

1. Describe and discuss the three identified methods of decision-making and explain with examples how and when each might be appropriate models to use.

Decision-making consists of three identified methods, which can each be used independently of one another. The decision-making methods are the scientific method, the satisfying method, and the emotional method. (Warner) If an individual is going to think through a problem thoroughly and logically, then she will most likely use the scientific method. Being the logical method for decision-making, the scientific method provides individuals with a process for coming to a conclusion about what should be done in any given situation. First, the individual must determine what the problem is. (Warner) Afterward, it is necessary to think about the different solutions available, examine the potential outcomes, make a choice, and follow through with the selected choice. (Warner) An example where this logical method pays dividends is in a young adult's career options following high school. The individual should consider his options, which include working full-time, or going to college, or going into the military, among the alternatives. In making his decision, the young adult will compare the options with one another in terms of short-term and long-term gains, as well as desires, abilities, and economic factors. Ideally, the individual will make a well-reasoned decision. Rather than making an emotional decision, using logic provides a solid foundation to what the individual decides. Unfortunately, this process can take a while, as there may be several alternative solutions to evaluate. In an environment where time is critical, a thorough use of the scientific method may be impractical.

If the scientific method is too cumbersome, the individual can attempt to use the satisfying method. This method is for expediency, in that the individual makes a choice and follows through with it. If the consequences are undesirable, then the individual will choose another solution and try again in a manner of trial and error. (Warner) The satisfying method works, for example, in building prototypes. Suppose an engineer is working on a new product and needs to tinker with various concepts in order to determine the best method. In an effort to find the best method, she will go through a series of trial-and-error tests. In this manner, she will empirically build a case for a particular method to use in the development of the product. Although this method provides for quick turnaround in decision-making, it can lead to precarious outcomes depending on the nature of the situations.

If neither the scientific nor the satisfying methods are palatable, then the individual can pursue a decision via the emotional method. This method is used without reasoning through alternative solutions. Individuals make emotional decisions when they react without thinking clearly about a problem. Oftentimes, they fail to properly identify the problem. (Warner) The emotional method is really more of an irrational response to a situation. However, the emotional method serves an important role in decision-making when used appropriately. The emotional method certainly played a role in the United States' response to the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941. Many young men and women dedicated themselves to serving their country based on their love for it. It was a decision reached based on emotion as much as it was based on logical thinking. Without so many individuals using the emotional method, World War II might have been much different.

2. Explain why problem identification is so critical to decision making.

Problem identification is very critical to decision making, because the actual problem must be understood before any solution can be pursued. Knowing the problem is the starting point for decision making, which is also known as problem solving. Many times when individuals face dilemmas, they may feel obligated to make decisions without having a full understanding of the problem. Such decisions made in rush fashion can be problematic, as incorrect assumptions are made. In fact, identifying the problem can lead to making mistakes, as it is the major factor in decision making. (Warner) To identify the problem, individuals must ask questions to elicit information that will be helpful in identifying what exactly the problem is. Sometimes people uncover symptoms that they believe are the problems when in fact the symptoms belie a much greater problem. In the realm of software development, it is especially critical to the success of a project that the problem is identified before actually building the software. It is much less costly to identify the problem early on rather than finding out about it during the testing cycle or when people are actually using the software. (McConnell, 2004, 472) In addition, for safety-critical software, identifying the problem early on can save lives once the software is in production use.

3. Explain why decision-making and change are synonymous.

Often, when decisions are made, existing situations are changed, which means decision-making is used to bring about change. While some decisions are made to reaffirm the status quo, many decisions enact

change to the status quo. The idea is to make a decision to improve a situation, or bring about positive change. Sometimes decisions create negative change in the beginning, but are designed to achieve long-term positive goals, depending on who implements the change. Unfortunately, the thought of change can be unpleasant to people, which causes them to be resistant to new decisions, especially when the changes are out of their control. (Warner) Despite people's views of change, it can be forced on them. Lack of control over decision-making and change causes people to respond with resistance, acceptance, or indifference.

(Warner) Such a response will depend on how decisions impact the lives of people. If dealt with improperly, changes can cause people to develop psychological problems. It can also cause people to change their behaviors. Some people may feel that specific changes are designed to benefit others and not them, which can cause resistance.

(Warner) For example, if an employer had union workers and non-union workers, it's possible that the union workers would find offense to any raise or increase in benefit earned by non-union workers. Any changes in the status quo may cause the union itself to make new demands of the employers.

4. Discuss the "consequences" that should be considered relative to change.

Some consequences should be considered relative to change, especially when they are the result of decisions made. Depending on the situation, people may be resistant to change, which can be a very negative consequence of change. Indeed, there may be strong resistance to change despite careful consideration for various parties' needs.

(Warner) Among the consequences is the idea that not everything will

be considered by those making the decisions. Certain people may benefit from decisions, while other people are at a disadvantage as a result of the change. The people experiencing disadvantage may see the differences and develop extreme dislike for the change, in what is termed the benefit-contribution disequilibrium. (Warner) Depending on the parties, a benefit to one group may need to be granted to other groups to avoid dissatisfaction. This idea of keeping groups on the same level is referred to as parity. (Warner) In the event that groups are given new benefits, the groups will want to know how the new benefits compare. The Principle of Relative Deprivation holds that if one group is granted slightly better benefits than other groups, the other groups will feel deprived as a result. (Warner) When legislators give tax breaks to a segment of the population but not to other segments, this is considered class warfare and is a consequence of decision making. When legislators are up for re-election, voters might remember how the legislators voted on issues. It could be positive or negative for politicians, depending on which part of the population is voting.

5. Explain how timing is critical to decision making.

In decision making, timing is very critical in that it is necessary to implement decisions at appropriate times. Selecting the wrong time to make a decision can have negative consequences. Despite the need to make decisions in a timely manner, if people have doubts, then the decisions may not be made. (Warner) Part of the problem is identifying the appropriate time to make a decision. This means that actions can be applied too soon or they can be applied too late. It

behooves those who make decisions to analyze timing for decision making, because in some cases, good timing leads to good judgment in decision making. (Warner) A perfect example of the critical nature of timing to decision making can be witnessed everyday in the stock market. Every day, people decide when to purchase shares of stock in a corporation. If people purchase shares at a high price, it's likely that they will lose money. Conversely, timing a decision to buy stock at a lower price might be profitable to investors. The idea of buying low and selling high contains the unmentioned element of timing the decisions to buy or sell.

6. After reading Case #11, choose the 5 people you would select to live and explain why. What decision-making method did you use?

From Warner Case Study #11, the five people I would select to live are the medical student, the young woman, the accountant, the nun-schoolteacher, and the nuclear physicist. In making my selections, I used the scientific method in reasoning which people would provide the most value after a nuclear war. I also used the emotional method to select people. A person who possesses medical knowledge is absolutely necessary, as he can provide medical care to the survivors. This selection is a logical choice. The pregnant young woman and the accountant are a young family, which is an emotional method choice. It is also a logical choice, because the young woman is pregnant. Given a successful birth, she will bring another person into the world. With the precarious, post-nuclear war world, the young mother will need her husband to help care for the child. To add to the logical method, the medical student might be able to help deliver the baby should it be born while the people are in the shelter. The nun-schoolteacher and

the priest overlap one another. They both provide spiritual support to people while they are in the shelter and after they come out of the shelter. The reason for selecting the nun-schoolteacher is that she also has the skill of a schoolteacher, which will be necessary for the future children of survivors. The final selection is the nuclear physicist. This person should possess some knowledge about how to deal with a world after nuclear war. The musician, the athlete, and the dancer bring less value after the shelter than the ones selected. The tough omission is the policeman. A veteran policeman could provide protection and order to the post-nuclear war, but that is according to the law. A post-nuclear war may require very different laws. Thus, the people selected carry more value in the shelter and the post-nuclear war.

7. After reading Case #9, assume the role of the president. What action would you take in this situation? Explain your rationale.

In Warner Case Study #9, in the role of the president, I would apply the logical decision-making method in recommending a policy position for the continuation of background checks on current employees and potential employees, perhaps with modifications. First of all, the merchandise that Diamond Find sells is very valuable jewelry. The company has to exercise measures to protect their inventory, including any legal methods. Since background checks are legal, they are also ethical practice. As long as the company informs current and potential employees that they perform background checks, it is perfectly acceptable that they continue this policy. Now, to prevent well-qualified employees from leaving the company, modifications to the policy may be necessary. Here, I would consult with employees about

what they consider unfair practices. For example, it may be unnecessary to continue regularly scheduled polygraph tests for long-time employees. However, pre-employment polygraph tests remain as part of the policy. Depending on what personal data has been collected in the past, it may be acceptable to limit what information is gathered from employees. The goal is to determine the potential for employees to commit theft. Certain pieces of personal data may not be necessary to determine this.

8. Using the website address <http://ethics.sandiego.edu/index.asp> as your reference. Visit one of the sites in the "Applied Ethics" section (there are about 11 ethical "topics" such as abortion, animal rights, euthanasia, etc.) and critique the site using the information learned in this section. Critique meaning to examine content, layout, ease of use, quality of information, etc.

On the University of San Diego's Ethics website, a section is devoted to poverty and welfare. The poverty and welfare site contains a list of hyperlink resources and non-hyperlinked resources that visitors can reference. The site also contains hyperlinks to surveys and a bibliography. The content is very appropriate to the subject matter, as the hyperlinks contain related information to poverty and welfare. The layout of the site is simple, as the main part is dedicated to hyperlinks and text. At the top of the site is a set of drop-down lists that take the visitors away from the subject of poverty and welfare subject. With the simple layout, the site is very easy to use. It's just a matter of reading and clicking on hyperlinks. The content is merely references to other documents about poverty and welfare. The site has a high quality of information with the hyperlinks to documents on MIT's website and other relevant websites. Going to one of the links on the site, The Heritage Foundation, a plethora of information is available about poverty and welfare. At the Heritage Foundation, articles

discuss policies for welfare, reducing poverty, and abstinence education.

Another quality link is to the website of Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, which contains articles on budgetary issues, Social Security, and income gaps. With the poverty and welfare information presented by the University of San Diego's website and referenced hyperlinks.

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