

Geared for Success



A publication of Training Werks
Your Resource for
Leadership Development

3rd Quarter
2016 Newsletter

Share





Geared for Success

3rd Quarter, 2016

A publication of Training Werks -- Your Resource for Leadership Development

Making Sound Decisions

Leaders make decisions all day—from the trivial to the complex and ambiguous. In the workplace, this often means the act of choosing between two or more courses of action. Making sound decisions involves the use of intuitive and/or reasoning processes. Some decisions are easy to resolve and have a straightforward answer. Others that are more complex involve gathering data, looking at possible solutions, measurement against established criteria, collaborating with others and big picture evaluation.

In the book, Successful Manager's Handbook, by Personnel Decisions, Inc., the authors outline five criteria that define a sound decision. A sound decision is:

- **Based on accurate analysis** – What tools (Decision Matrix Analysis? Critical Path Analysis? Decision Trees? , etc.) were used to understand the problem?
- **Reflects a solid understanding of the organization and its priorities** – How does this decision impact the organization's vision and mission?
- **Incorporates the analysis of hard data and people's concerns** – How does this decision affect everyday processes? What impact will it have on the people?
- **Weighs the pros and cons of alternatives** – What other possibilities exist?

- **Involves the necessary people in the decision-making process** – Have the critical people who will be impacted by the decision been consulted?

Sound decisions maximize positive outcomes and minimize negative ones. So, what problems keep leaders from making a sound decision? Some of the most common ones are: not enough information, too much information, too many people involved, vested interests of parties and no/too much emotional attachment. These factors may lead to procrastination, analysis



paralysis, discomfort and ultimately perhaps not making a decision at all.

To make sound decisions first examine how you make most of your decisions. What is your typical approach? Do you "shoot from the hip" and go with your first gut reaction? Do you drag your feet with the hope that you will not have to actually make a decision? Do you overuse collaboration so that the decision is made by a group? Do you use a balanced approach of people and analysis of the issue at hand? Identifying why and how you go about your decision making will enable you to be fully aware of your immediate reactions.

Decision making models offer ways to assess and clarify the issues at hand. These models help to incorporate both analyses of numbers with people issues. Here are some possibilities to use when making decisions:

- **Plus, Minus, Interesting** – This tool created by Edward deBono goes beyond a basic pro's and con's look at a decision. Use a table to list—What is good about this decision? (Plus) What is a negative for this decision?(Minus) And, what is interesting about it? The Interesting aspect of the model pushes your thought processes into different, creative areas.

- **SWOT Analysis** – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Model is drawn in a 2x2 matrix and reads like advantages and disadvantages. This powerful

Cont. on Page 2

"Be decisive. Right or wrong, make a decision. The road of life is paved with flat squirrels who couldn't make a decision."

Unknown



Training Werks

Celebrating 17 years of Business for the Professional Development of People and Organizations!

Specializing in:
Leadership Training and Executive Coaching

Expertise:

- MBTI® Step II
- EQ-i 2.0™
- EQ360™
- FIRO-B®
- CDP®
- TKI®
- William Bridges Change Programs
- Custom Training Programs available upon request

Jan Hovrud, Owner
www.training-werks.com
435-647-0516

Now accepting credit cards and government purchase cards

Making Sound Decisions

(Cont. from Page 1)

model can be used to create action steps, priorities and team goals.

- **Decision Trees** – Decision Trees are diagrams that represent possibilities, their choice points, risks and rewards. Ultimately, it establishes paths for likely events and potential issues for the decision.
- **As Is-To Be Model** – This quick tool helps to clarify what

changes will happen when a proposed decision is made.

- **Six Thinking Hats** – Edward deBono combines rational and intuitive aspects of decision making with this model. Each hat represents aspects of the decision that one should consider while making a decision.

Sound decision making is the mark of excellence in leadership. Your reputation is built on your ability to make decisions that make sense, are timely and utilize resources effectively. Ultimately, your decisions define how others see you and what your progression may be in the organization.

Learning from Your Conflicts

Self-reflection after conflict resolution is an important step in your personal growth and development. Complete the following sentences to stimulate your thinking, gain insights and identify conflict patterns within yourself.

- I learned that...
- I re-learned that...
- I discovered that I ...
- I noticed that I...
- I was surprised that I ...
- I am disappointed that I...
- I hope that I...

Resource: [The Manager's Pocket Guide to Dealing with Conflict](#), by Lois B. Har

Undermining Your Own Ideas

You may be your own worst enemy for presenting a new idea. Research shows that prefacing your ideas with a qualifying statement undermines their impact. Some to avoid are:

- "I was wondering if we might consider..."
- "I am probably way off base here..."
- "This might be a stupid idea, but..."

Each statement sets you up for skepticism and doubt by the listeners-the last thing you need when you are trying to gain buy-in.

Resource: Stacey Hanke, workplace consultant

What to Do After a Work Meltdown

Perhaps you've been there-lost your cool in an important meeting, broke down and cried, shouted at someone you work with, abruptly left a meeting in anger or did something equally embarrassing at work that was out of your normal personality. What now? We all act in ways we regret. However, it is extremely important to focus on actions to take after the incident.

In the article, "Bouncing Back After Embarrassment at Work", by Marcy Twete, the author outlines steps to take to heal the embarrassment and/or damage your actions have done.

1. **Own it immediately.** Apologize to the individuals involved. Approach each person individually to deliver a sincere apology for your actions and thank them for understanding. It may be your first instinct to forget about it and hope everyone else does too. Don't pretend it didn't happen-you are only fooling yourself.



2. **Be honest** both during and after about any consequences you might face. Accept responsibility with honesty and integrity. Don't try to brush it aside or pretend it didn't happen.
3. **Take steps to show your worth.** It may be tempting to go into professional hiding, lay low and hope everyone forgets what happened. Instead you need to work harder for small wins-raise your hand for unpopular assignments, come in early, stay late, etc. You need to show that you are 100% on board.

4. **Set future strategies.** Know your hot buttons and emotional triggers. Learn to recognize your limits. Learn from your mistake and never repeat it. Remember meltdowns don't happen overnight there is usually a buildup of frustration.

When all is said and done, recognize that you are human. Once steps 1-4 above have been done, acknowledge you did something inappropriate at work and move on. Beating yourself up endlessly serves no good purpose and will prevent you from being your best self. Most of all, learn from the experience so that you do not repeat it.

“You can't just talk your way out of what you've behaved yourself into.”

Stephen R. Covey

The Art of Thinking on Your Feet

As leaders develop in their careers, they are expected to be calm and composed under pressure. Whether in a one-on-one conversation or in front of a room full of people, leaders must know how to find the right words that can convey their message. Thinking on your feet is a coveted skill that when mastered ensures that your ideas are not only heard, but you come across as confident, persuasive and trustworthy.

Confidence is critical for learning to think on your feet. To be confident you must be prepared and ready. Below are some skills and tactics for building your confidence when you are placed in the hot seat.

- **Prepare for "What ifs"** - Think about what other questions might be asked of you. Prepare and rehearse some answers before you are in the actual situation. What other additional information should you have that links to your topic? Mentally brainstorm all aspects of what difficult questions others might ask.
- **Stick to the Important Points** - Under pressure people tend to give too much or too little information. If you give too little information, you risk the conversation going into interrogation mode. When your reply is too lengthy, you risk losing people's interest, coming across as boring or saying things that should have been left unsaid. Make your point, summarize and stop. This technique requires focus and practice. Enlist a colleague to provide you with feedback on how well you do on this skill.



- **Buy Some Time** - Under pressure people may blurt out the first thing that comes to mind. From an emotional intelligence standpoint, this is lack of impulse control. Often that first thing said may be a defensive comment that makes you look insecure and anxious rather than confident and in control. Instead:
 - **Ask for clarification** (e.g. "When you said you want to see data on...do you mean...?")
 - **Paraphrase** - "I hear you saying....Did I miss anything?" "It sounds like your concern is...".
 - **Narrow the focus** - "What impacts are you most interested in hearing about?"

• **Assume the Posture** - Your body language can translate directly into your mind's willingness to engage in the dialogue. People who are nervous tend to step back, avert eyes and fold their arms. Instead, stand tall on the balls of your feet, maintain eye contact and place your arms in an open position. Once done, you are ready to speak in a confident, strong voice.

• **Relax** - The very opposite of what you are feeling is what is needed when you are under pressure. In order for your brain to think and your voice to sound steady, it is important to find your inner calm. Clench invisible muscles (thighs, biceps, feet) for a few seconds and release. Tell yourself an affirming message-"I got this".

Thinking on your feet means staying in control of the situation. Performing under pressure is an important part of leadership development and enables you to build your self-regard and assertiveness competencies.

"If you don't go after what you want, you'll never have it. If you don't ask, the answer is always no. If you don't step forward, you're always in the same place."

Nora Roberts, American Author

Are You a LinkedIn Slacker?

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network with over 60 million members and growing rapidly. This complimentary network enables you to connect with trusted contacts and helps you exchange knowledge, ideas, and opportunities with a broad network of professionals. The three most important reasons for creating a LinkedIn profile are: staying in touch with professionals—past and present, acquiring and sharing knowledge/expertise and managing your career.

So, is it time to either create a profile or maximize your presence? Here are some aspects to consider:

- **Your profile picture** - Remember LinkedIn is a career site. Your picture should be professional and up-to-date.
- **Tend your profile** - Take the time to update your profile with any new career positions, relevant accomplishments to your field and successes that you have had.
- **Check in regularly** - It only takes a few minutes to visit

the site and check posts.

- **Join groups associated with your occupation** - This is an excellent way to keep up with what is happening in your field.
- **Build your connections** - Think about your career in a broad way. Connect with others from your past and present. Another option is using LinkedIn after attending a conference to build an online relationship with people you have met.
- **Endorse Others' Skills** - Be supportive of your connections by endorsing their skills and abilities.
- **Ask for Recommendations** - The key here is one recommendation per job/position that you have had.

Your consistent, honest communications on LinkedIn can and will open doors, keep your contacts in one place and provide learning expertise to you.

Resource: "How to Make the Most Of LinkedIn", by Kaitlyn Pirie

If I Only Could Remember Names Better...

You see someone coming towards you or you are talking to someone and things are getting interesting—now, what was his/her name? We've all been there. Embarrassing as it is forgetting someone's name happens every day in social settings. In fact, the ability to remember names gives you a great advantage in social and business organizations. In the article, "8 Effective Ways to Remember A Person's Name", the author Scott Ginsberg suggests that the ability to remember names is based on your learning style and personality.

Here are some ways to increase your ability to remember names:

1. **Repetition, Repetition, Repetition** – As soon as you hear their name, repeat it back to the person. "It's good to finally meet you, Karen. I hear you are an expert skier." If you don't do this, chances are you will forget the name within 10 seconds. Also, be sure to repeat the name at the beginning, during and at the end of the conversation. If you speak the name, hear the name, and listen to yourself say it, you will remember it.
2. **Inquiry** – Show you care about the person's name. "Do you go by Dave or David?" "How did you get that nickname?" Find out if there is a personal significance to their name. In doing so, you will ultimately flatter them and help you remember their name.
3. **Dramatize Faces** – You most likely remember faces better than names. Next time you meet someone, associate a particular feature with his/her name (i.e. Bob with the red hair, Susan the blonde). The trick is to silently make your associations memorable to you and interesting so you are more adapt to remember it.

4. **Forget about You** – Concentrate on the other person. Forget about yourself. If you are too self-conscious, nervous, overly confident, you are only thinking about yourself and it will interfere with your memory.
5. **Write the Name Down** – If you are a visual learner, write down the name of the person. This is a flawless method to remember. Most networking functions and meetings have pens, paper, business cards all available. Throughout the conversation, look at the name and person. Marty. Name on business card. Marty. Look again at the card. You will cement the information into your brain.
6. **Inner Monologue** – If you feel that saying the name out loud is too obvious (i.e. #1 Repetition, Repetition, Repetition), then an internal conversation of repetition is needed. Perhaps when you go to get a drink or while they get something out of their desk—internally say his/her name.
7. **Introduce Someone Else** – "Have you met my co-worker Joan?" This method helps to connect more people and reinforces that singular name to you.
8. **Listen and Look for Freebies** – Listen carefully. Even if you forget someone's name you may be rescued by someone else saying it.

The key here is practice and attitude. Pick out one of these suggestions and try it at the next networking event or party you attend. And—most of all—don't tell yourself "I'm bad at names". This is a skill that everyone can learn and grow to be better at.

Resource: "8 Effective Ways to Remember A Person's Name", by Scott Ginsberg

Oil and Water—Talking Politics and Work

If you feel compelled to talk politics at work, resist the urge. In an election year seemingly innocent political comments can become heated arguments with lasting impressions. Whether it is the presidential race or local elections, in political conversations you risk much more than you will gain. At best, you risk offending coworkers whose help you need to accomplish work. At worst, you distract others from their work and create an "us" and "them" environment with the potential for major rifts that may never be mended.

Being tactful and sensitive to others' views is important for maintaining morale and a respectful workplace. Remember—right or wrong—people come to conclusions about you based on your political beliefs. The more you vocalize your political opinions, the more you leave yourself vulnerable to judgments. Nearly one out of every four U.S. workers say they

are uncomfortable when their top leaders openly express their political preferences at work. Consequences can range from building an uncomfortable work place to people feeling inhibited and holding back when they come to work to filing a formal workplace complaint to actually leaving.

In a CareerBuilder poll, only 14% of workers said they enjoyed discussing politics or other controversial issues at work. Be mindful that such topics tend to be irrelevant to the work at hand and set the stage for labeling of others. As you already know, relationships are key to being successful, building trust and moving your organization forward. Set the example and boundaries for what is acceptable discussion on your team. When all is said and done and the election is over, you are all on the same team—make sure it is a harmonious one.

Resource: "Talking Politics in the Workplace? Generally, not a Good Idea", by Joyce E. A. Russell



Share



Want A Friend, Colleague, Your Boss or Your Team to Receive the Newsletter?

If you would like others to benefit from this complimentary, quarterly publication, please refer them to our website at www.training-werks.com/newsletter.html to sign up on the distribution list. Over 2,800 leaders receive it already - some since 2002! Thank you for your support!