own character but, essentially, the decision-making process they follow is foreseeable.

They gather or receive facts that they assess, measure, and weigh. Then, they judge those facts against what they know.



When they reach a point of satisfaction with the information they have received, assessed, and judged, they take action. They decide.

Those last two points are extremely important. When they are satisfied, the decision maker takes action.

Some decision makers will seem to move through those five phases in an instant. Sometimes, they may dwell on one or more phases, taking hours, days, weeks, or months to progress through the sequence. Be aware that these variations occur. Some may arise from the complexity of the subject, while others may simply indicate a lack of skill or diminished ability in the decision maker themselves.

If that means **you**, do not be troubled. The variation is entirely a human experience and it may sometimes allow the development of a better decision, despite its irritating twisting and tumbling.

Understanding a decision maker's mind takes a little effort, even if it is your mind we are considering. However, the effort is entirely worthwhile as understanding a decision maker can make you more powerful, more persuasive, and more insightful.

Imagine knowing how and when a decision maker will react. Imagine knowing what will prompt a decision maker and what will disengage them. Imagine showing others exactly how you make decisions so that **they** can provide exactly the right context that suits you every time.