

## Prompt

***1. Please share 1) some specific scenarios where you face difficulties to be decisive, or 2) some examples of decision-making practices (good or not good) in your company, organization, or community.***

This situation of making decisions without all the data will always be on our plate, and I am sure because you have a DiSC-style SC/CS like me, this may cause us some anxiety. I was exploring [this articleLinks to an external site.](#), and it looks interesting.

Good luck!

Jose

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Hello Russel,

I relate to your case because I have faced the same scenario. In one opportunity, we were in a project stuck for a decision, and each stakeholder sought a different option. Because it was so important to have a decision, we agreed to use a Delphi technique to reach an agreement. This allowed us to narrow the options and then get a consensus based on fewer options.

Best wishes!

Jose

Kristopher,

Have you considered implementing a rotation system to distribute travel more evenly among the team? This could help mitigate burnout and provide junior engineers with valuable experience while also addressing the skill gaps that arise from frequent travel.

Jose,

It sounds like a tough situation. Have you considered a more structured feedback mechanism to address the finance consultant's issues? Sometimes a formal review process can help uncover underlying problems and facilitate a resolution before deciding on replacement.

Amir

Reply from Amirhossein Afrasiabi

In my role, managing project deadlines is particularly challenging when multiple stakeholders have conflicting priorities. For instance, coordinating between different departments to meet a unified deadline often results in delays and compromises. Additionally, decision-making is hampered by unclear communication channels, causing extended approval times. For example, when teams use an ad-hoc approach to prioritize tasks, it often results in missed deadlines and inefficiencies. In contrast, a more systematic, democratic approach has proven effective in similar situations, improving overall efficiency and reducing delays.

Reply from Jose Peraza Juarez

I was running an SAP Implementation for an Oil Company in Barbados. I had assigned a few consultants to the projects, and we needed to catch up, so the finance consultant started to have a toxic attitude. Despite several conversations with her trying to identify if she was having any issues, she was not sharing anything, and even worse, she started to propagate her frustration to the rest of the team.

The question would be whether I should keep her and risk affecting the team's morale or replace her with the possible consequences in terms of image and cost.

Reply from Xiaomin Yang

There have been many genuine and generous class discussions, which reveal a strong collaborative learning culture. This is fantastic. I've noticed that many discussions focus on specific personal experiences at work.

I encourage you to also reflect on decision-making from a process perspective, whether personal or organizational. Consider why you prefer a particular approach, such as democratic, empathetic, or impulsive decision-making. Is it a conscious choice, your natural way of doing things, or perhaps following the example of other leaders?

Throughout the course, take the time to examine your decision-making 'habits.' Ask yourself what's working well and what might be missing. The goal is to develop a systematic decision-making process, supported by useful tools.

XY

Reply from Russell Floyd

Marrah,

I have worked at places that we went through this. I can definitely relate. Building back trust of clients, whether internal or external is often hard to do.

Kristopher,

What would you do to make it so there is no burnout?

Russell Floyd

In my organization, Procon Consulting, I often face difficulties in decision-making during team meetings with conflicting opinions from different people in different roles. A perfect example of this is when we are working on a process flows, and there are differing opinions on which way the flows should go. With so many people involved in the decision-making process, it often leads to paralysis by analysis. Additionally, I've observed that involving too many stakeholders in minor decisions can slow down progress and create confusion.

[Russell Floyd - Module 1 Discussion - Section 700.docx](#)

Andrew,

How did you come up with this decision? Was it collaborative? Did you use data analysis to solve this problem?

Michelle,

I understand it is hard coming back to a place when others haven't gone through the same trainings. One thing that could help would be to engage with your colleagues about your week. How did it go? What did you learn? What are you implementing to better yourself? Make this a discussion so others can see the improvements and the willingness that you are portraying.

Reply from Ivana Romero

I have had to work closely with the techs at my job. This requires trust between us. I was a newer employee and they have been there for years. They taught me a lot of what was going on but in the end, I would be the one that would have to make decisions. When working in a team I have always wanted to bring everyone together. Allow others to discuss their ideas and concerns, listen then finally say what I was thinking after taking in what they said. This has worked well for me when leading a team. Everyone feels respected and heard.

Chris,

your team culture is truly impressive, and it's something I aspire to achieve. Trusting the perspectives of team members and valuing their input is crucial. In my organization, the

previous MD had a different approach—he would often present counter-arguments just for the sake of it. His philosophy was to raise opposing opinions at least three times, even considering very unlikely scenarios. This approach often delayed the decision-making process and made it seem like he was trying to avoid accountability.

John, I can't imagine how difficult it must be to lay off your team members. You're right—technical decisions, like the troubleshooting tasks I'm currently assigned, are quantifiable and somewhat easier to navigate. However, making choices that impact the lives and stability of employees and their families is incredibly challenging. It's a burden that goes beyond numbers and deeply affects us.

Kristopher Marrou,

To answer your question, no unfortunately my manager does not come to the team for a proposed solution. He will involve us to figure out how to solve the problem in a way that appeases the outside influence, when we should instead focus on solving the problem itself. It always discourages the team because like you said, as engineers doing the work we have the inside knowledge, and that knowledge isn't capitalized on.

To comment on the scenario you are facing, does Lockheed allow for you to pair senior engineers with junior engineers for the travel work? My guess is no, since the travel expense could become too great to manage, but it would be an effective way to keep everyone up to speed, and allow for more versatility among the team, without sacrificing effectiveness during the travel event.

Reply from Aaron Smith

Marrah,

I am glad that you have learned that it is okay to say "no" and stand your ground when needed. In my company, I have a lot of respect from our managers who challenge my ways, and not just be a yes man. I wish I had a crystal ball, because then I could make the best decisions every time. If there is a major decision that needs to be made, a professional and rational discussion really helps. However, if there is an impulsive person in the group, situations can turn toxic real quick.

Reply from Aaron Smith

Jason Nunn,

Having to terminate someone's employment can be very hard. In my situation, the difficulty of firing someone usually tends on the reason for the termination. It is one thing, if the person is

just not working out or causing issues. It's another when as company the decision has been made to scale back. In both situations, I just try to be as professional and honest as I can.

Arron Smith

I am the opposite in my job - I make my decisions based on the data I collect. Even though we get made fun of in the government, we do collect a lot of data especially at the national labs. But I will say that like you, the compilation and sorting of data is an issue at the labs as well.

Reply from Michelle Foster

[Zoltan Csibi](#),

Like you - it is pretty easy for me to make a decision even if it is wrong as we say in the South. I get the data I need and then I make a decision. I may have to pivot, but I can make a decision. Great input.

I get what you are saying too about the way management is especially with communication. I think that is why they are encouraging so many managers to go through the METM so that they can be better communicator.

Reply from Michelle Foster

1. The scenario I came up with was how I would approach the team after Residency week and the Emotional Intelligence feedback. My feedback was that I sometimes get snippy with my colleagues, and they felt that I needed to focus on my Emotional Response. Unlike most people, I express too much of an emotional response instead of not enough emotion.
2. An example of a good decision-making practice at our company is the decision to utilize asset management techniques to improve machine reliability at LANL. Los Alamos was established in the 1940s and there is a lot of aging equipment at the facility that needs upgrading and care. Our team feels like that this effort will improve equipment

John,

You have to agree that bad decisions make good stories later on. It is impossible to make good decisions all the time. Decisions with not so great outcomes will always teach us a lesson, and contribute to built experience and expertise.

Two negative qualities of your former leader stood out to me: impulsive and upper management-pleasing. It is difficult for a mid-level manager to cater both to his/her management and direct reports. Me as a team leader tend to favor my team members and represent their needs.

Reply from Zoltan Csibi

1. In general I don't face difficulties to be decisive. Making a decision usually comes easily to me, and never really struggled with it. The more expertise I have in the certain subject, the easier is to decide.

2. I do see at my company some decisions coming from above that were not discussed or consulted with employees. The worst, they were not properly communicated out, and people found out about them first in hallways and rumors. I don't agree with this type of decision making.

Jeongmoon,

Risk mitigation can definitely be tricky to manage, but I believe you are absolutely correct, safety should always be the top priority. Lockheed takes foreign object debris (FOD) prevention especially serious for this reason. FOD can bring a plane down from the inside as quickly as an enemy can from the outside, so many decisions are often made to slow processes down in order to ensure that proper FOD prevention methodologies are being followed. Safety is everyone's responsibility!

Mark,

Outside influence can definitely lead to poorly executed plans or products. As leaders, I feel that we are stewards for our team, and that includes opening up discussions at all levels for people within the team to propose solutions to problems that are brought forth. Before conceding, did your manager ever approach your team on your proposed solutions? As the engineers doing the work, your team likely has the best inside knowledge of how to come up with a solution that would have made everyone happy.

Reply from Kristopher Marrou

In my team at Lockheed we have multiple recurring events where we must send engineers outside of Fort Worth to conduct integration or flight events with our radio hardware. The decision on who travels is based upon skill and experience. While this is sound because skilled engineers are needed to resolve issues, it has led to a select group of engineers far out experiencing more junior engineers. This group has begun suffering from burnout and have deteriorating in other skill areas because they have not trained often enough in those areas due to being out of the office so often.

Reply from John Watkins

Marrah,

I have been in your situation several times in my career, with impulsive supervisors that are solely focused on goals and overlook how to get there or worry about their people. My General Manager at the Paper Mill was very impulsive, because the Paper & Pulp Industry is very production driven. We worked 40 hour weeks, plus one weekend a month, plus an annual shut down of 12 hour days. All these hours would cause burnout and increase our safety risks due to fatigue. The General Manager had to learn to put safety first over production, which was instilled in every project. I have had to confront different supervisors before about their impulsive decisions and the consequences, and in the end they always appreciate it.

Reply from John Watkins

Christopher,

I know what you mean about being new into a position and having to make those tough decisions, because a the new person you do not want to mess up. I think what makes that situation more difficult is when you do not have the support you need or all the information required to make a well informed decision. It sounds like you have a great team and very supportive team. I have found that always helps when making those decisions, just knowing that they have your back and trust you. It also builds your confidence for future decisions that you have to make.

Reply from John Watkins

I have had to make some difficult decisions throughout my career in the engineering field, some were the right decision and some were not. First, I think about my previous job at the Paper Mill in South Carolina, which operates 24/7 around the clock. My decisions at that job were driven by cost and schedule, and ultimately by the impact to production. I was in charge of maintaining all the storage tanks and pressure vessels in the Mill, so luckily I had inspection data to help make decisions weather to repair, replace, or continue in service. My first project at the Mill was to clean the inside of a storage tank that had not been cleaned in twenty years. My decision was a poor decision due to the fact that I did not have enough information to choose the most efficient method to accomplish or succeed. On the flip side, I made several correct decisions at the Mill and had many successful projects.

Reply from Jason Nunn

[Christopher Franco](#)

I know exactly where you are coming from. I too employ a democratic approach with my most experienced and knowledgeable team members. How did you balance getting the input from your team while also trying to gain the confidence in your new SME position?

Reply from Jason Nunn

[Andrew Hartman](#)

I can 100% relate to this situation. We currently have a transformer getting right at 100% because that receives power from 2 solar generators and a new battery storage unit, which of course discharges at the afternoon peak to take advantage of prices. We made the difficult choice of allow the transformer to go to 105% for less than 2 hours during peak to allow the 3 generators to maximize their generation at an optimal time. Excellent for on getting the feeders down to 98% during the Texas summers.

Manage Discussion by Christopher Franco

Reply from Christopher Franco

Marrah,

Did you notice that your coworkers or yourself were intentionally left out of discussions or that their opinions didn't matter when that leader was making those impulsive decisions? What ended up being the reason change started to happen?

Reply from Christopher Franco

Jeongmoon,

I have been in those shoes in prior roles. Something that LANL has been pushing heavily is called the Safe Conduct of Research Principles, which focus on safety. It takes the entire organization to adopt the mindset that safety is the primary goal, and nothing is worth potential safety risks.

Reply from Christopher Franco

I face difficulties to be decisive when I feel as though I don't have enough information: I had taken over as the subject matter expert for some test procedures & equipment about 6 months after being hired in my current position because the previous SMEs suddenly left. Being new, I was very hesitant to make decisions regarding the use and maintenance of it which needed to be done immediately.

On my team, we have a very democratic approach to making decisions. We all recognize that each other has a significant amount of knowledge and our project lead relies on that. During our Monday meetings, problems are laid out and discussed, but he ultimately trusts the decisions we make as SMEs. We are also very open to suggestions or constructive criticism, again because we all trust each other and have a shared vision and pride in the work.

Reply from Mark Richie

Marrah Boschelli-



I can relate to your story very well. While my leader is not impulsive, he is not a decision maker and instead follows the impulses of other leaders. This has caused my team to be insubordinate on many initiatives because we can see the end result of a bad decision, and we choose to make different (better) decisions for our local team.

Reply from Mark Richie

Aaron Smith-

One thing we started doing at our company is picking jobs at random and doing deep dives on the data we have on those projects. We are fortunate to have software to compile our data, but it often becomes an information overload when looking at all projects. By reducing the data to a small group of random projects, we minimize the data being utilized without losing too much resolution. This can help when the data is managed by hand.

Reply from Ken Cechura

Marrah Boshelli-

Saying "no" to leadership or even other groups is a huge downfall for me, so I can certainly see how that could affect a team. It's good that you've become comfortable setting those boundaries to establish a quality result. Metrics can tell us a lot, but it certainly seems like metrics made to only tell "good" stories or made without taking all the data into account are the downfall of projects.

Reply from Joseph McCoy

1) In my role as an Architect I am often tasked with assisting customers with their software deployments where the customer mindset for how to deploy is at odds with how it should be deployed. If I am unable to challenge their mindset to change their initial deployment goal then they may not be fully protected or may end up in a state where they will require even more work later.

2) When I worked as a sales manager at a car dealership we were capped to how much profit we could make per car deal. The owner set guidelines that meant that made less short term profit, but earned more referral and repeat business.

While selling insurance the managers gated incoming customer calls from specific area codes where there was a higher percentage of "good" customers. The best leads often went to the people that socialized with the managers creating an environment where agents often spent as much time heaping attention on the bosses as they did taking care of customers.

[Ken Cechura](#)

Reply from Ken Cechura

Aaron Smith-

Is your data primarily numerical, or is it something that is more qualitative? For a small company, concentrating data into a database, like MS Access, may allow you to see the patterns you need to make better informed decisions. Some of the departments I've worked in used this type of solution to forecast work and personnel needs, though it required a little bit of VBA to do some math.

Reply from Ken Cechura

I have been at two different companies that require the business case for capital allocations to be made when applying for the purchases, in order for more senior leadership to determine what items make the cut. Using this data was a good practice to justify what items were being purchased, but often cause issues when trying to build a justification the non-technical leadership several levels above us could understand.

One of the companies I worked for, in addition to request forms, also required a breakdown showing the potential alternatives, such as renting equipment, or procuring alternative items, as well as showing the return on investment as a time-phased chart on the request. This was not a bad practice, but often presented challenges if the return on investment didn't meet a leader's expectations, even if the item was necessary for continued operations, again, the struggle being how to describe the importance of an item to a non-technical leader.

Reply from Aaron Smith

In my company we are lacking on data driven decision making. As a small company, we do not have the software that can easily generate accurate job reports. We have all the data. It is just not easily compiled. Therefore, our major decisions are currently based on middle and end of year performance numbers.

Reply from Jose Saenz

With limited experience in the facility management expertise, my biggest observation of a process failing to work well is organizing project management procedures. I have seen the frustration from our civilian counterparts and the Level 3 contractors who run the projects from start to finish. What frustrates them, is the constant changing of requirements or additions to procedures depending on which organization is overall in charge of the buildings. We have three building locations, each with a different organization lead. Being unable to follow one direct line of completion for all buildings hampers the decision making process for our projects.

Reply from Marrah Boschelli

Robert Long,

Working to change the culture of a company can be quite hard. I think creating a CMMS system and using it to make informed decision would be so helpful. Giving them concrete data and even being able to show maintenance performed will help with the change. It has been a challenge for me to get buy in with our customers to trust us but once we have shown them the data we can put together about the life cycles, maintenance, and condition we have had a large shift in trust.

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Reply from Marrah Boschelli

Jason Nunn,

I can understand how hard it was to let someone go especially because it impacted their livelihood as well as having to admit you had hired the wrong person for the position. Basing the decision on the fact of performance metrics is a way to ensure it was based on facts and not just an impulse.

Reply from Marrah Boschelli

I am a part of a program that started with a leader who was impulsive. He was more focused on appeasing those at the top and reaching "goals". This quality led to poor metrics developed and reported. We have had to spend years rebuilding credibility and putting together process and procedures that ensure we do not fall to these things again. We have also had to establish standards for our individual site to ensure we are meeting the needs of our customers and those in leadership above us. I have learned that its okay to say no and push against things that do not align with what I know to be true.

Reply from Jeongmoon Kim

In my role as Head of Operations, I often face difficulties being decisive when dealing with complex safety issues on the offshore gas production platform. The need to balance operational efficiency with the highest safety standards can create challenging situations, especially when

decisions involve potential risks. However, safety is our top priority, so even if the decision-making process takes longer, I always strive to prioritize safety in every decision. This approach can sometimes lead to production delays and downtime, which I then need to justify to my director, making the decision-making process even more challenging.

Reply from Mark Richie

In my office, my management team has a habit of letting other departments make decisions for us, which often ends poorly. One of the operations managers in our region noticed old versions of our designs were being used in the field for install. He decided this was due to our engineering team's document naming standard and called for us to redefine that standard. Our manager decided to concede and we recreated our standard, which had no positive effect on the outcome. Implementing better document handling for the operations team would have been a better decision.

Reply from Xiaomin Yang

We will anchoring bias and confirmation bias in the next module. Jason and John, you may revisit your discussions after learning about these biases.

Reply from Robert Long

Jason Nunn,

I absolutely agree with Andrew H I work in a dangerous environment and have learned to load up and move a toolbox out of the plant so fast their heads will spin!

But seriously, The hardest firings for me are the ones that don't make it past the probation period. A couple of people knocked their interviews out of the park but would not perform once they started work. After a while, it becomes a chore to keep them motivated. I do lose sleep when that happens. Not only was I disappointed, but I also had to start the hiring process all over again.

Reply from Robert Long

John Daughtridge,

Thanks for the question. I have found that many younger companies do not use a CMMS, or if they do, they usually use a cheaper version. They will continue to "fight fires" until some equipment wears out and repairs start getting expensive. So, I was brought on board because the leadership team already has a business case for change. It is easy to create a plan to align with their business goals and choose the right software. Building a work order management

process and getting buy-in from key stakeholders on the shop floor can be difficult. Sustaining the process is even more challenging, especially with people who have been in the current state for 20 years. I've done it before, but not on this scale. It will be a lot of fun!

Reply from John Daughtridge

Jason Nunn -

You avoiding an anchoring bias and I commend your action against an employee you chose to hire. It's impressive you were able to reframe your opinion with new data related to his on the job performance, admit your first perspective of the employee was wrong and then take action to separate him from the job. Though I understand why it was difficult, well done!!!

Reply from John Daughtridge

Robert (r-c-long)

I'm intrigued in your experience at your new job. I too work in a manufacturing environment and would be befuddled to find expensive tooling without a CMMS to track cycles, consumable parts and service history. What plan do you have to get the greater organization onboard with change? How can you involve leadership in the decision to improve?

Reply from Andrew Hartman

John D., that is a rough way to start the week. I'm sorry you had to endure it. That scale of cut cannot be easy, especially if it's not related to their performance but just required cuts for downsizing. I hope I am never in that situation.

Reply from Andrew Hartman

Jason, I can see how you would not want to fire someone, especially if they have a family, but at the same time, you are responsible for his team's work. You are only responsible for his livelihood as long as he is performing. After that, it is his responsibility. It will never get easier unless you work in a dangerous work environment and the individual is unsafe; at that point, it gets really easy.

Reply from Andrew Hartman

In a previous role, I was responsible for monitoring feeder loading during the summer and coming up with solutions when the loading was expected to exceed 100 percent of the maximum rating. As a rule, I would try to prevent the loading from going over 95 percent, but it was very challenging when the temperatures were 104 degrees or higher. One feeder consistently sat at 100 percent, and there were limited options to offload some of the load. Most surrounding feeders had emergency capacity for hospitals in the area. However, we

activated all the capacitor banks along the feeder to increase voltage and reduce the overall load. Finally, we could offload a single-phase branch to another feeder and rebalance. After completing this, we kept the feeder around 98 percent for the rest of the summer.

Reply from Jason Nunn

I once faced a difficult decision when I had to fire an employee after 42 days—the first and only person I had hired as a new supervisor. I struggled to motivate him to perform his role effectively and was very hesitant about letting him go. This experience highlights a situation where I found it challenging to be decisive. I was concerned about his livelihood but knew he was going to cause extra work on my part as he only wanted to collect a paycheck.

Reply from Xiaomin Yang

Sorry hearing about your recent experience on this sensitive topic. While data analytics enhances decision making, human judgement still plays a large (unreplaceable) role in the high-impact decisions. Human understands the impacts of these decisions that deeply affect individuals' lives and the social justice.

Reply from Ken Cechura

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Jason, I can see how you would not want to fire someone, especially if they have a family, but at the same time, you are responsible for his team's work. You are only responsible for his livelihood as long as he is performing. After that, it is his responsibility. It will never get easier unless you work in a dangerous work environment and the individual is unsafe; at that point, it gets really easy.

Andrew Hartman

In a previous role, I was responsible for monitoring feeder loading during the summer and coming up with solutions when the loading was expected to exceed 100 percent of the maximum rating. As a rule, I would try to prevent the loading from going over 95 percent, but it was very challenging when the temperatures were 104 degrees or higher. One feeder consistently sat at 100 percent, and there were limited options to offload some of the load. Most surrounding feeders had emergency capacity for hospitals in the area. However, we activated all the capacitor banks along the feeder to increase voltage and reduce the overall load. Finally, we could offload a single-phase branch to another feeder and rebalance. After completing this, we kept the feeder around 98 percent for the rest of the summer.

Jason Nunn

I once faced a difficult decision when I had to fire an employee after 42 days—the first and only person I had hired as a new supervisor. I struggled to motivate him to perform his role effectively and was very hesitant about letting him go. This experience highlights a situation where I found it challenging to be decisive. I was concerned about his livelihood but knew he was going to cause extra work on my part as he only wanted to collect a paycheck.

Xiaomin Yang

Sorry hearing about your recent experience on this sensitive topic. While data analytics enhances decision making, human judgement still plays a large (unreplaceable) role in the high-impact decisions. Human understands the impacts of these decisions that deeply affect individuals' lives and the social justice.