

## **BECOMING A GOOD DECISION MAKER**

**By Daniel Theyagu**

Inevitably, one of your job requirements might expect you to make decisions for your organization. When you rise up your career ladder you will find that you will be increasingly tasked to make decisions. Becoming a good decision maker will make you an asset to your organization.

Some of the decisions that you have to make may have a deep impact on your career as well as the lives of other people working with you. For instance, your company is suffering a financial crisis and the management team that you head has identified various causes for this crisis. To arrest this financial crisis you have been proposed with a solution that includes terminating thirty percent of your existing staff strength. Since you are the key decision maker you have the unenviable task of selecting those staff that you have to let go. How are you going to make that decision?

We sometimes pray that we do not find ourselves in such a dilemma. However, when tough situations arises only those who can make tough decisions will survive. So here are a few pointers on how you can become a good decision maker in your organization.

### **Understand the root cause of the situation**

In order to make good decisions, it is important that you have a clear understanding of the root cause of the situation. The decision you make must be based on facts that you have and these facts must be verified and authenticated so that you are certain that the decision you are about to make is a rational and reasoned one. Remember the acronym CARF which means have you ‘considered all relevant factors’.

### **Do not succumb to office politics**

Making a good decision entails that you are not motivated by people in your office who may want you to make a decision which might be in their favour. It is quite common that when people start working together there will be a tendency to form little clicks. Each click will then begin to have its own sub-culture and its own unique way of doing things in the office. As a decision maker it is your duty to ensure that you remain apolitical and base your judgement on your effective understanding of the situation.

### **Don't be drawn into the 'Groupthink' mentality**

'Groupthink' mentality is one whereby all the members of a group or team feel that they are invincible and whatever decision and action they take and make will not fail. Such a 'groupthink' situation comes about when the organization has been relatively successful in all their endeavours for a long while and there is an overall sense of well being and that *'everything is going to be fine'* kind of attitude. Organization that falls prey to this kind of 'groupthink' mentality will find it difficult to make harsh decisions when the need arises and prefer to take a wait and see approach until things become worse.

You will notice the effect of 'groupthink' mentality when you are having meetings or group discussions and everyone seems to agree with everyone else. There is no dissention and no resistance to the proposal put forward by anyone in the group. Remember that there is no such thing as a best laid plan. Any decision that you make will have with it certain inherent flaws. The important thing is to objectively identify these flaws and if possible to either try to eliminate or at least minimize their effects.

This can only be achieved if you are not drawn into a state of 'decision making invincibility' in that you feel that you and your team can make no wrong decision.

### **Successful Decisions are those that can be translated into Action**

Decision making is still relatively easier than the ability to translate the decision into action. To be an excellent decision maker you must also be the kind of person who takes action. Once you've made the decision you must give yourself a timeline for the implementation of the decision. You also have to engage in a review process to see how the decision has improved the situation that made you take such a decision.

### **Viewing failure as feedback for further refinement**

There will be times when the decision that you've made does not quite turn out the way you want it. There is no guaranteed success formula in decision making. When you made a decision that failed what makes you an effective individual is your ability to assess the damage and review the situation to see how you could refine the decision again and put it into action. This certainly is not going to be an easy road. You will face obstacles and perhaps it might be a decision of tremendous magnitude that you have no second chance. However, take heed that if you've done your homework and have paid attention to the other pointers above, you most likely might not suffer a massive catastrophe. You may falter and perhaps sustain a few 'executive bruises' that will give you valuable feedback on how you could refine your decision.

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