

TOPIC ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

Software Project Management (SOEN 6841)

How to Share Decisions for Strong Execution

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Abstract

The study emphasizes the critical role of effective decision-sharing in successful team execution. The author outlines a comprehensive approach, highlighting key steps such as clarifying decisions, pre-communicating the decision-making process, identifying decision-makers, and documenting and recording decisions. The article underscores the importance of intentional communication, transparency, and inclusivity throughout the decision-making process. Additionally, it emphasizes the significance of choosing appropriate communication methods, delegating decision-making responsibly, and promptly updating relevant documentation. While acknowledging the perceived time investment, the article contends that the benefits of intentional communication far outweigh the potential challenges and inefficiencies associated with misunderstandings and lack of alignment within a team. The main pivotal step is the necessity of clarifying decisions. The author stresses the importance of articulating decision statements clearly and explicitly, emphasizing that a lack of clarity can lead to misunderstandings and diverse interpretations. By establishing a solid foundation of understanding, teams can avoid the pitfalls of miscommunication that may arise in the absence of a clearly defined decision.

1 Introduction

1.1 Motivation

The investigation into effective decision-sharing mechanisms within a team is motivated by the fundamental premise that successful decision-making is only the first step in a broader process. While significant attention has been dedicated to understanding how decisions are made, the subsequent challenge lies in ensuring that these decisions are communicated, comprehended, and executed effectively. This motivation is particularly relevant in today's dynamic and collaborative work environments where team success hinges on the ability to align and execute decisions seamlessly. The investigation aims to address a critical gap in current organizational practices, recognizing that the quality of execution is contingent on how well decisions are shared and understood.

1.2 Problem Statement

The problem at hand is the frequent oversight and undervaluation of decision-sharing processes within teams. Despite the wealth of research and knowledge surrounding decision-making strategies, the subsequent steps of clearly communicating decisions, designating responsible decision-makers, and documenting outcomes often receive inadequate attention. This oversight leads to a range of issues, from misunderstandings and varied interpretations to a lack of accountability in decision execution. The problem statement, therefore, revolves around the need for a systematic and intentional approach to decision-sharing, acknowledging its critical role in successful team execution.

1.3 Objectives

The primary objectives of this investigation are multifaceted. Firstly, it aims to develop a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and shortcomings in current decision-sharing practices within teams. This understanding will be derived through an analysis of existing literature, case studies, and real-world examples. Secondly, the investigation seeks to propose practical strategies and methodologies for enhancing decision-sharing processes. These strategies should be applicable across diverse team structures, industries, and decision types. Additionally, the investigation aims to articulate the potential benefits of implementing improved decision-sharing practices, not only in terms of enhanced team alignment but also in terms of overall organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Ultimately, the investigation aspires to provide actionable insights that can be utilized by team leaders, managers, and organizational stakeholders to foster a culture of intentional decision-sharing, benefiting the entire team and contributing to sustained organizational success.

2 Background Material

In response to increasing pressure from investors, creditors, and shareholders following corporate corruption scandals, boards of directors are now under heightened scrutiny to ensure effective corporate governance of investments. While previous research has closely examined the effectiveness of corporate governance structures, little attention has been given to boards' effectiveness in fulfilling their strategic role of guiding strategy execution. This gap is attributed to the challenges in externally assessing boards' effectiveness in guiding strategy execution due to the secretive nature of strategic issues. To address this, the paper proposes using "strategy consistency" between a firm's resource allocation and its announced strategy as a proxy for assessing boards' effectiveness in guiding strategy execution. The research contributes to existing literature by extending the focus beyond structural governance issues and directly addressing strategic governance issues. It introduces a novel approach and standard measures to evaluate boards' effectiveness in strategy execution, aiming to provide a more comprehensive understanding of corporate governance in the context of strategic decision-making. [6]

Laura Stack emphasizes the importance of execution in achieving strategic goals. In today's rapidly changing world, Stack argues that strategy cannot be separate from execution; instead, it must emerge from execution. The LEAD Formula outlines the Four Keys to Successful Execution: 1. Leverage your talent and resources 2. Design an Environment to support an agile culture 3. Create Alignment between strategic priorities and operational activities 4. Drive the organization forward quickly Stack believes that you have to continually adjust your strategy to fit new realities. If your organization isn't set up to be fast on its feet, you could easily go the way of Blockbuster or Borders. The book includes a leadership team assessment, group reading guides, and bonus self-development resources. It aims to equip leaders with the knowledge, skills, and inspiration to help them hit the ground running. [9]

Delves into the domain of share buy-backs, a strategic tool in corporate capital allocation that has garnered significant attention. Despite extensive research on the topic, the execution phase of share buy-backs remains relatively unexplored compared to other capital allocation decisions. The aim is to illuminate the execution practices of share buy-backs, uncovering challenges and opportunities and offering a comparative analysis with other capital allocation aspects. The analysis, from an outsider's perspective, aims to reveal the intricacies of execution and assist corporations, investors, and regulators in understanding the process better. The paper questions the fees charged to corporations for share buy-back executions, highlighting potential inefficiencies and advocating for greater transparency and fairness in the execution phase. In light of increased regulatory attention and evolving ESG considerations, the paper seeks to foster dialogue, encourage transparency, and promote the efficient use of resources in capital markets, ultimately benefiting shareholders.[7]

Elucidate four essential levers that managers can employ for the effective implementation of strategy, drawing insights from Simons' levers of control framework within the performance management literature. The identified levers include diagnostic, belief, boundary, and interactive controls. The findings underscore the importance of orchestrating these levers harmoniously to fully unlock the potential of a firm's strategy. Failure to do so may lead to underperformance, damage to reputation, or even organizational extinction. The practical implications highlighted involve the imperative for managers to secure employee commitment to the firm's belief system, establish clear boundaries for activities that could jeopardize the firm, communicate strategy through metrics and incentives, and personally engage in decisions related to strategic threats and opportunities to shape the firm's future. The paper contributes value by providing contemporary examples of each lever and emphasizing the interdependence among them, offering practical guidance for managers seeking to navigate the complexities of strategy implementation.[8]

Provides a comprehensive guide to implementing organizational development (OD) interventions. Emphasizes that to adapt and thrive in today's business world, organizations need to implement effective OD interventions to improve performance and effectiveness at the individual, group, and organizational levels. OD interventions involve people, trust, support, shared power, conflict resolution, and stakeholders' participation. Note that OD interventions usually have a broader scope and can affect the whole organization.

Therefore, OD practitioners or change agents must have a solid understanding of different OD interventions to select the most appropriate one to fulfill the client's needs. OD practitioners and change agents a step-by-step approach to implementing OD interventions and includes example cases, practical tools, and guidelines for different OD interventions. It focuses on how to successfully implement organizational changes, as roughly 65% of organizational change projects fail due to ineffective implementation. Individual, group, and organizational levels of OD interventions, and addresses broader OD intervention efforts at industry and community levels. Each chapter provides practical information about general OD interventions, supplies best practice examples and case studies, summarizes the results of best practices, provides at least one case scenario, and offers at least one relevant tool for practitioners.[5]

In today's challenging economy, business analytics and big data have become more and more ubiquitous. While some businesses don't even know where to start, others are struggling to move from beyond basic reporting. The book focuses on integrating multiple types of intelligence, such as web analytics, customer feedback, competitive intelligence, customer behavior, and industry intelligence into your business practice. It provides the essential concept and framework to implement business analytics. The book is written clearly for a non-technical audience and is filled with case studies across a variety of industries. It uniquely focuses on integrating multiple types of big data intelligence into your business. [1]

A simple system to empower everyone in your company to be focused, aligned, and accountable. This system is a three-rhythm process for effective execution: Think Rhythm: A rhythm of strategic thinking to keep your teams focused and working on the future of your business. Plan Rhythm: A rhythm of planning that will allow you to choose the right priorities and get your departments or divisions aligned with those priorities. Do Rhythm: A rhythm of executing your plan and making effective and timely adjustments every week. [11]

This study investigates how business-to-business (B2B) firms navigate contexts of unexpected uncertainty. Building on the theories of effectuation and dynamic capabilities, the study develops a model that highlights how effectual decision-making logic is manifested in the activities B2B firms employ to sense and seize new opportunities and threats and transform existing business operations. The qualitative data were collected in two phases (before and after the COVID-19 outbreak) and consisted of 24 interviews with 13 B2B firms. The findings demonstrate a strong reliance on managers' effectual decision-making in situations of unexpected uncertainty and provide a set of key activities that help managers to respond to such situations in a rapid and agile manner.[3]

Hold true for most executives around the world, although the traditionally slow consensus-building practices of Japanese managers may not agree with the second half of his quote. We can say with conviction that the process of decision-making (that is, how and when to decide) is still a critical leadership task. Furthermore, we believe that the decision-making process is greatly influenced not only by the organization's culture but also by national cultures and their unique contexts.[4]

A disciplined process model for making strategy work in the real world. It sheds light on why execution is even more important than many senior executives realize, and why businesses fail to deliver on even their most promising strategies. A systematic roadmap for execution that encompasses every key success factor: 1)Organizational structure 2) Coordination 3) Information sharing 4) Incentives 5) Controls 6) Change management 7) Culture 8) The role of power and influence in the execution process[2]

Strategy execution depends on following factors: 1) Execution and Alignment: The authors debunk the myth that execution equals alignment. While processes to align activities with strategy up and down the hierarchy are generally sound, the real problem is coordination.

2) Adapting to Change: Execution doesn't mean sticking to the plan. Changing market conditions demand agility.

3) Communication and Understanding: Communication doesn't equal understanding. Despite relentless emails and meetings about strategy, executives often change and dilute their messages. Only half of middle managers can name any of their company's top five priorities.

- 4) Performance Culture: A performance culture doesn't solely drive execution. Companies need to reward other things, too, including agility, teamwork, and ambition.
- 5) Execution from the Top: Execution shouldn't just be driven from the top. It lives and dies with managers in the middle, but they are often hamstrung by poor communication from above.[10]

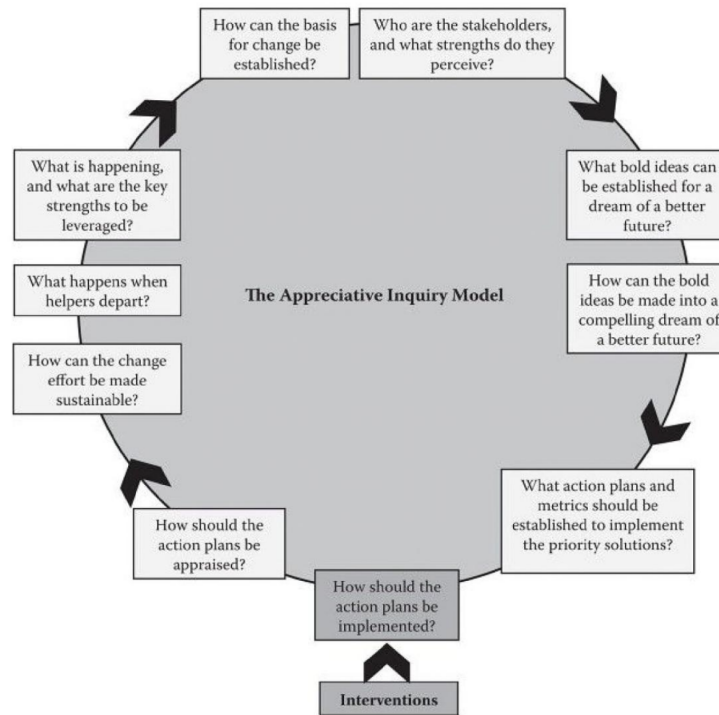


Figure 1: The Appreciative Inquiry Model [5]

3 METHODS & METHODOLOGY

3.1 How did we approach the problem?

To address the problem we took a systematic and collaborative approach. we began with problem definition, defining and understanding the problem is very important. This involves breaking down the issue into smaller components and identifying the specific challenges. The second part is research and analysis, extensive research was conducted to gather relevant information and insights related to the problem. The third plan is cross-functional collaboration, recognizing the complexity of the problem, we fostered collaboration among cross-functional teams. This approach allowed us to leverage diverse expertise and perspectives, ensuring a well-rounded analysis and solution development. Last the implement the plan, the final phase of our approach involved developing a detailed implementation plan. This plan outlined the steps to be taken, assigned responsibilities, and set timelines to ensure a smooth execution of the proposed solution.

3.2 What techniques are used in analysis of results

The analysis of results involves different approaches: 1) Quantitative Analysis of execution metrics: for the effective decision one of the most important parameters is key performance indicators which evaluate the impact of decisions by analyzing relevant KPIs. 2) Surveys and feedback analysis, collected feedback from team members after a decision has been executed. 3) Comparative analysis: Compare the outcomes of the current decision with similar decisions made in the past.

4 Results Obtained

4.1 Under what conditions

The study identified specific conditions under which effective decision-sharing significantly contributes to successful team execution:

Clear Decision Clarification: Teams that invested time and effort in clearly defining decisions experienced smoother execution. Ambiguity in decision statements led to confusion and hindered effective implementation.

Proactive Decision-Making Communication: Teams that communicated the decision-making process in advance reported better-prepared team members. This proactive communication facilitated thoughtful contributions and diverse perspectives, enhancing decision quality.

Empowered Decision Makers: When decision-makers were clearly identified and empowered, execution was more efficient. Delegating decision-making responsibilities, especially to non-managerial roles, contributed to a more autonomous and accountable team.

4.2 Constraints

Several constraints were identified that could impede effective decision-sharing and subsequent execution:

Lack of Time for Decision Clarification: In fast-paced environments, teams faced challenges in allocating sufficient time to clarify decisions. This time constraint often resulted in vague decision statements, leading to misunderstandings.

Resistance to Delegated Decision-Making: Some teams struggled with embracing delegated decision-making, particularly if there was a prevailing belief that decisions should always come from higher management. Overcoming this resistance was crucial for building a more empowered team.

Inadequate Documentation Practices: Teams faced difficulties in promptly updating relevant documents and workflows after a decision was made. This constraint hindered the establishment of a clear record and affected future reference and alignment.

4.3 Quality

The quality of decision-sharing was assessed based on several key indicators:

Alignment and Consistency: Teams that effectively shared decisions experienced a higher degree of alignment among team members. Consistent communication of decision details contributed to a shared understanding of goals and objectives.

Timely Execution: Decision-sharing practices that emphasized proactive communication and empowered decision-makers resulted in more timely execution. Teams could swiftly implement decisions without unnecessary delays.

Reduced Misunderstandings: Clarity in decision statements and proactive communication reduced the likelihood of misunderstandings. Teams that invested in intentional communication practices observed fewer instances of diverse interpretations among team members.

5 Conclusions and Future Works

5.1 Suggested Improvements

Enhanced Training Programs: Implementing comprehensive training programs to equip team members with effective decision-sharing skills, emphasizing the importance of clear communication and documentation.

Technological Solutions: Exploring and integrating technological solutions for decision documentation, ensuring real-time updates and accessibility for all team members, thereby improving overall communication efficiency.

5.2 Limitations to solution

Resource Constraints: Implementation of technological solutions may be constrained by resource availability, both in terms of financial investment and technological infrastructure. Teams must carefully consider the feasibility of such enhancements.

Cultural Resistance: Teams may face resistance to changes in decision-sharing practices, particularly if there is a deeply ingrained organizational culture. Overcoming this resistance requires careful change management strategies.

External Factors: The external environment, including market dynamics and industry-specific challenges, can impact the effectiveness of decision-sharing practices. Teams should remain adaptive and responsive to external influences.

5.3 Applications in real world

Organizational Performance: Improved decision-sharing contributes to enhanced organizational performance by ensuring that teams are aligned and execute decisions efficiently. This positively impacts overall productivity and effectiveness.

Conflict Resolution: Clear communication of decisions reduces the likelihood of misunderstandings and conflicts within teams. Effective decision-sharing serves as a preventive measure against disputes that may arise due to ambiguous directives.

Strategic Adaptation: Teams equipped with robust decision-sharing practices are better positioned to adapt to changing circumstances. This adaptability is crucial in dynamic industries where agility and responsiveness are key to success.

5.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the study underscores the critical role of effective decision-sharing in achieving successful team execution. The suggested improvements, while addressing key challenges, need to be implemented judiciously considering the identified limitations. The real-world applications emphasize the tangible benefits of intentional decision-sharing for organizational performance and adaptability. As organizations navigate the complexities of decision-making, fostering a culture of clarity, transparency, and accountability in decision-sharing practices emerges as a foundational element for sustained success.

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Acknowledgements:

1. chatGPT: Write a generalized abstract for a given topic.
2. For the given report, what kind of results we can obtain?
3. What are the suggested improvements of this report and what are the applications in the real world?
4. Can you please summarize the report and write conclusion?