

Go on, make a decision

OF the many things in life that we do daily, making decisions comes pretty close to the top of the list. Some decisions are subconscious ones which hardly ever warrant more than a nano second of thought. In fact about 80 per cent of the decisions we make fall into this category.

So what of the remaining 20 per cent, the really important ones that broadly involve people and money.

In their personal lives and in particular in their commercial lives people are very different. This reflects in their styles of decisionmaking. Not surprisingly, each of us is a sum total of all the decisions we have made in our lives. Here are some suggestions to enhance your decisionmaking capability.

First the golden rule. If you are empowered to make a decision then make it. If there is one issue that causes a manager to lose the respect of his team, colleagues and peers alike it is procrastination. By not making a decision you

are in effect voting for no action. There are people who believe by not making a decision they avoid making mistakes. For a manager at any level that is a one-way street to incompetence.

A decision should never be made when you are angry, upset, frustrated or in any state of mind when you are clearly somewhere else. There will be too many factors colliding in your mind that will not get the right amount of time spent on the issue.

Review some of the decisions you have made recently and see whether you are making primarily reactive or proactive decisions. If you are being honest with yourself you will probably find too many reactive decisions and that suggests fire fighting. A good manager practices preventative management to head off a problem before it develops into a revenue loser.

This is a simple check list for a reactive decision.

- Keep an open mind and do not pre-judge the outcome – a big mistake!

- Define the problem.
- Locate the causes, not the symptoms.
- Do not attach blame.
- Gather evidence and evaluate it.
- Get different perspectives from various people directly and indirectly involved. If all you do is talk to people with similar perspectives as yourself you will likely not look at alternative areas and not get different views.
- Do not settle on the first solution. Look for as many options as possible and decide on the best one.
- Assess the short-, medium- and long-term payback. Short-term fixes on their own invariably just dampen the problem and do not put out the fire.
- Take action.
- Follow up, follow up, follow up.

If you have to take a problem to your boss use this check list as a means of telling him/her how you are approaching the problem. Do not make excuses. People hate

to hear them and generally makes the situation worse.

Here are some tools you can use to add objectivity to your discussions.

- Force Field Analysis
- Six Hats Thinking
- PMI (Plus, Minus, Interesting) which weighs the pros and cons of your options
- Grid Analysis

So what about proactive decisionmaking? We are talking about scanning your “personal/management radar screen”. This applies to people, products, budgets, recruitment, competition, market conditions, systems and so on. The question to ask yourself is: how are you reading that radar screen?

Many people take the view that “if it isn’t broken then don’t fix it”. Surely good thinking dictates that you “fix something before it breaks”. Would a sales person be happy losing a customer? Would a manager sit back and allow a team member’s performance to decline dramatically before stepping in?

Constant questioning will improve your skills

COACHING



People do not go looking for problems. We analyse poor performance. How often after a great week, month or quarter, etc do we go back and look at why we did well and review whether it could so easily have gone the other way? You need to keep questioning yourself, your people and your environment. In that way you will improve your decisionmaking – think about it.

Mr Ray Bigger is founder and managing director of Think8, a leading coaching, consulting and training company headquartered in Singapore. He has more than 25 years of sales, marketing, people and team development experience. Mr Bigger is a former English Premier League and Football League referee. Tel: (65) 6875-0104, email: ray@think8.net, website: www.think8.net



Starwood ad 2

18x6 cols