

Intuitive Decision-Making

One of the challenges for a project manager is making decisions that can significantly impact the success or failure of the project. While data and analysis help a project manager make informed decisions, there are times when the project manager may need to rely on intuition to make decisions because not enough data is available.

In today's business landscape, where it may not be easy to meet with team members and stakeholders in person, trusting one's intuition can be invaluable.

Objectives

After completing this reading, you will be able to:

- Describe the need for intuitive decision-making when managing projects
- Explain how to use four types of thought patterns to validate decisions made based on one's intuition

Need for Intuitive Decision-Making

Sometimes in high-pressure or time-dependent situations, a project manager doesn't have enough time to analyze all available data. Yet, when a project manager must make an immediate decision, the project manager must make decisions based on their intuition. A project manager relies on things like their past experiences and emotional intelligence. In part, emotional intelligence is the ability to interpret the emotions of others effectively. Sometimes, it is necessary to gauge others' feelings and incorporate that understanding into the decision-making process. Also, a project manager may need to depend on their emotions, which are automated reactions based on experience, because otherwise, the project manager doesn't have enough explicit information. Learn to trust your intuitive reaction.

A project manager may have to make quick decisions to reduce the impact of various issues on the project. In these situations, relying on one's instincts can help make quick decisions that can be critical to the success of the situation. The more knowledge and experience a project manager has, the more the intuitive instincts come from sound reasoning and informed decision-making.

To help a project manager feel comfortable with their intuition-based decisions, knowing one's thinking patterns and preferences can be helpful. What kind of evidence do you need to trust your intuition?

Ned Hermann's whole brain model

According to Ned Hermann's whole brain model, there are four categories of thought patterns: analytical, practical, relational, and experimental. Knowing your thought patterns when making decisions will help you trust your judgment when relying on your intuition.

If an individual is an analytical thinker, they will feel most comfortable taking a logical approach to decision-making. Ask yourself such questions as, "What factors will indicate the solution is on track?" "What are the possible root causes of the problem?" "What aspects indicate a need for change?" and "Are those indicators subjective or objective?"

If an individual is a practical thinker, their thinking is organized, detailed, and structured. They focus on a method to solve a problem. Practical thinkers feel most comfortable following a plan in problem-solving and avoiding pitfalls. They effectively manage their feelings when making decisions to ensure the actions are focused.

Relational thinkers will trust their intuition when solving problems by getting a sense of the problem through the eyes of the people the issue affects the most. They carefully gauge choices and decisions by listening to the tone of interactions and reactions of the people involved.

Finally, experimental thinkers will trust their intuition when making innovative and creative choices. They like to understand how their decisions affect the big picture. They prefer to explore and consider possibilities before making a choice. A project manager will also find times when they must trust someone else's intuition. Understanding their thought pattern preferences according to the whole brain model may also help you evaluate their decisions when you have little else to go on.

A project manager must assess the potential risks and benefits of the decision based on the thought patterns as a basis for evaluation. A project manager must ask questions, express concerns, and try to understand others' perspectives. If their thought pattern preference is different, it may be helpful to justify their decision by asking them questions based on one's preferred thought pattern category.

Conclusion

The need for decision-making based on intuition arises in time-dependent situations when there is not enough time to gather all the relevant data. It is helpful to understand the four categories of thought patterns when justifying intuitive decisions. The categories include analytical, practical, relational, and experimental thinking.