



ECSU Student Center and Student Activities Office *Co-curricular education for student organizational leadership*

→ EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING ←

Have you ever been in a position of having to choose between two items for your organization; and you try to look at each item equally, but you just can't seem to make a decision? If that's the case, then these steps for decision making may be useful to you and your organization.

Clarify the Problem

The problem or need for a decision should be clear. For example, the problem of trying to get better food in a cafeteria might be clarified as the problem of obtaining more fresh fruit, larger entree portions, and more salad varieties.

Collect Information

Identify information to be gathered and the sources available to obtain the information. Ask questions like: How much? What will others think? Where? What restrictions are there? These should be answered at this stage.

List Alternatives

Brainstorm possible solutions and then narrow the list down to the workable suggestions and those you would like to consider further.

Weigh Alternatives

Consider what would occur if each particular alternative was selected. Identify the criteria being applied to evaluate each possible solution and be explicit. Resources like time, money, interest, and skills may all be criteria in making a decision.

Make a Tentative Decision

The alternative that best meets the evaluation criteria is usually the solution to implement. Be sure to present this decision to those who may be affected by it or possibly to a larger group for feedback.

List the Steps

Determine what needs to be done and in what sequence to meet the goal of the decision. This may be the implementation of the final decision rather than the tentative one.

Evaluate the Decision

Evaluating the experience determines if the decision is a good one, if it is worth it, or if it has value. Ask questions like: What good things have happened? What has gone wrong? What has been the reaction of others? What changes will make it better? These can help identify possible weaknesses in the original decision and clarify steps to remedy the problem(s).

Take Action

As in weighing the remaining alternatives, consider the alternatives and then implement an action. The solution may be a modified version of the original decision or an entirely different decision. Keep in mind the policy and steps to be followed.

Review

Finally, be sure to review the plan periodically. All good decisions need follow through!

REFERENCE

Adapted from: St. Norbert College, Department of Leadership, Service & Involvement

*Additional resource handouts are available as well as consultation services.
For more information, contact the Student Activities Office in the Student Center at 465-4450.*