

Kacie Fischer

Aug 19, 2020Aug 19 at 6:08pm

Although I am new to my company and position, I have seen many examples of good and bad decision making in the control room. I work in the Transmission Grid Management division of Oncor, an electric delivery company many of you may be familiar with. Our job is to maintain grid reliability and perform preventative/corrective switching safely. One thing I've observed here at my company compared with my previous naval career, is how little supervision the controllers truly have. The nature of our job depends upon this. We have the authority to make decisions to ensure grid reliability and personnel/equipment safety, and some of these decisions have to be made quickly leaving little room for error. The wrong choice made hastily is much worse than making the right decision a couple minutes later. These decisions can literally be life or death. With that in mind, I try to make every decision as if someones life depended upon it, always taking the time to think before making a choice. It was, and still is, difficult for me to change how I react to situations having been in the Navy under stressful conditions, but I'm working on it!

Joe Williams

Joe Williams

Aug 19, 2020Aug 19 at 7:09pm

This sounds as if this job has the potential to wash out allot of people because of the stress tolerance levels that have to be maintained day in, and day out. It kind of sounds like an Air Traffic Controller, but for power... Would I be thinking correctly here? It sounds like a perfect fit for "Alpha minded" individuals who make great decisions based off of their experience, and comprehension of their decisions. I can see this being fun for those who have great problem solving skills, and love a dynamic challenge each day.

Kacie Fischer

Kacie Fischer

Aug 20, 2020Aug 20 at 4:20pm

Yes, that and rotating shift work is hard to keep up with after many years. Most decisions I see as "bad ones" are just made by those who have gotten complacent in the job and quick utilizing their process. There are so many ways to accomplish any given work request, this leads to inconsistency in the control room which also makes things difficult. Consistency without being to micromanaging is a delicate balance.

[Daniel Talamantez](#)

[Daniel Talamantez](#)

Aug 20, 2020Aug 20 at 11:12pm

Kacie,

Seeing that we work for the same company, your perspective from TGM is similar to other areas of the company in terms of supervision. Now I understand the importance of your particular job however I can say if you have the knowledge, I have always appreciated the lack of micro managing. I believe our management does a great job of providing oversight if needed but also autonomy if proven oneself.

[Kacie Fischer](#)

[Kacie Fischer](#)

Aug 21, 2020Aug 21 at 8:33am

Daniel,

I agree. It is not something that I am used to having just gotten out of the Navy. It was a little intimidating at first, but something that I have truly begun to appreciate and enjoy about this job. That is also why I mentioned the delicate balance between micromanagement and supervision.

[Tom Cappucci](#)

Tom Cappucci

Aug 21, 2020Aug 21 at 2:07pm

Kacie, the autonomy of your position, and description of the real consequences you could face from a decision you make remind me of my own role. Do you find your Navy experience has other coworkers often looking to you for advice before implementing a decision?

Jun Gao

Jun Gao

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 3:44pm

Kacie, I totally understand the business model of your company. In our laboratory, we have QPA department which controls and manages all kinds of quality related reliability, from rigging, tooling, and/or small electric switches. We also have a human reliability program (HRP). We have to be HRP qualified to be able to handle nuclear explosive devices. It is time consuming and a pain to maintain, because we have to be physicaly and psychologicaly evaluated every year, randomly selected for drug /alcohol and polygraph tests. But compared with threat of life and a billion dollar project, these stresses are insignificant.

Edited by Jun Gao on Aug 23 at 2:29pm

Timothy Koontz

Timothy Koontz

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 4:57pm

At my company, we receive praise on our problem solving abilities. In that same conversation, the customer raises the issue that the reason we are good "firefighters" is because we constantly put ourselves in precarious situations. I work in the dreaded safety department, and we evaluate risk and its mitigation. In regards to preventive measures, we place human reliability at the bottom of the safety hierarchy with removal and engineering being at the top. We place a lot of focus on systems to remove the human factors. Some people have the belief that we hire the right employees then the job or project will succeed. Though I believe that we need the right people in those high stress jobs, those same employees can experience

burnout or have a lapse in judgement due to a personal issues at home or at the workplace. I believe that the military understands this concept hence why all of the rules. Systems need to be in place to overcome the human factors such as oversight, procedures, investigation processes and redundancies.

[Damian Dalcour](#)

[Damian Dalcour](#)

Aug 26, 2020Aug 26 at 3:21pm

Yes sir Timothy , I believe everyone can be a good fit for a position if properly trained and educated for the task. No one individual knows everything and a whole lot of individuals should know something. I have always said, " That I can push my car by myself, but it sure would be nice if others would stop honking and flipping me off and just help me push it out the way". And indeed if we had the right people in the right positions some accomplishments could possibly occur. Believe it or not, I think on - the -job training is the best education you can have in the work industry. Problem lies in tribal knowledge getting pasted down correctly and in a timely manner to ALL employees involved. Good summary sir, thanks for your support.

[John Mullins](#)

[John Mullins](#)

Aug 24, 2020Aug 24 at 8:07pm

Kacie,

Thank you for a brief overview of you job description, as a former power plant operator I have never given much that to what happens when the power hits the grid other than reaching the end user. Would definitely like to learn more so I can pass it along to my operators to provide them a better understanding of what affects their role has in the process.

Travis Metz

Travis Metz

Aug 28, 2020Aug 28 at 5:27pm

I definitely know where you are coming from. Working previously on very large deepwater drillships as an engineer, power generation and distribution was the name of the game. Control room operations definitely require one to think on their feet and make that split-second decision, and that decision needs to be the right one. Experience and training are 2 major parts to keeping that operation safe and efficient, but being familiar with the plant itself, an operational knowledge of where everything is, how it works together and its safe operating parameters can certainly be every bit as valuable as experience. If you have the opportunity, go take a walk through the plant with some of the operations or maintenance personnel to learn more about the plant through their eyes. A control room is a great watchdog, but it has yet to replace eyes and ears.

Kaleigh Philips

Kaleigh Philips

Aug 29, 2020Aug 29 at 3:06pm

Great example and interesting read Kacie! Did your company experience any outages with the recent storms? We didn't receive damage from storms, but an electric company our area uses had to make the decision to do rolling brown outs. I can imagine for a company the decision to place a large portion of your company without power to potentially help bring back online other users is a tough call to make. Does the company you work for have guidelines to help in making that tough call that you know of?

Looking forward to hearing more about your line of work!

-Kaleigh Philips

Zachary Smith

Zachary Smith

Aug 29, 2020Aug 29 at 8:13pm

Kacie - This is interesting to know and really has made me realize how much I take having reliable electricity for granted! I think this is a great example and really ties well in to the applicability of System 1 and 2 types of thinking that are mentioned in the *Judgement in Managerial Decision Making* text book. I also appreciate how you consider "life or death" in your decisions; it really puts in to perspective how important some decisions can be and why we sometimes need to take a deep breath and think about what decision we're about to make.

Ken Wagner

Ken Wagner

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 5:07pm

This still sounds like working in the Navy to me, I have been in numerous casualty situations as Load Dispatcher. Like you said, make a rash decisions and this could truly cause more damage than the initial issue. The one thing that I have learned is that most casualty procedures gives you 15-30 seconds to respond. When you are in those situations, you realize that this is actually a lot of time to make an informed decision. Taking a deep breath really changes your perspective in many cases.

Joe Williams

Joe Williams

Aug 19, 2020Aug 19 at 7:01pm

Good Decision

Today I had multiple examples I could discuss here as I work in a very dynamic environment that requires many decisions made throughout the day for our business to progress. One that sticks out in my mind is where I had an employee approach me in regard to themselves needing to miss work to take care of a sick child at home. They are one of my top performing employees, and is a very open spoken individual who gives me great feedback on all decisions made whether it be positive or negative. They have a very unique skillset to where I rely on them to

perform a very large portion of the work, that no one else can do in our area. I chose to work on my interpersonal relationship with the employee, show them empathy, and authorize their absence to take place without disciplinary actions against them. I responded to the employee by letting them know that I feel family comes before anything there at work, and I have high hopes that things will be ok with their child. Even though this was a performance setback for our team, I feel this culture on my team will have long paying dividends down the road.

Marc Farias

Marc Farias

Aug 19, 2020Aug 19 at 8:23pm

JR, I can totally relate with you! As a lead, I often have to juggle decisions on whether to take a call from a coworker that needs help or attend the last part of meeting I am dialed into. I have tried to do both at the same time with minimal success. During my coaching session I have learned that I need to work on empathy which partially means to be an active listener without being distracted.

Kacie Fischer

Kacie Fischer

Aug 20, 2020Aug 20 at 4:23pm

I think that this is a perfect example of weighing your pro's and con's. In this case, weighing the importance of family and showing employees that they are taken care of in their time of need is pretty important. With the economy being the way it is and with how easy an employee can move on to another company, I think it is important to "weigh" the small things like family, sick time, etc. and show, as a leader, you are capable of having empathy.

Rosanna Popa Rangel

Rosanna Popa Rangel

Aug 20, 2020Aug 20 at 6:26pm

Putting myself in your employee's shoes, I feel that yes, this was good for them to be allowed to be with their family but at the same time, more people in your team should be trained to cover for them in case of these types of emergencies. Nothing stops it from happening again and you already know that this will cause a setback for your team. Your decision was the best you could take based on the circumstances, but I think the next step should be thinking about the next time this happens and how to avoid a set back on your team by not depending on one person that could have another emergency.

Matthew Hudson

Matthew Hudson

Aug 24, 2020Aug 24 at 7:31pm

Showing both compassion and empathy helps the employee take off and not feel as stressed about the time off. I know people that have sacrificed taking off to help their sick child or even themselves because they fear the retribution from the company for not working. The US employees are sometimes scared to use their sick or vacation time, yet the EU encourages it. I once had a manager from France and he would constantly ask the employees to think of themselves and take time off for mental health, vacation or family sickness. It was an eye opening experience.

Joseph Ramirez

Joseph Ramirez

Aug 25, 2020Aug 25 at 4:20pm

This is a great example of how to establish a successful relationship with an employee. I currently work for a manager who will always put family first and he tells us to do the same. This has led to longer tenured employees and a trustworthy relationship between employee and manager. I have also seen the opposite where a manager is not as flexible and this has caused a tense relationship. I believe that the relationship between an employee and manager should outweigh any short term performance setback.

Tanner Welch

Tanner Welch

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 11:54am

I truly believe that empathy is one of the key characteristics of a strong leader. Your willingness to relate to your employee, show them respect, and grant them leave will undoubtedly build a stronger team and issue dividends in the future. Does your company offer any management or leadership coaching? I've also found that team building outside the work environment is key to building strong relationships. Is offsite team-building recommended by your management or company?

Marc Farias

Marc Farias

Aug 19, 2020Aug 19 at 8:08pm

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, my department at Lockheed Martin required all employees to physically work in a cubical environment and has traditionally been against telecommuting, with a few exceptions. When the pandemic hit, the department made the tough decision to direct all employees to work from home full time until further notice to avoid exposure. The decision was risky, not knowing how it would affect work quality and productivity with remote connectivity. Placing trust in their employees, management has found that not only are employees more productive and efficient but have discovered that moral has improved through telecommuting versus working in a cube city. It is still unknown as to what the future will bring after the pandemic is over but I am certain that our leaders have learned from this decision and things will most likely be different when and if we do return to work physically.

(3 likes)

Joe Williams

Joe Williams

Aug 19, 2020Aug 19 at 8:23pm

It's great to hear that your group was able to see metrics that showed an increase in productivity. One "pro" about the telecommuting is that it really shines the light on those who have great independency, and the work ethic to back up them being selected for that particular job. I know when you are in a group, in a traditional environment it is easy for those "freeloaders" to just blend in and reap the rewards of others hard work. In this virtual environment, it is very neat to see who is still shining, and who is avoiding the light all together! It's going to be very interesting in the future to see how our country as a whole begins this "working from home" culture, versus the traditional costs of business in the face to face days of the past!

[Kacie Fischer](#)

[Kacie Fischer](#)

Aug 20, 2020Aug 20 at 4:26pm

Marc,

My company (not my position, unfortunately) has made similar changes. Those that can work from home, do. So far, it has been quite successful and has actually led to an impressive record number of "safe" hours that the company keeps track of. It is very interesting to see how some companies have reacted to the pandemic. I am glad that it was a positive response in your case. Being flexible is certainly a desirable quality!

[Jay Hembree](#)

[Jay Hembree](#)

Aug 20, 2020Aug 20 at 4:56pm

Marc,

Are the metrics you measure productivity with the same ones used prior? Why do you think things improved? Is it just feeling trusted or something else?

Marc Farias

Marc Farias

Aug 21, 2020Aug 21 at 9:49am

Hi Jay, glad you asked! In order to track productivity at work, we have used a process call AGILE development since Jan 2019. We use a tool called JIRA that tracks our workload in 2 week Sprints using a point system. Prior to the pandemic, we averaged around 28 points every 2 weeks and occasionally would fall short of our planned potential. Since the pandemic, we have increased our points completed with an average of 32 and have hit every target. JIRA is a great tool that gives management our AGILE metrics real time. Our leaders have also surveyed employees on occasion during staff meetings and have received nothing but positive results on working from home.

Rosanna Popa Rangel

Rosanna Popa Rangel

Aug 20, 2020Aug 20 at 6:30pm

Marc, this exact situation happened where I work. A lot of the supervisors were worried about their team's productivity. They also realized that it took an adjustment period, but it paid off, we managed to continue a project that in a way was holding our company up, and we managed to communicate through Teams and using different platforms that we usually avoided.

Brandi Greenberg

Brandi Greenberg

Aug 21, 2020Aug 21 at 10:05am

Marc,

The company I work for was the same before COVID-19, our upper management was not happy with the surrounding industry giving more and more telecommuting days to their employees. The company was feeling the pressure from new hire candidates and long term employees. I can say that I have seen mostly good results from my team in this new environment of working from home but I can also say that I have a few employees that have not stepped up. Have you encountered this too?

Jordan Caddick

Jordan Caddick

Aug 21, 2020Aug 21 at 1:28pm

Good to see some other examples of positive workplace outcomes due to COVID Marc! Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) was struggling to provide office space to its growing staff prior to the pandemic. Millions of federal funds were and are still allocated for new offices, office renovations, parking garages, road improvements, etc... Then the pandemic hit. LANL now realizes that by allowing employees to telework from home where possible, millions could be saved because we don't need the new offices we thought. Parking garages are no longer needed because people are mostly working from home. Operating costs have decreased significantly. Energy spent to heat and cool office spaces will likely decrease, saving the taxpayer money. It's interesting how decisions forced upon a company by a pandemic that initially seem detrimental can really be quite positive.

John Schaub

John Schaub

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 10:41am

Marc,

I love this topic as it hits home to all people in our industry and others. Like your unit, MUO, has struggled for years to allow expanded remote work. What I have found for myself and represents others in my section, is that productivity and quality has increased in our delivered

products. It makes it difficult for leaders to argue why going back to a traditional office environment is warranted.

[Richard Pearson](#)

[Richard Pearson](#)

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 11:39am

This is great to hear and similar to what I have heard at my company (American Airlines) and other large companies. We always could work from home; everyone has laptops, VPN access, etc but there has always been very little to no allowance on remote work. When COVID hit, all of a sudden A LOT of our office personnel were sent home to work remotely. At first, there was a learning curve for some people, but overall our group started performing better than before by most if not all metrics we have.

We all thought they would be bringing us back in the office as soon as they can, but it has been refreshing for our upper levels of management to praise the work we have been doing remotely and mention they are in no rush to bring us back based on the work they are seeing us do. We also have no idea what the future will be like as far as working from home, but I wouldn't be surprised if managers are going to need to be more lenient going forward in letting their people work remotely more often. I know for me not having to commute over an hour a day instantly improves my morale and sets me in a better move when I logon in the morning.

[Carolyn Perez](#)

[Carolyn Perez](#)

Aug 23, 2020Aug 23 at 6:07pm

Marc,

As one of the many employees who was working in "cube city" I was almost worried when my manager believed the pandemic would be over in a few weeks and we had to have a special circumstance approved in order to work from home in March. I believe they were slow to let us work full time from home because of the risk of poor quality and productivity in our work. I can say my manager has been pleasantly surprised by just how productive we are. Great to hear it is working out for us!

Matthew Hudson

Matthew Hudson

Aug 24, 2020Aug 24 at 7:40pm

I am a remote employee, I saw my boss about once every 6 months. When my office was closed, I started to work from home. My manager had no issue with it. My N+2 manager thought that I needed to be seen more or people would forget about me and I wouldn't advance in the company. So I was told to work 3 days every other week in the cubes 90 miles away. Because of our travel policy, I was required to stay in a hotel, at the expense of the company. For several years I did this process. When COVID hit, we all worked from home and upper management could see that we still completed our work. Even my team is located in different parts of the world. If you can work with your teammates in different parts of the world, you should be organized enough to work from home with your local time in the same time zone. For this reason we have closed many buildings and will move to a hot seat model when the building opens. The local team can come together when necessary. The rest of my team now understands why I am able to complete much more work than when I am in the cubes. On the flip side there are people I know that can't focus while at home and need the structure of the office to work, they can drive to a building and will hot seat every day, if they want.

Kassie Mobley

Kassie Mobley

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 9:38pm

Matthew,

It has been interesting to see how companies have handled the pandemic with respect to working from home. It's encouraging to know that your company and team now see it is possible to work from home and be as productive, if not more while working from home. The next phase in this process is how companies will continually handle returning to work. Again, it is encouraging that your company is giving options with the new hot seat system. It is important that companies remain flexible to the needs of their employees during this pandemic and for the future in general.

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[Jay Hembree](#)

[Jay Hembree](#)

Aug 20, 2020Aug 20 at 6:32am

Firefighting. When problems arise it's good to be quick on your feet, but without a well thought out and understood plan everything becomes firefighting. People can make entire careers out of putting out fires and fixing issues that pop up. They can be the "go to" person and be very well thought of. It also can become a habit and I've seen entire business units run on very week planning and "heroic" firefighting. This leads to reactionary thinking and a lack of data driven analysis and problem solving. There is definitely a need to be able to quickly solve problems on the fly when they arise, but those should be the exception and not the norm. A well thought out and communicated data driven plan allows for everyone to work toward the same process and then when the problems arise, they can be handled efficiently and quickly. I say this as a guy who made a name for himself for putting out fires and being rewarded for it. It became a habit and I was not big picture, data, or forward thinking enough to effect real change.

[Kacie Fischer](#)

[Kacie Fischer](#)

Aug 20, 2020Aug 20 at 4:30pm

Jay,

Please tell me you were first exposed to this in the USN. Sounds like (almost) every department I ever worked for while in the service. Too much work, not enough people; that coupled with leaders who don't understand the meaning of delegation, and poor inter-departmental communication (and so much more!) leads to little fires, as you put it, everywhere.

Jay Hembree

Jay Hembree

Aug 20, 2020Aug 20 at 4:51pm

Air Force and unfortunately, maybe because we are mostly prior service, some of the Lockheed flight-line. Don't get me wrong it got me promoted, but having a good, executable plan that understood is so much better in the long run. Then when the small fire pop up you can quickly triage and put it out.

Jordan Caddick

Jordan Caddick

Aug 21, 2020Aug 21 at 1:35pm

Jay and Kacie - I worked as a project manager for a construction firm contracted by the US Dept of State to build US Embassy complexes in Asia, Africa, and Europe. I did this for 11 years and saw the same thing. The construction and design engineering industry is especially bad at creating "firefighters" instead of planners and executors of a well thought out strategy. I'm hoping this master's program will give us the tools to make organizational changes so that the role of a firefighters begins to become a profession of the past.

John Schaub

John Schaub

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 10:32am

Jay,

I have in the past and at times love fighting the fires to provide a quick and decisive answer to keep the project moving forward; utilizing my system 1 thinking. Where I find myself in trouble is using the system 1 decision making when a more in-depth study is required using system 2.

As you concluded continued firefighting can lead to complacency to always lean on system 1 decision making and firefighting. I look to using a more critical thinking in future decisions that I'll need to make.

Jeremy Meehleib

Jeremy Meehleib

Aug 23, 2020 Aug 23 at 1:19pm

Jay – I come from the Oil and Gas industry and 'firefighting' is a common condition as well. Adjusting to big picture thinking is difficult. It is all about time horizon really. In the field doing frac jobs, as an engineer, I was concerned with the next 5 minutes of operations. As I advanced to managing those field engineers, I became concerned about the next few days. Then you get to a region level and concern yourself with the next few weeks. Those managers, the next few months or years, and so on and so on. The delegation and team leadership component of this endeavor as your time horizon and big picture perspective develops is critical to avoid 'firefighting'. That 'firefighting' experience (data) does allow one to see the potential for 'smoke' more clearly (forward thinking) and allows you to avoid those fires all together sometimes (planning).

Tyler Gilbreath

Tyler Gilbreath

Aug 27, 2020 Aug 27 at 9:44pm

Jay,

During my first 2 years with FritoLay, I spent almost all of my efforts into purely firefighting. It brought me little reward because I effectively turned myself into a key figure for my team that couldn't be moved to new opportunities or grow my career with the company. It wasn't till I stepped back and started thinking big picture and putting processes in place to prevent the fires that I was able to move forward with my career.

Jeremy Smith

Jeremy Smith

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 5:27pm

Jay,

I can relate to this as well. The Oil & Gas industry is notorious for firefighting. In one of my previous companies I was actually known by more than one department as the fixer, i.e. the guy you brought in when it looked like there was no hope left. That role is definitely a double-edged sword, as you get tons of credit if you solve the issue, but all the blame if you don't. So it's not really a choice to be successful or not. In working through all of those type of issues, I agree with your assessment that it requires data-driven decision making. That is the number one tactic that I used to help rigorously engage people to use their Level 2 thoughts. This in turn forces them to slow down just enough to make a good decision, map out a rudimentary plan, then execute at full speed. These experiences have led me to continually ask the question why does this seem the norm everywhere? Why are people so focused on the short-term? There definitely has to be some human factors that drive this, as we see it in every industry...

Tom Cappucci

Tom Cappucci

Aug 20, 2020Aug 20 at 5:57pm

I work for Union Pacific Railroad. My company has been around for nearly 160 years, transporting goods and supplies that we all need for everyday life. Chapter 1 of our textbook describes System 1 and System 2 cognitive function in decision making. An example where System 1 may be used at my company is when a train derailment occurs that shuts down the railroad in/out of a community. The pressure is high to clear the derailment and get the rail line back into service within an aggressively set time period (Anchor) to continue to ship freight. This often leads to decision-makers making gut feeling, fast decisions to meet deadline expectations. Because of the pressure, decision-makers may not have time to effectively analyze the problem, and further damage or injury could result from cutting corners to meet the aggressive deadline. An example where decision-makers use System 2 is deciding where to deploy capital investment, such as building new rail lines, mechanical shops, and railyard expansions. The decision to deploy capital is often years in the making, requiring significant analysis of business trends, cost vs benefit of the improvements, collaboration from multiple department decision-makers, etc.

(3 likes)

Rosanna Popa Rangel

Rosanna Popa Rangel

Aug 20, 2020Aug 20 at 6:38pm

For the System 1 example: is there any manual or handbook that the decision-makers could use or be coached for these types of situations? Have these people been trained under pressure? I believe, personally than when one situation repeats itself constantly, there must be a change, an improvement to be able to avoid it in the future, especially if people can get injured.

Kacie Fischer

Kacie Fischer

Aug 21, 2020Aug 21 at 8:45am

Rosanna,

I had the same thought. I'm sure there is some sort of training put in place to provide direction and experience to deal with these types of time sensitive occurrences. As well as a system to review issues and determine root cause and put an action, training, instruction, or some other directive in place to prevent it from happening again. I think that would be quite a large undertaking, considering all of the different departments and possibly even contractors involved.

Rosanna Popa Rangel

Rosanna Popa Rangel

Aug 21, 2020Aug 21 at 1:34pm

Yes, hopefully, that's the case, if they haven't done this, they need to start thinking of taking this step to avoid future mishaps.
I'm not too familiar with how this industry works, but since these types of events are most likely

to happen, I think gut feelings are dangerous. Also, deadlines need to be realistic, do you want something fast or something that is well done, thought through, and does it meet the expectations?

[Daniel Talamantez](#)

[Daniel Talamantez](#)

Aug 20, 2020Aug 20 at 11:18pm

Tom,

Seeing that you described your system 1 example as fast acting and quick decision making, does UP avidly research new technologies and new ways of doing business? I believe our companies are similar with the fact that our types of services are limited because an unregulated market would create havoc. Multiple companies given the opportunity would not be able to handle the financial obligations and sheer size that must be maintained in our fields. I asked about new technologies because even though we are the only provider in certain areas of our service territory, we have an obligation to continue to upgrade and create a more resilient grid.

Edited by [Daniel Talamantez](#) on Aug 27 at 10:21pm

[Tom Cappucci](#)

[Tom Cappucci](#)

Aug 21, 2020Aug 21 at 1:40pm

All, excellent questions. The way UPRR is set up, we have departments that often have competing goals when it comes to resolving situations like this. My department is heavily trained in these scenarios, however, each one is different and often unpredictable. Where the aggressive timeline issue comes into play: Our transportation department is the lead decision-maker on all things. If we can't move trains, we can't make money, our transportation department wants us to clear the tracks as quickly as possible, they are not trained in these situations and often do not know the possible consequences of cutting corners etcetera. The relationship is a give and takes, where sometimes we are pressured to cut corners to save time on our clean up, it is up to us to make quick decisions on the best course of action. As for

technology, yes we continue to evaluate and have recently started using drone technology to assess the damage, rather than risk putting people in harm's way.

Edited by [Tom Cappucci](#) on Aug 21 at 1:40pm

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

Aug 21, 2020Aug 21 at 6:54pm

Nice! That's a good use of new technology and shows that the company is willing to evolve and grow, and is also used to prevent human damage, as injuries, that can be prevented. Thanks for answering.

[Sarah Terrill](#)

[Sarah Terrill](#)

Aug 23, 2020Aug 23 at 2:39pm

I manage the Administrative Procedures for my company (LANL) and I often face pressure to fix/revise them to meet one group's needs without consideration of others. That has been one of my favorite parts of the job is to learn how the different groups coordinate and to learn how to correctly weigh the importance of them when it comes to revising the procedures. Cutting corners is one of my least-favorite terms and I have certain groups that are good at requesting them! I have had to really learn how to create malleable procedures to ensure each group can use them. Your work sounds intriguing!

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

Aug 20, 2020Aug 20 at 6:18pm

A good example of decision-making practices in my company is at the moment of buying equipment for the plants we build, equipment such as pressure vessels, pumps, heat exchangers, and instruments such as control valves, relief valves, orifice plates, etc. When we receive the proposal from vendors, we evaluate a few criteria, such as lead time, price, and how well we have worked with them in the past for the same type of projects and applications. By taking into consideration these factors, we can make the best decision at the moment of purchase (lead time, price, discounts) as for the forthcoming future (maintenance, material quality, installation).

Another example is that my company uses MBM guiding principles for the internal culture of the company. When a new person is hired, a lot of these values as self-actualization, integrity, humility, transformation, among others, are taken into consideration. The decision to hire a person is not based strictly on their experience or knowledge, but instead as a whole of all of these aspects. My company uses the four quadrants to evaluate the human resource, and how their values fit into the company's internal culture.

[Brandi Greenberg](#)

[Brandi Greenberg](#)

Aug 21, 2020 Aug 21 at 10:17am

Rosanna,

The company I work for does something very similar, we have a system with checks and balances built in that requires the requester to provide different amounts of information based on the value of the purchase. If we want to purchase from a specific vendor and the value is over \$25K we must supply a Sole Source Non-competitive Justification and it must be approved by legal, contracts, financial, and senior management. Do you use software to track and evaluate your criteria for these purchases?

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

Aug 21, 2020 Aug 21 at 1:26pm

Not at my level, probably in upper management. Since I'm the Process Engineer we usually evaluate the process information to match the data sheets we sent, we evaluate the materials the vendors are offering, the lead times. If it's a pump, we evaluate the performance curves, the horsepower of the pump, the minimum flow, among other things. If it's a relief valve, we evaluate soft seats and any internals, as well as compare between Balance bellows or modulating pilot (if the client hasn't specified this already) to see according to the system, installation cost, chances of error, failures, etc, what's the better choice. Usually, our POs for instruments are not as expensive as for equipment and in that case, we just give our feedback to the PM of the project, and if we need to discuss operability and process guarantees with the vendor we talk to them directly to clarify any doubts we may have. We can use spreadsheets to make this comparison and then make our recommendation.

Jay Hembree

Jay Hembree

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 6:47am

I like that they use past experience as a criteria for a relationship and not just the bottom line price point. The relationship with a vendor is often overlooked.

Rosanna Popa Rangel

Rosanna Popa Rangel

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 11:11am

Yes, Jay, a lot of time this previous experience with a vendor even gets us lower prices, especially if we bundle the equipment we buy from them. The downside is that prevents us from working with a diverse group of vendors since our clients get used to the operability and efficiency of certain equipment from a certain vendor but it does bring the relationship closer and at the end is a win-win situation.

Timothy Koontz

Timothy Koontz

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 5:39pm

The first decision-making process that you describe can make a difference in shipping the wrong product that could aggravate the customer or making a life long, satisfied customer. Of course, the key to any decision-making process is having the right resources, such as criteria for each product and a method of obtaining the right information from the customer. I have encountered in my online shopping experience where a pull-down box did not contain enough choices, or the choices were vague. Without a followup call to customer service or by chance, I could easily order the wrong variety of the part and become a disgruntle customer.

One of my roles as a safety manager is to create and initiate policies and procedures that will help prevent an injury or incident. I believe that a company should place more importance on hiring people that will align with their culture than focusing solely on the employee's knowledge base. Toyota is successful because one of the criteria they use to screen candidates is their work ethics and beliefs. Employees will adhere to the rules and procedures if they believe in them.

Eric Worley

Eric Worley

Aug 23, 2020Aug 23 at 1:38pm

Hello Rosanna,

What are the markets that your company primarily serves? Oil and gas, chemical, industrial gases, other? I'm curious how your company's sourcing process and supply chain has been impacted since the Covid-19 pandemic. Did you have to make any process or procedural changes to ensure a hedge against supply chain disruptions? Are you all currently stocking more equipment than you have in the past because of the uncertainty?

Thanks,

Eric Worley

ewworley@tamu.edu

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

Aug 23, 2020Aug 23 at 1:49pm

Eric,

We are an EPC company, after we design and engineer the plants we build (petrochemical, gas processing, compressor stations, etc) we do the procurement, purchasing and construction. Since I'm a Process Engineer, I make sure the process conditions are followed when a vendor sends a proposal, I make sure that the design makes sense for the application where it will be installed and that the materials picked out will suit the process (NACE compatible, stainless steel for water services, etc)

In my department, we work closely with Project Management to ensure all of the client's Specs are met, we buy what we need. There is a Procurement department that is in charge of buying valves, fittings, pipe, and that type of application that can be stored and re-use in future projects.

Because of the pandemic, we have been working in the projects we have active and it hasn't impacted our scheduling. But as far as the projects that were still pending where contracts needed to be finalized, they got postponed or completely cancelled.

Thanks for asking

Edited by [Rosanna Popa Rangel](#) on Aug 23 at 1:54pm

[John Schaub](#)

[John Schaub](#)

Aug 20, 2020Aug 20 at 8:52pm

Within my area of an aero-defense corporation, I find both good and bad decision-making practices that either plague us or propel us throughout a project. A key to the latter is adhering to the six steps of the decision-making process.

I often find that truly defining the problem has been key! Not diving deep enough to find the "bigger picture" and only treating the symptoms only exacerbates issues. I include myself in those that make hastily decision due to many factors; lack of funds, time, or skilled resources to enable a better decision.

Even the decision-making process itself can be examined. In the case of my work section, a lack of training or educational investment by the company leads to allowing individuals making decisions without a full understanding of how complex the decision-making process or how it impacts our strategic goal.

Using myself as an example, recently I made a high end purchase of an iPad Pro (keyboard, etc..) because I wanted an off-line option for studying and downloading my text books while my older iPad or other devices likely could have done just as good a job. My irrational and hasty decision led to spending a considerable amount of money when in-turn the product was not needed.

In summary, an investment in training for myself and those in my section will result in or better decision-making can help achieve goals.

(3 likes)

[Kacie Fischer](#)

[Kacie Fischer](#)

Aug 21, 2020Aug 21 at 9:26am

John,

It seems that you have many years of decision-making experience in various projects. I have little experience in a project management role and it is interesting to read others experiences. From the reading, I was interested to see that decision making is grouped into 2 broad systems, something that I can certainly relate to. I can see how beneficial it is to really breakdown the "problem" and develop the appropriate actions to take. If you don't have a proper definition, you cannot adequately develop criteria to then generate alternative options.

[Brandi Greenberg](#)

[Brandi Greenberg](#)

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 7:33am

John,

I find that in my position I rarely have all the information that I need at the time to make a decision. I have to make a decision based on the facts at hand and then revisit as more information comes in, and re-evaluate that decision. My first decision is better based on my experiences. All of these experiences make my planning better, make my budgeting better, and overall allows me to handle these situations better. I guess I am trying to say that my company allows for a lot of "on the job" training, they allow you to fail forward. Do see that all

the good and not good decisions have helped push you forward to be better at making a decision?

[John Schaub](#)

[John Schaub](#)

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 9:55am

Good morning!

Great question; I have found I learn from the "not good decisions" concrete in my memory a little better. Recently I have even my own bad decisions push me forward to be better. Relating to our Coaching session in another class I was able to dial in and find that due to my Self Regard issue I find myself not following standard processes and procedures set in place because I fail to seek help when time is critical or because I find myself following from memory instead of standardized processes. Thank you for the question.

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 11:15am

John,

In this sense, I'm the complete opposite. I follow standards and procedures too closely, to the point where evaluating a certain situation and events might be hard for me, trusting my instinct and decision making sometimes is hard and I seek someone's approval before making the last call.

[John Schaub](#)

[John Schaub](#)

Aug 25, 2020Aug 25 at 8:14pm

You have it! Stick with processes, instructions and directives; find the problems areas, note them and look to improve them. After my mistake I went back searched for areas to be improved and refocused my attention of the instructions and directives.

[Brandi Greenberg](#)

[Brandi Greenberg](#)

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 12:59pm

John,

I call that "fail forward", I tell my engineers that it is ok to fail forward, as long as they learn from it and make better decisions in the future. Granted they are not in charge of enough tasks to cause great harm to my program (budget or schedule) but they could cause a lot of damage to equipment. I believe that we all have to keep learning even from our mistakes.

[Carolyn Perez](#)

[Carolyn Perez](#)

Aug 23, 2020Aug 23 at 6:16pm

John,

As an LM employee as well, I can absolutely understand how the problem with several of the projects I have been on is the lack of a defined scope. It not only creates confusion and frustration, but lack of motivation. Only treating symptoms is what is often felt in project I have been a part of. From the reading I was interested to see what exactly is needed to tackle the problem from a decision making standpoint in order to have direction and increase motivation for your team.

[Jonathan Weiss](#)

Jonathan Weiss

Aug 26, 2020Aug 26 at 9:44am

John,

Well said. I as well hate how I have had to pay dearly for making fast decisions, that were not well thought-through. We feel like we're saving time by making quick decisions. Everything is about efficiency and getting things done as fast as possible. Through experiences, I have realized often that if I just slow down for a minute and think a decision through, I typically make a much better decisions, which normally results in saving time and money in the long run.

Daniel Talamantez

Daniel Talamantez

Aug 20, 2020Aug 20 at 11:03pm

At my company, we involve multiple work groups when we have an escalated issue with a city . This allows for cross-functional interaction to assess and provide an answer contingent on the situation. Depending on the severity, an upper level manager may have a role in providing a response and/or expects some kind of resolution which is provided back to the city in a timely manner. The goal is to always have people in the same boat as you. The key items that ultimately make up the decision include safety, power delivery, the tariff, and any moral obligation we initially agreed to. However, we also look at the possibility of how a negative outcome may impact our future relationship with that particular city.

Tom Cappucci

Tom Cappucci

Aug 21, 2020Aug 21 at 1:44pm

Daniel, can you tell me more about what your relationship with the city is? Is your company building infrastructure and you are looking to build a good relationship with the regulatory community of a city?

Daniel Talamantez

Daniel Talamantez

Aug 21, 2020Aug 21 at 8:14pm

Tom,

Great question. So in my particular role, we act as the face of the company for a specific region which therefore encompasses multiple cities. We are constantly upgrading and building new infrastructure so we feel these partnerships/relationships with each of our cities is necessary and mutually beneficial. By doing this, each city has a quick contact for any issues that may arise whether it be regulatory or day to day business.

Brandi Greenberg

Brandi Greenberg

Aug 21, 2020Aug 21 at 9:46am

One of the major Decision-Making Practices that the Engineering Company I work for utilizes is a "Gate Slide" presentation. A "Gate Slide" presentation allows a requester to propose information to senior management, in the hopes of gaining a positive response on whether the opportunity presented is worth moving forward to developing a proposal. The "Gate Slide" presentation prompts the requester to provide details on the request for proposal (RFP). These details will range from the type of contract, the period of performance, and the value of the RFP. A "Gate Slide" presentation also requires the requester to understand the objectives of the RFP, as well as do a comparison of existing capabilities within the company. There are several questions the requester must be able to answer, including, a competitive analysis, a pricing comparison, and a strategy to win. At the end of the presentation, a "go" or "no-go" decision will be made. If senior management decides that this proposal is worth moving forward, a price to win will be determined, and approval for funds being spent on this work will be settled.

Richard Pearson

[Richard Pearson](#)

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 11:47am

I like the idea of the "Gate Slide" presentation as an opportunity for anyone to propose a way to make and/or save money for the company. American Airlines had a similar program many many years ago (20 or so) in which an employee could submit a method to either bring in more money for the company or save the company money. To incentivize these suggestions, the employee was offered a percentage of the savings up to a max for any implemented suggestion. Needless to say, it was very popular but discontinued for some unknown reason.

I tend to like the requirements of your "Gate Slide" to make the person submitting the suggestion think about the suggestion that much more. In my situation, rather than someone suggesting "Hey let's make this modification to the airplane to save on fuel burn!" it would require the person to think about it that much more and determine the potential costs and returns associated with doing such work.

[Brandi Greenberg](#)

[Brandi Greenberg](#)

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 1:02pm

Richard,

Do you think that AA saw too many suggestions and then it was a drain on resources to review each one and evaluate it?

Our Gate Slides get more and more in-depth and require the requester to do more and more upfront work before bringing it to Sr. Mgmt. I think that is because their time is limited and they just want to make sure the requester has fully exhausted all the strategies before they have to make a decision.

[Richard Pearson](#)

[Richard Pearson](#)

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 6:31pm

Honestly, I don't have any idea as to why the program was stopped; it was ceased well before my time there. The "Old Guard" will bring it up from time to time and complain about how it doesn't exist anymore. If I were to guess, you are probably right and they received way too many submissions to maintain or people complaining or wondering why their idea wasn't accepted.

The program would definitely require some level of balance. Our mechanics and customer-facing employees usually have some of the best ideas that could make their job or the operation easier and/or more efficient, but at the same time, they are probably the least likely to do the research work upfront. There would need to be some incentive to entice them to do that work.

Zachary Smith

Zachary Smith

Aug 29, 2020Aug 29 at 8:28pm

This sounds like a great mechanism in place to ensure RFPs are responded to with exactly the information needed so you all can make the best decision. I recently received a RFP with tons of interesting data about a project which you could tell the originating company put a lot of work into. The issue was they never explicitly stated what they wanted us to do. Sure I could respond with whatever services I thought they might be asking for, but I didn't want to guess. It turned in to a week of back and forth emails clarifying exactly what scope of work they wanted us to bid on and they ended up reissuing the RFP with a new section dedicated with how they expected vendors to respond.

Jordan Caddick

Jordan Caddick

Aug 21, 2020Aug 21 at 1:18pm

1) Context: I am a project manager in our construction group. Many of our construction projects experience cost and schedule overruns. Recently, management assembled a group subject matter experts to manage cost and schedule overruns, called a "change control board".

If the project exceeds a monetary threshold from what was originally indicated, or the schedule is changed in a way that exceeds a certain threshold, the project manager must have their project evaluated by the change control board before they may continue. This change control board follows an algorithmic process similar to a system 2 thinking approach to evaluate the root cause of the changes and issue an approval to proceed. 2) Context: my HOA recently performed some maintenance work to the roads. My HOA retains a crew of 3 laborers for general maintenance tasks. Earlier this year, this crew sealed all cracks in the asphalt with tar. Recently, the HOA manager contracted with an outside firm to reseal the same cracks the HOA labor crew sealed months earlier. Perhaps a system 2 type thinking could have been applied before the work was performed by the standing crew to avoid rework and thus excessive HOA fees?

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

Aug 21, 2020Aug 21 at 1:40pm

Jordan,

I have zero project management experience, but from your example I find it interesting to re-evaluate the project. I'm a Process Engineer and in a lot of cases, we assume the excessive cost because in the long run, it'll make up for the saving in utilities such as power, water usage, etc. Sometimes our decisions are not based on the main price of the equipment we buy (for example) but instead in the maintenance, installation, and future savings cost. When your company evaluates the budget for a project, what do they take into consideration?

[Jordan Caddick](#)

[Jordan Caddick](#)

Aug 21, 2020Aug 21 at 4:55pm

Rosanna,

We look at a lot of things, but much of what impacts the budget evaluation lies in the relationship between the schedule and the work taking place. Since we track the progress and assign dollar amounts to activities in the schedule, if the schedule is not correct then the budget can be way off. The tricky part is building a realistic schedule to match the budget.

You're essentially making predictions on some things (availability of labor, skill of labor, efficiency of labor, leadtimes on equipment and materials) that you need to come true or else you're budget won't align with your schedule and/or you'll have cost overruns. A great example of a disruption to this relationship is COVID-19. 6 months ago, nobody had accounted for the impact of this on their projects. We've had to build in metrics to track these delays so we can clearly justify and explain the increase in cost to the customer.

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

Aug 21, 2020Aug 21 at 7:01pm

Jordan,

Thanks for answering. Yes, COVID has impacted many areas of the O&G industry and has affected the schedule in a lot of projects. A lot of projects that were in the conceptual engineering phase stopped and got postponed until next year. Scheduling is an area I'm not familiar with, except for deliverables, when is the client expecting certain documents and also when the equipment, control valves, long lead items will be delivered so the construction crew can start working, but it's an interesting topic to learn from the decision-making point of view, how the scheduling and the budget around each progress can make you decide whether to continue or if it's not worth it.

[Jun Gao](#)

[Jun Gao](#)

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 3:55pm

Jordan,

Cost and schedule overruns are very common. We face this all the time, even though we have designated budget analyst. Because we are running a large scale project, people always take longer time and charge more to solve the obstacles. I'm not saying our team members are low performing. This is just part of the big project and can never be projected in advance. Hopefully, we can learn some skills from this class to better manage these projects in the future.

Edited by [Jun Gao](#) on Aug 23 at 2:30pm

Sarah Terrill

Sarah Terrill

Aug 23, 2020Aug 23 at 3:01pm

I think another bias I see within the projects at LANL is the Framing Bias. We have some of the most unique and intriguing projects going on and I think you'd be hard-pressed to find a project at LANL that follows the industry norms, yet I have been on several projects where the schedule and budget were not based on knowledge of LANL work but on traditional business processes outside of the lab. I have been in those meetings where the leadership made their own judgement calls instead of discussing with the engineers what the schedule for that activity should be and what the risks may be to completing the work. It's been refreshing when I've been involved with Project Managers who understand they don't have the expertise to know my tasks but work with me so that they understand what I need and what to expect. It's also been fun to show them how my work can make their's easier!

Jeremy Smith

Jeremy Smith

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 6:02pm

Jordan, we have a lot of the issues O&G as well with our project engineering schedules as you describe. I believe they are due to exactly what Sarah points out. For example, due to the significant number of line items in the schedule and the fact that it is currently all manual at my company, the schedule is built off of archaic templates to reduce the number of line items that have to be managed formally. Of course, as the project engineer I am obligated to keep the durations that are input from the templates (e.g. full development of a subsea tool from paper napkin sketch to finished drawings in <10 days) as well as manage the informal tasks that were neglected in the schedule. I am constantly working with the planning team to update the durations appropriately to more realistic values, but that of course creates schedules that sometimes do not conform with the contract, therefore creativity in-sues. As I am relatively new to my company, it has been fun learning their processes as I tend to engage multiple parts of the value stream, which I have learned many of my coworkers do not do. When I discuss this with them, you can tell that they start to better understand their role and the ability to understand the impact of decisions they make. I always tell people two things that I believe are

the core to addressing most problems at work: actively communicating all the time, and if you want to feel fulfillment in your job, help someone else do theirs. This in turn creates trust, increases the active level of communication and smooths the water to have open-minded discussions when it comes to decision-making. Have you experienced anything similar?

[John Mullins](#)

[John Mullins](#)

Aug 23, 2020Aug 23 at 4:46pm

Jordan,

Do you build any contingency into your project for cost or schedule creep? I usually always build a 15% contingency for both cost and schedule and at the corporate level they have additional contingency fund for projects. Not sure your companies position.

[Jordan Caddick](#)

[Jordan Caddick](#)

Aug 26, 2020Aug 26 at 11:12pm

John - good question. I always like hearing other professionals input on contingency or "management reserve" as Los Alamos National Laboratory refers to it sometimes. My contingency is usually anywhere from 25%-35% on cost, primarily because it is really hard to do work at our facility. We do a lot of renovation work on facilities that may have been used to machine hazardous or radioactive material in the 50's and 60's, and when that material is found on a project it can be very costly to remediate. That's just one example. I think we are also a very large federally funded organization and because of that there is a lot of red tape that pushes the contingency up. If you were to ask me what I would apply to my projects in my previous career building diplomatic facilities abroad for the US Department of State, it would be closer to 15% because we ran a very lean operation and had tight control of costs, material, labor, etc...

Jacquelyn Lopez-Barlow

Jacquelyn Lopez-Barlow

Aug 27, 2020Aug 27 at 10:40pm

Management reserve and contingency needs are developed in various ways at LANL from my experience. It depends on the scope and the customer's requirements. As a program manager, one way I estimate reserve/contingency is by doing a risk analysis evaluation. All the projects I fund that cost >\$10M or are critical to the program's success must have a risk analysis for each phase of the project. By performing a risk analysis, we can identify mitigations that could reduce risk and request funds to support the mitigation activities. The evaluation is also a communication tool I can use with our stakeholders (customers, management, operations, etc.) as part of my reporting. The risk evaluations include identifying impacts on both schedule and cost. The tool we use for analyzing risk impacts and contingency needs is Acumen Risk. The program allows us to run multiple scenarios through Monte Carlo to help us make decisions and provides data to manage the health of our program. A recent example where I have used Acumen is on a \$50M equipment project. The team developed the risk matrix, scored each risk, and linked the risk items to our scheduled activities, as applicable. We then ran the data through Acumen and evaluated what would happen if a risk group was to realize during the final stages of construction, based on their likelihood. The schedule impact results became my contingency (6 months), and the cost impacts became my management reserve (\$1.6M).

Jun Gao

Jun Gao

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 10:04am

Dr. Yang:

Can you elaborate the mathematical model in module one?

Thanks

Jun Gao

Jun Gao

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 2:35pm

Why the option 2 has \$63M expected value? According to the calculation, it should be \$78M as well, right?

Edited by [Jun Gao](#) on Aug 22 at 2:37pm

[Sarah Terrill](#)

[Sarah Terrill](#)

Aug 23, 2020Aug 23 at 3:01pm

I also came to the same conclusion as you.

[Xiaomin Yang](#)

[Xiaomin Yang](#)

Aug 27, 2020Aug 27 at 2:43pm

You are right. It should be 78,.0. I made an announcement to correct it. The numbers in the assessment are updated this year, but the summary chart is not updated accordingly. Thanks.

XY

[Xiaomin Yang](#)

[Xiaomin Yang](#)

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 2:46pm

We will begin covering the analytical methods in Module 4.

[Jun Gao](#)

[Jun Gao](#)

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 3:24pm

I cannot create a new post for the subject I am supposed to post on.

I'm working in the one of the most important large scale weapons experimental engineering programs at Los Alamos National Laboratory. We need make decision all the time during each project. The program was well established to respond to national security. In each project, we establish the requirement first. For each sub-projects, we will perform conceptual, initial and final design reviews before execution. The decisions will be re-visited every week during the core team meeting. The programmatic decisions have never been made solo. The most challenging decision making is in the field. The decision has to be made to overcome the issue before we can communicate with the upper managements or other test leads. Stop work or pause work is our golden standard so we can evaluate the real-time security and safety situations to minimize the damage.

Edited by [Jun Gao](#) on Aug 23 at 2:33pm

[Richard Pearson](#)

[Richard Pearson](#)

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 11:22am

I work for an airline and the primary driver for most decisions made is Safety, if there is something that needs to be done to either remove a potential safety risk or improve the safety to an acceptable level, there is usually no pushback on ensuring it is accomplished. While this seems to be a good thing, and it is, the actual implementation of these decisions tends to fall flat from time to time.

In general, I would say our decision process for large scale projects is good and the appropriate people are brought in the room to evaluate and make the necessary decisions. One of the biggest things we have started to incorporate into nearly ALL of our projects is our own version of risk management. Each project is now required to identify potentially affected parties of the project, determine and evaluate all the potential risks of the projects, risk rate each risk, then

determine mediation plans to reduce the risk as much as possible. This task is tedious, but we have seen great improvements from it, additionally, if something goes wrong, we are able to evaluate the risk management portion and determine if what occurred was flagged or not. This helps us identify if we need better training, better actions, etc.

My experience has found that from time to time we find that a decision is rushed, whether it be for safety or a person's opinion on a solution, without proper vetting to ensure proper implementations. While these decisions don't affect the safety in the operation of an aircraft, we have multiple additional controls in place to ensure this is the case, we find that the human and operational cost/risk can be forgotten about while trying to release a quick solution to address what is perceived as an issue. Over time we have worked to improve and simplify processes so every change, big or small, is given the proper scrutiny.

Edited by [Richard Pearson](#) on Aug 29 at 10:47am

[Bill Osburn](#)

[Bill Osburn](#)

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 5:28pm

Richard,

I can see when safety is involved the tendency is to get things done without any question. As safety tends to be a major priority in my field, as a technician and in training pilots, I have found that if there is a safety concern there are no questions asked. They just want it gone. It goes along with bringing up cost savings when you want to get an idea across and implemented. I have always found that if I have an idea to bring to management, bringing up the monetary value or the safety concern will get it implemented.

I know when safety is concerned it has to be priority one and the best steps are not always followed but the end result should be effective.

[Richard Pearson](#)

[Richard Pearson](#)

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 6:32pm

This is incredibly accurate. I can't tell you how many times I have spoken with our engineers and they are always trying to see if they can incorporate their changes with safety or cost-reduction initiatives to help ease the approval process.

Jacquelyn Lopez-Barlow

Jacquelyn Lopez-Barlow

Aug 23, 2020Aug 23 at 11:44pm

Richard,

The response to a safety concern resonated with me. What you described is similar to what happens at my site. I work at a nuclear facility, and safety comes first. But when we do have safety concerns, the fix is usually quick, and it was not until a few months later that the implications are understood. Typically, we respond by adding more paperwork to the process and add extra steps to the execution of an activity. To help correct this response, we have fact-finding meetings with subject matter experts and managers to understand what the problem is. Action plans are developed after the fact-finding to drive implementation. Fact-findings are one of the best tools we have implemented at my site. It provided better opportunities for our staff to raise concerns but also be part of the solution.

Jonathan Weiss

Jonathan Weiss

Aug 26, 2020Aug 26 at 9:54am

Richard,

It makes sense that safety takes a number one priority and dictates almost automatic approval. Like you're saying, it's still important that there are proper procedures and protocols in place to vet all proposed safety procedures, whether big or small. While it's important to get safety protocols off the ground, they certainly shouldn't be rushed, like you pointed out. Of course,

safety is a number one concern, but it can still be addressed in a way that is conducive to being fiscally responsible and is in line with good business practices.

Kassie Mobley

Kassie Mobley

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 10:19pm

Richard,

I work in asset integrity for O&G and one of our primary drivers is safety as well along with regulatory compliance. In recent years we have also created our own risk analysis for each of our assets and we rank them in as a group as well as by geographic location. While this does differ from what you have described, I'm curious if your quantitative risk analysis always matches up with what you and your team would have concluded qualitatively. In our risk analysis, these do not always match up and we are currently working to improve our model.

Jeremy Meehleib

Jeremy Meehleib

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 12:13pm

One practice that was implemented in our company was the standardization of new product vetting gateways to ensure proper product development acceptance and prioritization. Initially, product initiatives may start in the sales department from a customer request and go straight to the lab team for development without ever being vetted to determine the broader business case of the application.

By implementing these vetting gateways, a company can ensure resource allocation is warranted by the business case. A small customer with a unique application and little possibility for broader use of the product may not be sufficient for efforts to be justified. However, the potential for broad adoption of the product or the significance of the customer to the business may justify the investment. This dialogue seldom took place before this process was implemented.

Making this change is difficult in companies where there is a strong sales culture. When "The customer wants X." is a sufficient business case, a lot of single use products can make their way into a company's product portfolio.

[Xiaomin Yang](#)

[Xiaomin Yang](#)

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 2:49pm

Jeremy, you raised a good point. When we go through the strategy and performance modules, please revisit the topic and think about what process/tools can be developed to help your company improve product portfolio management.

XY

Edited by [Xiaomin Yang](#) on Aug 22 at 2:50pm

[Bill Osburn](#)

[Bill Osburn](#)

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 5:37pm

Jeremy,

This vetting process has to be carried out to avoid wasting valuable resources. I am sure the cost savings after this implementation has been great. I know companies tend to want to give the customer all they want but research must be done to assure the vast majority would want the product or service and not just a few,

Has there been a lot of push back to implement these changes?

Sometimes all the information is not given and a lot of times you high dollar resources invested to something that was not required in the first place.

As much as we want to please the customer, all customers are not always right. It sounds like your company has made the right choice here.

Jeremy Meehleib

Jeremy Meehleib

Aug 23, 2020Aug 23 at 1:44pm

Bill - This "vetting gateway" was just one component of an overhaul of our product development and implementation process. It was definitely disruptive.

Bill Osburn

Bill Osburn

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 3:19pm

TCMT-612:700-702

Technical Management Decision Making

Module 1: Discussion 1

Bill Osburn

As a government contractor, most decisions are made and are out of my company's control. One such decision happened recently with the modernization of our simulators. The site that I work has the TSSC which entails Logistics, System Engineer, Software Engineer, Configuration Management, Data Manager, Database Modeler, and TSSC Manager, among others.

The decision was made to modernize the sims at all the other sites before our site. The issue with that decision is the Engineers and such were still expected to support all the other sites with little to no information about what the modernization involved. No supporting software or any way to test new software updates or visual updates. Also, as the main site, when Simulator Technicians are asked questions from other sites, they did not have answers or a way to duplicate issues experienced by other sites.

Luckily after some intense conversations between Corporate Management and the Government it was decided to modernize one simulator at our site. That alleviated all the above-mentioned concerns. Whatever is required can be done on the modernized simulator at our site.

Daniel Day

Daniel Day

Aug 24, 2020Aug 24 at 11:45pm

I can relate, Bill. The company I work for manages a portfolio of several data centers spread across the country. All of the data centers, being built at different times, in different environments, and for different clients, vary widely in the types and number and configuration of equipment. This becomes a hassle when trying to standardize industry or company-wide best practices. Our technical operations division might put out a new policy that they developed in coordination with the teams in Portland or Atlanta, but which is not feasible for the Dallas or Los Angeles sites. Calling up the TechOps team to explain our issue and hearing "Oh, yeah, you're right. We hadn't considered that." becomes tedious after a number of times.

Bill Osburn

Bill Osburn

Aug 29, 2020Aug 29 at 9:51am

Howdy Daniel,

I think lack of planning and communication causes problems everywhere in the Decision Making proces.

Mariano Paoli

Mariano Paoli

Aug 29, 2020Aug 29 at 12:45am

Hi Bill,

As a control systems engineer that gets to sometimes work on modernization projects and system migrations, I can tell you that this is always an issue. We mostly do work on refineries and chemical plants, and instead of simulators, we do upgrades on their control systems (including the operator graphics). Our job includes having to think of these operational issues ahead of time to avoid disruption of operations, so I would have expected the party responsible for the simulator upgrades to have included that in their plans. More often than not, modernization projects are completed in multiple phases. For that reason, lots of project planning ends up going into safety, disruption of operations, and employee training.

Bill Osburn

Bill Osburn

Aug 29, 2020Aug 29 at 9:53am

Howdy Mariano,

I can see you know exactly what we had to deal with. Proper planning and the correct questions asked ahead of time could have prevented our issue.

Mariano Paoli

Mariano Paoli

Aug 29, 2020Aug 29 at 10:31am

Good communication and planning are crucial to making these types of projects successful. It can go downhill quickly when people start taking shortcuts and purely focus on meeting deadlines instead of looking at the big picture.

Timothy Koontz

Timothy Koontz

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 4:09pm

I am employed as a health safety environment and quality manager for an offshore drilling company. The Company strives to stay ahead of the technology curve, but sometimes we play catch up. The Company has embarked on many new initiatives that either made us competitive or propelled us to the forefront of the market. It is my opinion that the decision to adopt a project was never an issue, but the means how we proceeded forward with projects is where the Company encounters problems. Last year, the Company made the decision to introduce Blockchain Technology into the offshore drilling realm. The project never manifested into anything that was beneficial to the Company. One would speculate that there were multiple factors to blame. Blockchain Technology was never introduced nor explained properly to the workforce, the face of the Company. The managers who interact with the current customers could not explain the technology or its applications. Another factor was that the technology was never incorporated into the Company's operations. By incorporating the technology into the Company's operations, potential customers could witness the product being used first hand. If used correctly, Blockchain Technology could have helped the Company operate more efficiently. The lack of actions to foster the Blockchain technology is what made the initiative a poor decision.

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 4:24pm

Tim,

In our industry, I think the most crucial thing before agreeing to add new technology or to change how things were done, the managers and supervisors need to know from A-Z how it works, this will allow them to train the employees or at least train them with SME to learn more about it.

By showing a lack of understanding of the technology, the managers and everybody else, are showing the clients and also the stakeholders that they are not prepared, and it might have been a good decision that will allow the company to propel in the industry but a lousy performance and action plan to implement it, maybe a little too impatient. Thanks for sharing.

[Eric Worley](#)

Eric Worley

Aug 23, 2020Aug 23 at 1:56pm

Timothy,

Thanks for your note and perspective as this is quite an interesting topic from both the technological side in the energy industry, as well as the failure to properly execute. First, I am curious, just from a high-level, how your company was planning on leveraging blockchain technology and implementing that into offshore drilling operations to realize efficiencies? What current process(es) was the technology supposed to replace? Secondly from the project standpoint, it sounds like maybe the idea was well intentioned but the planning and execution was a failure. Did the project have an executive sponsor and project manager assigned, or was this initiative just added to the agenda of a few employees' 'day job'? With the proper project oversight and 'gate reviews', someone would have likely paused the rollout until further evaluation. Also, as you mentioned, it was never integrated into the company's operations, nor did it have internal support/buy-in from the employees. In my opinion, this is a sure-fire way for failure as without internal support, certainly it will be nearly impossible to secure external, customer support. Maybe a phased approach including both key stakeholders internally and externally would have resulted in a greater success. Thanks again for sharing!

Eric Worley

ewworley@tamu.edu

Matthew Hudson

Matthew Hudson

Aug 26, 2020Aug 26 at 7:05pm

It sounds as if someone read about Blockchain, liked what they read and said, "we should do this!" Which is a great idea until you have to place it into practice and integrate it into the company. When you have managers that can't explain it and have no real understanding it can set everyone up for failure. Was the project taken to the end before it was stopped or did someone recognize the lack of understanding and place the project on hold until more information can be learned. In my company, I have seen managers and projects pushed further, even when the people working on the project can see it will not work and think it should be stopped. While I have no visibility, I think part of this is because it is an objective and there is a bonus tied to the project.

Jacquelyn Lopez-Barlow

Jacquelyn Lopez-Barlow

Aug 22, 2020Aug 22 at 4:20pm

My organization performs both R&D and production for various customers, and as a government contractor, how we make decisions can be unique. A couple of decision-making processes we do are making tactical and strategic decisions. Tactical decision-making is needed to keep work going and are based on what is happening right now but also the manager's risk level comfort. Strategic decision-making is usually more involved because they have higher impacts on what we do. For those decisions, the current situation is discussed, including short-term and long-term risks, and figuring out what is best for the organization. However, we do have challenges in making decisions. They are made without all the information available occasionally, or information is filtered out, and it depends on the individual's willingness to listen to opinions.

Edited by Jacquelyn Lopez-Barlow on Aug 22 at 4:22pm

Jeremy Meehleib

Jeremy Meehleib

Aug 23, 2020Aug 23 at 12:38pm

Jacquelyn - You mention 'information is filtered out'. Does the team that keeps the 'work going' have a firm grasp of the strategic impact of their work? In the absence of information, awareness of the big picture can provide the necessary direction for decisions to be made. If even that is not available, decision making can be difficult.

I once worked for a start-up in the bottling industry. When I took the position, one of the skills in the job description was "to be able to make decisions with little to NO information." I eventually realized that when there is a lack of information, I always had available to me the knowledge of the significance of the project to the success of the larger business to inform my decision. I allowed "Strategic" information to fill the gap to inform "Tactical" decisions.

I would venture to say that this approach works in the reverse direction as well. Using "Tactical" information to fill the gap and inform "Strategic" decisions. With little information to make a 'strategic' decision, one should allow the 'tactical' capabilities of the organization to be the influence. Essentially, "I do not know what to do strategically. So, what can I do with the

capabilities I have?" Obviously, this may curtail strategic decisions with grand visions, but vision without capability is often a difficult proposition. As more information becomes available, better strategy decisions can be made and 'tactical' capability can be planned for.

[Jacquelyn Lopez-Barlow](#)

[Jacquelyn Lopez-Barlow](#)

Aug 23, 2020Aug 23 at 10:57pm

Jeremy,

The information usually filtered were new risks or information considered "bad news." The lack of communication at the middle level created a lot of issues. We had senior managers who did not know scope was not being executed for months until recovery was not possible. This attitude is a cultural issue of "I can fix it, and I do not need help" that even today I encounter. Line management makes tactical decisions with a lot of real-time information. However, for some reason, when an activity did not go as planned, communication would stop. There was a knowledge gap that eventually led to tactical decision-making deviating from the strategy. Our first line managers did not know it was a problem, because no one told them. And our senior managers continued negotiating agreements; that, in reality, could not be met. I was involved in one of these situations about five years ago. It created a lot of stress for my coworkers and me. We couldn't get a clear answer to what should do, and anytime we tried a recovery plan, it felt like we only made the situation worse.

Edited by [Jacquelyn Lopez-Barlow](#) on Aug 23 at 10:59pm

[Jeremy Meehleib](#)

[Jeremy Meehleib](#)

Aug 24, 2020Aug 24 at 10:09am

Wow! When things don't go as planned, that is EXACTLY when communication needs to take place. Even better if you can have the "I'm not seeing things coming together quite right" conversation so you can appropriately adjust before 'it doesn't go as planned'. Were procedures adjusted after this to ensure better communication?

Jacquelyn Lopez-Barlow

Jacquelyn Lopez-Barlow

Aug 25, 2020Aug 25 at 9:10pm

Yes, I agree this is when we need to communicate. As an organization, we are getting better at communicating. In the last few months, we updated the Roles and Responsibilities documentation to clarify expectations for communication. As a program manager, this is frustrating, and I need to rely on my relationships to help collect the information I need.

Rosanna Popa Rangel

Rosanna Popa Rangel

Aug 24, 2020Aug 24 at 5:55pm

I cannot imagine going for months without knowing that the scope was not being executed in O&G. Communication is critical, and it sounds cliché, but it really is, especially between departments, everybody needs to work for the greater good, which is delivery and finalization of a top-quality product. If that product is an inspection, a risk evaluation, everybody should be on the same page. I understand how this could be stressful for all levels involved.

Eric Worley

Eric Worley

Aug 23, 2020Aug 23 at 1:19pm



Eric Worley

TCMT 612 - Technical Management Decision Making

Module 1: Discussion

The Short-term Perspective, Confirmation Biases, and the Consequences

I have had the opportunity to work across the energy industry for several years in numerous roles. I have seen different business decisions that have been influenced or impacted by various biases.

One in particular that is prevalent in my mind was concerning a nondestructive testing and inspection services firm. A business decision to prioritize one operational group over the other, supported by confirmation and framing biases, proved detrimental. There were two primary groups within the business: the first, which I was responsible for, was called 'Conventional.' This group was the business's legacy foundation and was a transactional, rapid-response intensive, callout model. The second newer operational group was named 'Major Projects,' which, as the name indicated, was focused on larger, scope-defined, capital projects.

Unfortunately, the new MP group was prioritized over the Conventional group in terms of resources (people and equipment) for a few years where Conventional resources were allocated to support MP. This resulted in the Conventional group losing market share as these resources were not available when customers called for short-notice support. Executive management overlooked this, and as the MP group grew, they referenced data that improperly justified this continued path with confirmation and framing biases. These biases included reassigning revenues from supporting resources in the Conventional group to MP, not correctly allocating costs to MP monthly profit/loss statements, and falsely inflating top-line growth and margins in the new MP group's financial performance.

Nonetheless, this all came to an inevitable crashing end when the Covid-19 pandemic hit. Large capital projects were halted or delayed, and the business is now in a precarious situation with a significant loss of Conventional market share and no MP activity. There is an old saying that one of my supervisors once told me that will be with me the rest of my career, "Data never lies, but liars use data." While the negative impact of biased influenced business decisions may not initially be visible, the consequences will eventually reveal themselves, and the result can be detrimental.

[Daniel Day](#)

[Daniel Day](#)

Aug 24, 2020Aug 24 at 11:31pm

Thanks for that, Eric. Where I work, I've also seen the impact of overzealous or reckless expansion. I work for a data center construction and facilities management company in DFW, and we have an issue right now that is in this same ballpark. In fact, I wish I had discussed it for my main post!

My company was looking to expand into the DFW market and purchased several pieces of land on which to build enterprise-level data center facilities. We were able to secure a customer relatively quickly and construction commenced. As the client was moving in, the senior management team made the decision to commence construction on the next facility, confident (based on their recent easy success) that they could find a client to occupy the facility by the time it was complete. This did not happen. The brand new, state of the art data center facility sat empty for three years. The company was hemorrhaging money, as, though the facility did not have any client equipment, it still had chillers, UPS systems, batteries, generators, etc. that all had to be maintained, as well as security and facility personnel to secure the site and conduct maintenance and what minimal operations were necessary. Eventually, the building was sold off to another infrastructure company, at what I understand was a significant loss, and it sits empty still.

Like you were describing, the major decision makers at the top seemingly got distracted by the new shiny, and failed to accurately assess, in our case, the saturation of the market.

[Eric Worley](#)

[Eric Worley](#)

Aug 25, 2020Aug 25 at 4:39pm

Hello Daniel,

Thanks for your response, and yet another short-sighted, premature business decision! Unfortunately, there does not seem to be any shortage of these, but hopefully with all of us working together through this program, we can learn to better identify and raise these issues to discuss within our organizations before more bad decisions are made. It seems that at the

senior-to-executive level, there is tremendous pressure of demonstrating performance quarter-to-quarter, especially in publicly traded companies, and that tends to take precedence in many cases.

However, in your specific example, I am very surprised that the management team decided to move forward with a second facility without having any type of commitment from a client. Even if they didn't have a purchase order and/or lease signed, it would have been prudent to identify some clients and at least secure an executed 'LOI' (letter of intent) prior to purchasing the land and building out the facility.

Nonetheless, thank you for chiming in with an interesting example that's eerily similar stemming from premature decisions, biased decisions, and generally poor business decisions.

Thanks Again,

Eric Worley

ewworley@tamu.edu

Sarah Terrill

Sarah Terrill

Aug 23, 2020Aug 23 at 2:21pm

Working in the government world we are often required to subcontract to businesses that meet certain aspects such as small business, minority owned, first-time proposers, regional owners, etc. While in theory these are great methods to encourage new and budding businesses, they are not always the best method to ensure quality outcomes. Living in Los Alamos, NM, where the business centers are often hours away and the cost of living is high we are also limited in the number of businesses who meet these aspects and are willing to submit proposals to our requests. We have become used to sub-par quality in our contracts. This sub-par quality leads us to an Anchor Bias. Our expectations are lower than industry standards for many of our contracts and we accept this. Our subcontractors have also become used to this Anchor Bias and do not work to offer more than what they have been offering in the past. They realize that this bias does not require discussion of any other items in the contract other than price and that the contract only needs to be completed and not competitive with others.

Eric Worley

[Eric Worley](#)

Aug 23, 2020Aug 23 at 7:44pm

Hello Sarah,

Thanks your comments, and you pointed out some very interesting aspects of anchor bias. In this example, it uniquely involves not only internal stakeholders, but also external 3rd parties you all are sourcing to contract who seem to be keenly aware and understand that lower expectations will be accepted for subpar work performance. You also mentioned that they know that the primary factor in being awarded the work is simply price and not other differentiators one would normally see in a competitive bid.

I understand Los Alamos, NM may be thin of local contractors and a competitive landscape from your note, but does the current remote working environment that many are practicing provide an opportunity to source outside of the local area? Is most of this work require to be physically onsite? Also, if price is truly the primary deciding factor for award, has that approach not 'bitten' the organization in terms of safety, quality, timeline, execution, and other issues that could jeopardize the project? If yes, how is this handled and rationalized to repeat the same behaviors when sourcing contractors time and time again?

Thanks Again,

Eric Worley

ewworley@tamu.edu

Edited by [Eric Worley](#) on Aug 23 at 7:51pm

[Robert Carrano](#)

[Robert Carrano](#)

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 6:35pm

Hello Sarah,

Being active duty military, I have seen and come across how the government is required to subcontract to specific businesses and provide them opportunities to take on different work. While I understand the idea behind it, I have witnessed a lot of what you discussed and how it has negatively impacted projects. I have seen networks or platforms installed by some of these small businesses, where they were to maintain them for a certain amount of years after. Unfortunately, it seems these contractors are not always large enough to supply support to all work-sites. This has left us stranded at times waiting way to long for an issue to be resolved. I

have also seen where the contractor was purchased by another without proper turnover. When we requested support, it also took a ridiculous amount of time to for the new company to assume the responsibility.

Respectfully,

Rob Carrano

[John Mullins](#)

[John Mullins](#)

Aug 23, 2020Aug 23 at 4:35pm

All companies have to make tough decisions whether a project is viable or not and cost is a major part of the decision making process. Our company is looking for a 3 year immediate rate of return when vetting projects. Our plant recently submitted a project to replace Nitrogen trailers that have a fixed monthly cost of \$9,000 (\$108,000 annually) and a variable cost depending number of trailer expended a year. The proposed number of trailers used for 2020 is expected to be 60 with a refill cost of \$1,500 per trailer for a estimated total of \$90,000. The combined fixed cost and variable cost is \$198,000 annually. The proposed project that was declined was a Nitrogen Generator system at a cost \$440,000 that would have resulted in a 2 year rate of return and a annual maintenance cost of \$2,500. The project has not been totally scrapped but moved to 2023, no reason given for pushing the project.

Good decision making for my company is the CEO listened to his staff about the impact of COVID-19 and the company allowed employees to staff the plants as they saw fit and corporate employees to work from home. He made the decision up front we would not be coming back in 2020 to take care of our families and get your work done during the day as you saw fit.

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

Aug 23, 2020Aug 23 at 6:13pm

John,

This is the type of considerations my company has to take when facing a tough decision. We ask

the question: is the investment worth it in the long run?

Sometimes, the price at first is appealing but in the long run other options are more worthy to be considered.

Thank you for sharing, I would love to discuss this further, it will be a great learning conversation that I can put to use in my field

Edited by [Rosanna Popa Rangel](#) on Aug 23 at 6:14pm

[John Mullins](#)

[John Mullins](#)

Aug 24, 2020Aug 24 at 8:20pm

Rosanna

Thank you for the comments and really appreciate the question of "is the investment worth it in the long run?" Maybe this will help me come up with an answer to get the project brought into to 2022 for our plant and maybe other in our fleet in the future.

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

Aug 24, 2020Aug 24 at 8:33pm

I am glad I could be of any help. Thank you

[Xiaomin Yang](#)

[Xiaomin Yang](#)

Aug 25, 2020Aug 25 at 12:35pm

John, Thank you for sharing the case. Please revisit the case when go through the finance performance module (operation cash flow in the context of cost leadership business strategy). You might be confident to make such decisions after mastering the strategy and finance concepts. Thanks. XY

Richard Pearson

Richard Pearson

Aug 29, 2020Aug 29 at 10:42am

The groups I have participated in aren't necessarily in the business to bring in a profit for the company rather than saving the company money. When we evaluate larger projects, we look for an ROI over 10 years, but that is in the hope of breaking even in most cases. Our primary driver is decreasing the downtime of an aircraft so if we can increase the on-wing time of troublesome components or decrease the manpower required to do various tasks helps us substantiate getting our project approved.

We had trouble with our upper management once COVID started to become a thing. A lot of personnel wanted to start working remotely, but that just wasn't the way things normally were done and they wanted cohesion with the people who had to be "boots on the ground" and didn't have the option to work from home. In the end office staff were allowed to work remotely and given the freedom to come into work, following certain precautions, if need be. In the end, by a lot of metrics we have been just as productive if not more during this time and morale has significantly improved with allowing remote working. (all of this from upper management) It will be interesting to see how the future way of working looks.

Carolyn Perez

Carolyn Perez

Aug 23, 2020Aug 23 at 6pm

At the previous company I worked for, Ingersoll Rand, there was a merger with Gardner Denver (another compressed air manufacturer) who was formerly our competitor. As a sales engineer, I spent my time on several occasions telling customers the issues with Gardener Denver equipment in an effort to sell more IR products. When the merger was announced, there was a collective sigh from the sales team as we now needed to sell the products that we were just

telling customers were not reliable. It was a difficult transition in that the entire sales and engineering team were also given all new equipment that we needed to become experts on overnight. However, these new products filled a hole in the market IR was not in yet, oil free compressors below 50Hp. Despite the trouble with learning the ins and outs of the equipment and working to make sure I was correctly selling both Ingersoll Rand and Gardener Denver products, the payoff of getting into the oil free market proved to be worthwhile for both the company and the sales team.

(3 likes)

[Mitchel Garrish](#)

[Mitchel Garrish](#)

Aug 24, 2020Aug 24 at 8pm

Hi Carolyn,

It sounds as if you successfully used Framing Bias as an influential sales tool by presenting your product as a superior product when driving a sale. Did you find that you knowingly or unknowingly used any other biases to your advantage as a sales engineer? Years ago, as a leasing agent, I would describe our freeway facing apartments as mountain views, in a thinly veiled attempt to frame expectations.

[Jeremy Meehleib](#)

[Jeremy Meehleib](#)

Aug 25, 2020Aug 25 at 11:11am

Carolyn and Mitchel - I had to chuckle a bit from your stories. I've seen sales teams make the sigh as mentioned by you Carolyn and the leveraging of biases mentioned by you Mitchel. As an engineer assisting salespersons with customers, I often found myself having to ensure expectations of product performance "framed" for the customer by sales, more closely matched reality.

[John Mullins](#)

[John Mullins](#)

Aug 24, 2020Aug 24 at 8:15pm

I actually just purchased 3 new I75r compressors over the last 2 years and looking to add 2 new I150r to complete the plant compressor replacements. It would have been nice if the oil free compressors were available in larger sizes as oil in the air systems have been detrimental to our systems which is the reason for the upgrade.

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

Aug 29, 2020Aug 29 at 12:08pm

Carolyn,

I work with Compressors in ALL of my projects; we use centrifugal, recip, screw, you name it. I honestly haven't heard of oil-free compressors, your post made me do a quick google search, and it's interesting. I'm wondering if, for my industry, this could work in the long run without having to replace them frequently, I wonder if the investment is worthy of low maintenance cost. Although our processes usually take thousands of horsepower, it's still interesting to learn these new technologies. This will help with cost savings if that's the case, no more piping to a slop oil tank, no more lube oil control. I am eager to know more about it.
Thanks for sharing.

[Mitchel Garrish](#)

[Mitchel Garrish](#)

Aug 23, 2020Aug 23 at 7:04pm

Currently, I am underway. Hurricane Marco is heading towards the Louisiana coast, and we are heading South West to calmer waters. The decision was to avoid the incoming storm. Our Captain ultimately made this decision, as is standard on seagoing vessels. However, the Captain didn't make this decision without considering all data, company policy, and consulting with department heads on board. Each morning we met and discussed the newly available data from the weather center. Using corporate standards, we developed a plan to secure the deck,

charted a safe route to avoid the storm, and ultimately decided that we must move locations. It is common for us to use corporate standards for decision making on board; this could be step by step procedures, flow charts, or risk matrixes. Although crew member buy-in is sometimes difficult, it adds a common strategy to our everyday decision making.

[Joseph Ramirez](#)

[Joseph Ramirez](#)

Aug 24, 2020Aug 24 at 11:46pm

Mitchel,

I'm just curious on this in regards to the safety and risk due to the situation. You mentioned that you all follow corporate standards, but are there any OSHA standards or any other government standards that need to be followed? Stay safe out there!

[Mitchel Garrish](#)

[Mitchel Garrish](#)

Aug 25, 2020Aug 25 at 4:45pm

Hi Joseph,

We follow the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) and Coast Guard regulations. OSHA would come in to play if BSEE and the Coast Guard do not regulate a specific working condition.

[Matthew Hudson](#)

[Matthew Hudson](#)

Aug 24, 2020Aug 24 at 7:25pm

As a Microsoft Most Valuable Professional in 2010, I was given private information for over 1 year about Azure, the rollout, plan and how to adopt it. The information and access to beta software allowed me to understand the direction of Microsoft and how the company should adjust to the market shift. My company was offered free licenses to help us enter the Cloud, we declined because management didn't understand the Cloud and resisted input from IT. They fought against the Cloud for 5 years until they promoted the largest opponent of the Cloud to manage our company's Cloud strategy.

Many years ago, an employee drove to an oil field site several hours away. When he didn't arrive on time the situation was not questioned until later. The employee had fallen asleep and driven off the road, wrecking the vehicle. Management now requires frequent breaks while driving and a phone call or Phone App to a special group that manages travel of employees, outside of home to office trips. This process has saved many lives and places employee safety above all else. If the trip is not safe due to weather conditions, sleep, or time of day, no matter the cost to the job, the employee is not allowed to travel. Failure to follow the rules has resulted in accidents and employee deaths.

Edited by [Matthew Hudson](#) on Aug 27 at 7:58pm

[Tim Parker](#)

[Tim Parker](#)

Aug 27, 2020Aug 27 at 3:48pm

Matthew,

Decisions regarding data strategy and movement to the cloud is nebulous and wrought with very hard decision choices. My company is coming to terms and working on its data strategy and combining resources. We of course have the old guard and IT fighting several initiatives to help us move in the right direction. Keeping our old methods, servers and fragmenting data (such as recreating the same information/database several different times) has caused some major hurdles to working across many departments. The ship is slowly turning its course, but managing cloud strategy is a long, arduous and scary process for many.

[Daniel Day](#)

Daniel Day

Aug 24, 2020Aug 24 at 10:58pm

Where I work, there is a tendency to not want to be the person who makes a decision. When presented with problem situations, instead of taking reasonable action to correct an issue, there often seems to be a hesitance to act, and to instead seek guidance from a senior leader before implementing any solution in the moment. While this does result in the *wrong* action being seldom taken, it often results in *no* action being taken when time is a significant factor. The personnel responsible for taking action usually know, when prompted, what actions they should be taking, but often respond with "Well, I just wanted to check with you first" or similar when speaking to a senior leader about the situation at hand.

We (the management team) are discussing and brainstorming ways we can encourage and/or incentivize more prompt and autonomous decision making action from the team, while maintaining a healthy line of communication up and down the chain.

Mitchel Garrish

Mitchel Garrish

Aug 25, 2020Aug 25 at 4:59pm

Hi Daniel,

Unfortunately, this type of decision making is pretty standard in my industry. Our client representatives often defer all major decisions to their onshore leadership team. It's easy to see how we got to this point in the Offshore Oil & Gas industry, considering past high profile disasters. However, it does create inefficiencies and frustrations.

Tyler Gilbreath

Tyler Gilbreath

Aug 31, 2020Aug 31 at 12:18am

In instances where someone did step up to make a decision, what happened if it was the right or wrong decision? I have had team members tell me they would prefer for a manager to come and make a decision than make a decision on their own. I always try to reinforce that I prefer

action over inaction. When people take the approach and can explain why they did what they did, I can support them better than if they just did nothing.

Something I have used in the past to encourage decision making for my teams is to turn issues around and ask the team member how they would fix it. I then ask what would you need to resolve the issue and provide them with what they need. You have to start slow and let them know you are willing to also invest time or resources into helping them resolve the issue but not fix it for them.

Daniel Day

Daniel Day

Aug 31, 2020Aug 31 at 7:38pm

That sounds like good advice, Tyler. I appreciate it.

Joseph Ramirez

Joseph Ramirez

Aug 24, 2020Aug 24 at 11:29pm

I have witnessed both good and bad decision-making practices within my current company. One example of a bad decision that I have seen, consisted of a motor issue that had to be recalled. A cheaper motor from a manufacturer that our company had no history with, was used in the assembly of new floor model machines. This decision was made based on cost and availability. The issue was not found on these motors until after a years' worth of use for some customers. It was found that the motor bearing would come slightly loose and this was causing a loud squealing noise. A limited amount of testing on these motors was done due to the need of expediting the machines to customers to meet deadlines. If longer testing cycles had been done before approving these motors for assembly, then this issue would more than likely have been found. Instead it has cost the company money in the long run to get these motors replaced at customer sites.

Jacquelyn Lopez-Barlow

Jacquelyn Lopez-Barlow

Aug 25, 2020Aug 25 at 9:21pm

Joseph,

We have been on the receiving end of a situation similar to this for our limited volume (LV) circulating chilled water systems. We ordered the LVs from a company and requested replacement parts to be available off the shelf. Eventually, we received notification about the concern that allowed us to update our maintenance plans. In response to finding out about the issue, what did your company do? Were there any lessons learned/good practices identified?

Joseph Ramirez

Joseph Ramirez

Aug 25, 2020Aug 25 at 10:13pm

Jacquelyn,

So, after replacing the motors with another manufacturer of course, we had implemented better testing practices and standards for our motors. This also provided an opportunity for us to switch to AC motors over DC for our future products. We received feedback and learned that some customers wanted to use the machines for more of a fatigue test which would put a lot of load on the motors and this was not possible for our current DC motors. So overall it helped us to implement a better-quality machine.

Tim Parker

Tim Parker

Aug 25, 2020Aug 25 at 5:33pm

One of the worst decision-making practices in my company is continuing to use gut instinct when we have information that directly disproves gut instinct. The company I work for is

extremely conservative with most of our leadership have decades worth of experience in the industry (which is a great thing.) One of the biggest problems though, is how leadership feels that our product is being used. We now have factual knowledge from a statistically significant population of how our product is operating, including down time, idle time and a lot of other metrics. Not only that, but we also have the resources available and the ability to digest and process the data to show that some long held norms of the industry are just no longer applicable. We still see some of our decision makers continue to ignore the information presented.

Thankfully, our highest level of executives and many departments are starting to tap into the new sources of information, so many are questioning long held notions.

[Damian Dalcour](#)

[Damian Dalcour](#)

Aug 25, 2020Aug 25 at 5:44pm

This is an area where I am needing to improve on my impulse control and stop going with the "GUT INSTINCTS". Although its normal, this one characteristic can lead to some huge pitfalls with self, life and your employer. Definitely a good read for the team, thanks for the correspondence.

[Damian Dalcour](#)

[Damian Dalcour](#)

Aug 25, 2020Aug 25 at 5:54pm

I definitely can agree that the management can sometimes be the problem over a thought out solution, but I guess thats what happens when you get a bunch of cooks in the kitchen. The question I seldom ask is, " will we ever triumph over the hurdles in our path that ultimately hold our companies back"? I am a firm believer that organizations fail due to leadership at the top. Furthermore, thats why I am sure that all of us our on that path to make a difference . And who knows maybe we can look back at these journals one day and acknowledge the change that was necessary to put us where we are headed.

Ronnie Hurst

Ronnie Hurst

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 9:36pm

Tim -

I can relate to your post quite a bit because I see it all the time within my organization as well. As you mentioned, we are also in relatively good shape because we have experienced decision-makers that have been historically right for a long time. However, we have done a poor job in taking the tribal knowledge that exists within those individuals and laying out solid strategies for making decisions or building appropriate models.

Is your organization building tools/models to make better decisions? Are they utilizing historical data and past decisions to shape that at all?

Tyler Gilbreath

Tyler Gilbreath

Aug 31, 2020Aug 31 at 12:13am

FritoLay was notorious for this mindset with their teams that specialized in each product line. The teams were comprised of seasoned veterans that had operated the production lines for years, moved into leadership roles, and were now working as the company experts in that area. I specifically remember the Doritos specialist had been in that role for nearly 20 years. He was extremely resilient to new technology or processes that increased efficiency or overall chip quality if they were not processes/technology that he had personally used.

Amazon is not structured this way at all. There is not a lot of tenure in management which makes for greater opportunity for trying new things and using data to drive business decisions instead of gut instinct.

Damian Dalcour

Damian Dalcour

Aug 25, 2020Aug 25 at 5:36pm

[TCMT-612;700-702 Module1 Discussion.docx](#)

John Mullins

John Mullins

Aug 25, 2020Aug 25 at 8:17pm

Damian,

Do you believe the meetings are being held frequently enough? In the past we used to have similar style meetings but due to the meetings going long and covering such a broad range of topics we switched to meeting weekly for safety, have a separate weekly meeting for idea generation that identifies cost savings or process improvements. These meetings are scripted to prevent the war stories and stay on track, even with meeting more frequently the total meeting time is down and are more productive.

Damian Dalcour

Damian Dalcour

Aug 28, 2020Aug 28 at 7:36am

No sir, the meetings are only once a month and by the next meeting everyone has cooled off from the enthusiasm from the previous meeting. Its sad that most of the employees only attend to get a relief from work, but there are few like myself that can spearhead a few good topics here and there. There is definitely some room for my like minds and more availability to have discussion/debate about production at Lockheed Martin and to add there can NEVER be TOO MUCH DISCUSSION about work place etiquette and safety metrics. Maybe you and I and some of our other colleagues can establish a practice that changes the world, who knows....I say, "LETS GET BUSY".

Jonathan Weiss

Jonathan Weiss

Aug 25, 2020Aug 25 at 8:07pm

I'm relatively new to my company, but so far I have been very impressed with the efficiency and processes that are in place. It has been made very clear by my superiors, that they do not believe in double-work or doing things that don't make sense. One of our clients needed help deciding on what product they should put under contract. The client was leaning towards choosing a product that did not make sense technically, and would have created a lot of problems for our company and there's down the road. In order to avoid this from happening, our engineering department took it upon themselves to write up a document explaining why one product should be chosen over the other. The client took our company's advice and will be putting the recommended product under contract. Because my company took the actions they did, they will be saving the client money and preventing a lot of unnecessary work and headaches in the future.

Matthew Hudson

Matthew Hudson

Aug 26, 2020Aug 26 at 7:11pm

This is a great example of placing the customer needs front and center. It also creates an environment of respect and compassion. Your company is not after money but a long standing relationship which will hopefully lead to more business between the companies and that produces profits and partnerships in the long run. This is also where you hope the engineer is praised by management, down the road. I try to keep track of these types of actions and response so that when it comes time for quarter or yearly review we can bring them up as the manager might have forgotten.

Joseph Ramirez

Joseph Ramirez

Aug 27, 2020Aug 27 at 10:24pm

It sounds like your engineering department did a great job in being decisive and thoughtful. Often times, I have seen decisions made off impulse or bias but weighing the options and presenting an explanation, such as your company did, shows great decision making. I have seen my company make decisions on suppliers that consisted of using framing bias. Certain managers have a preexisting agenda in mind when looking at new suppliers and they often choose the supplier without input from either the engineers or other employees.

Edited by [Joseph Ramirez](#) on Aug 27 at 10:25pm

[Travis Metz](#)

[Travis Metz](#)

Aug 28, 2020Aug 28 at 5:35pm

This is very encouraging to read. I love it when something isn't simply stonewalled as being a problem, and though the initial product was what the client thought they wanted, somebody (or multiple somebodies) was able to quantify another product that was identified as being a better overall solution for the long term. The simple fact that your engineering department took that extra step went a long way towards elevating the client's trust and respect, I have no doubt.

[Matthew Hudson](#)

[Matthew Hudson](#)

Aug 26, 2020Aug 26 at 8:59pm

We were falling behind in our Windows 7 to Windows 10 adoption rate. Upper management decided to start an email campaign to push the notation of what the user will gain by upgrading to the latest version of Windows 10, instead of telling the users they will be forced or "get with the program" Through the multiple emails and internal message boards, over several months, we saw thousands of users upgrade ahead of the phased deployment deadlines across the company. By upgrading early the users experienced a decrease in non-productive time because they could start the upgrade and reboot the machine when their work load allowed it. They

also felt empowered about the move because they decided to make the move instead of forced by IT.

Edited by [Matthew Hudson](#) on Aug 27 at 8:02pm

[Tim Parker](#)

[Tim Parker](#)

Aug 27, 2020Aug 27 at 4:02pm

It is amazing how a simple, properly framed task can cause better adoption as well as increases in morale. The upgrade itself isn't a big deal, but it gave the employees a feeling of advocacy and empowerment. When presented with choices in methodology and tone, but needing the results the same, giving empowerment typically gets better results.

[Amy Hollabaugh](#)

[Amy Hollabaugh](#)

Aug 26, 2020Aug 26 at 10:56pm

The Good:

During the pandemic our management decided to let us work from home and have been supportive to the employees and everyone's new schedules and needs. My direct manager has been concerned about our groups health and has been conservative on allowing us to come on-site and checks in with us on a regular basis. I think in these uncertain times it has been refreshing to see management care of their employees well being.

The Bad:

Our state government has enforced a new roundabout onto our community without discussing this change with local government or the citizens. The roundabout is on a state road that is the thoroughfare of the town. The state conducted general traffic research for calming traffic patterns, however they didn't take the community and their wants into consideration. The community now has to deal with the road construction that has caused quite a bit of traffic (pre COVID times) and the construction still isn't done yet, the community and the local government feel ignored and are stuck with a roundabout no one wanted.

Megan Wallace

Megan Wallace

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 10:22am

Amy,

I really enjoy seeing stories of when management cares about their employees, it's an important and surprisingly overlooked aspect of leadership. Too often people are only concerned with the bottom line, as opposed to getting the job done while still taking care of those around them.

I can relate to community road changes coming out of nowhere, the street I live on is split with a median, and apparently a decision was made to continue that median all the way to the nearest intersection (Brothers Blvd and Texas Ave in College Station). For several weeks, the flow of traffic was impeded as the median prevented any turnaround options, but an actual traffic light had yet to be installed. It's definitely frustrating when the city makes decisions without actually consulting with those primarily affected by the outcome.

Tyler Gilbreath

Tyler Gilbreath

Aug 27, 2020Aug 27 at 8:10pm

Amazon has 12 leadership principles that act as a guide from our senior management team all the way down to our hourly associates. Two of the principles that stick out to me most are "Bias for Action" and "Have Backbone, Disagree and Commit."

Bias for Action calls for quick, calculated decision making sometimes without all the information provided. Amazon values calculated risk-taking. I have enjoyed having this flexibility to make on the spot, gut decisions without having to seek multiple levels of approval. This type of action gives me a true sense of ownership at my job and allows me to learn from the good and bad outcomes of my decisions.

Have Backbone, Disagree, and Commit is another decision-making practice that I am growing to appreciate as I am developing my technical decision-making skills. This encourages managers

and associates to defend their decisions regardless of how it may impact social cohesion. I feel like this decision-making practice can sometimes lean too far into anchoring bias. I am excited to begin looking for anchors that are not capturing the full scope of a problem or situation.

Richard Pearson

Richard Pearson

Aug 29, 2020Aug 29 at 10:17am

Tyler,

I think for some of us this feels like a dream, having the power to make decisions on the spot without having to go through the bureaucracy. My question would be, do you guys have a corporate standard to evaluate the potential risks in your decisions or is there a standard on who can make what kind of decisions? Also, I would be interested to hear how this affects team morale if someone may be good, but lack the backbone to make such decisions or decisions are always affecting them.

Tyler Gilbreath

Tyler Gilbreath

Aug 31, 2020Aug 31 at 12:01am

Richard,

I should clarify that decisions I make are generally not long-term impacting or ongoing. Amazon is extremely fast paced and our priority is ensuring we fulfill every customer's order to maximize their experience while shopping or utilizing an Amazon service each day.

For example, I have been in situations where I have to decide if I am going to staff additional pickers at the cost of removing counters who are helping to verify our inventory is accurate. On the shift I work, I know we complete a significantly larger amount of volume compared to my night shift counterparts. I have made the decision to take counters off station to put pickers on station to ensure that I can fulfill the current orders that are generated in my work pool. I can then create an additional plan to staff additional counters for the night shift to assist in inventory verification because I know their volume is reduced and will allow for counters to

occupy more stations. I can bridge to my direct manager and senior managers why I took the actions I took during shift and what I have done to ensure we are still working to validate inventory.

Rosanna Popa Rangel

Rosanna Popa Rangel

Aug 29, 2020Aug 29 at 12:47pm

Tyler,

The company where I work also implemented certain principles to be followed, here's a little extract from the web page:

The eight Guiding Principles are key to the internal culture of an organization. They are integrity, stewardship and compliance, Principled Entrepreneurship™, transformation, knowledge, humility, respect, and self-actualization. When put into action, these principles combine to create a dynamic and positive culture.

An organization's culture is the foundation of success, and a healthy, thriving workplace is a prerequisite to being able to solve problems using the five dimensions of MBM®.

These 8 principles are the backbone of my company and what has helped us grow in the past 5 years and create strong relationships with our clients and stakeholders.

Travis Metz

Travis Metz

Aug 28, 2020Aug 28 at 5:17pm

Within my current company, the decision-making practices are laughable at best and more often than not, dangerous to personnel. Any decision that could possibly affect the bottom line is met with resentment from upper management, who then typically sees fit to remedy the

issue with the application of unnecessary stress and unsafe demands to simply work harder and faster for longer hours with as minimal support as possible. As a recent example of this, a 5-day scheduled maintenance period at the company dock was shortened to 3 days with the expectation that we go out of our way to meet that at the expense of our own personal safety and regardless of how much necessary work was actually completed.

In years past at other companies, however, that was not the case. It was understood that the vessel was the asset that generated revenue, not any of the personnel, whether in the fleet or shore-side. In those instances, spending additional, reasonable money early to upgrade machinery components or systems was applauded as it lent itself to lower maintenance costs over the long term as well as better overall reliability to the asset.

[Troy Philips](#)

[Troy Philips](#)

Aug 29, 2020 Aug 29 at 10:11pm

Travis,

It's insane to me that a company would risk personnel just to make a little more revenue, unfortunately this isn't the first time I've heard of this. I have a few friends that have had the same issue and I just cannot understand how that is beneficial for a company in the long run. Was there ever a situation where someone actually was injured because of a decision from upper management? If there was, did it influence how the company handled similar future decision making?

[Travis Metz](#)

[Travis Metz](#)

Aug 30, 2020 Aug 30 at 3:45pm

This has unfortunately been a bit of an overarching theme within the maritime world, although it is mercifully on its way out. There is no true benefit, but some still see fit to gamble for the short term luck so they (the shot-callers up above) can look like rockstars. I've seen that mentality backfire time and time again, and every time it typically resulted in accident

investigations and multiple days of down time (reduced/non-operational rates). Everybody I've worked with over the years has managed to dodge the bullet, but there are more than plenty out there who did not.

Different companies I've been with handled this situation differently, and in one instance, the solution was simply to install a revolving door so there was never steady, set leadership. Pretty cool when a ship goes through 8 or 10 captains in less than 3 years. The common denominator there was that the company tried to force itself between captain, client, and operational personnel. Needless to say, that vessel is no longer operational and I doubt it'll come out of retirement.

In the world of offshore drilling, the idea of "speed = success" is being replaced with "efficiency = success." That's a huge difference, believe it or not. Going away from outright speed to more thorough planning and setting a fluid, comfortable pace does lead to more efficiency, mostly because everything isn't getting torn up left and right. Commercial fishing up in Alaska was its own can of worms. Now, in the tug and barge industry, specifically for clean oil/petroleum transportation and distribution, it's a bit more speed and less efficiency, although it is possible to sway opinions if you dig your heels in and bark loud enough.

The biggest issue, I think, stems from the difference in work environments. Office management goes home to the comforts of their home and family every night. Fleet personnel don't. We leave our families behind for weeks (or months) at a time and work in rather isolated and potentially harsh and hazardous environments. That disconnect tends to be the starting point for the office to say "No" to certain things. Prime example - water, for intents and purposes, is unlimited at home. On the vessel, we carry 7300 gallons, of which the pumps can only reach about 6000 gallons. No means of water production, so we are at the mercy of a dock having water for us. Now, the price of oil drops, refineries stop producing, we're on standby waiting for work. 6000 gallons of water divided by 7 people is effectively 857 gallons per person. Realistically, that number is much lower. Doing laundry, flushing a toilet, taking a shower, just tending to basic hygiene becomes a numbers game. Asking for a dock time just to refill, that costs money, and we are told, "No." Purchasing a water maker (Reverse Osmosis unit) also costs money and materials, plus a day to put it in, but now we don't need a dock to have water. That however, is also a "No." We are then effectively forced to compromise health and hygiene just to save a few dollars. Crew member(s) get sick from lack of water availability, now the company is sending people to clinics and/or switching people out just to keep the vessel on standby status and generating revenue.

I apologize if this is perceived as a bit of a rant, but enough close calls over the years does tend to sour one's perspective on the ugly reality of it all.

Logan Presnall

Logan Presnall

Aug 28, 2020Aug 28 at 9:39pm

In my organization we tend to use a data driven approach when it comes to assigning personnel and assets to a given project. For example, a similar project used this many people, required this much time and this many assets. I've been on projects where this approach both has worked and on others where it ended up failing.

What this approach doesn't take into account is the experience of the people being assigned or the specific details of the new project. The result when it fails are many. On one project, we ended up having to delay the delivery by more than 3 months and reassessing the personnel on the project to bring on more experienced people to complete the project. With the added cost increase to bring in the more experienced people and delays in the delivery we ended up with a reasonably upset customer and no expectation of a repeat contract.

On the other hand, when it does work it serves as a quick and seemingly efficient way to forecast who is going to be tasked to what project for the foreseeable future, what assets will be tied up, and if we will come close to meeting the deadline. It seems to act as the easy button and with a little deeper look at each individual project we could end up being more efficient.

Edited by [Logan Presnall](#) on Aug 28 at 9:58pm

[Richard Pearson](#)

[Richard Pearson](#)

Aug 29, 2020Aug 29 at 10:10am

Logan,

We run into this issue a lot, not usually at the project development level, but at the action level. For example, we may release a modification to an aircraft that requires extensive mechanic manpower to accomplish. We will usually assign a number of manhours to have the job accomplished, but there is rarely a step to review the potential capabilities of the location or the mechanics who may be doing the work. Whether accomplished internally with our own mechanics or outsourced to a vendor who manages their manpower and/or capabilities, we find ourselves running into modifications taking longer than expected which starts to compound on the other work required for the aircraft.

We have taken some steps in recent years to help address these types of issues; prototyping of the work at applicable locations, engineering support onsite during the first accomplishment, specific contractual obligations (for vendors), and more. We have started to see an improvement over time, but I believe we could still do more to evaluate the manpower risk during the project development phase.

Taylor Anderson

Taylor Anderson

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 9:13pm

Logan,

With my organization being mostly data-driven decisions as well I have also experienced the failure of this being the primary method. It does not take into consideration the experience and knowledge of the individuals on the team have. I am currently experiencing this at work at the moment where one function is presenting data along with suggestions to my team for us to set a schedule for a project, but the inexperience on the presenting team shows in the suggestions being made which therefore waterfalls to my team compiling our own data and using past experiences on other contracts to drive our decision. While experience is not everything when making decisions, it can save a lot of time and costs in the long run when having encountered schedule slip-ups in the past and using this information along with new data to make decisions and set a schedule.

Mariano Paoli

Mariano Paoli

Aug 28, 2020Aug 28 at 11:11pm

I work for an I&C (Instrumentation and Control) engineering company, and we base our work on projects awarded by our clients. Since we are project-driven, one of the most challenging aspects of the business is the manpower loading. Being able to juggle multiple people in multiple projects from different clients may sometimes create a bit of chaos. For this reason, the company typically tries to assign a project manager and a team to a specific client. One of the project managers I have been fortunate to work for does a great job when deciding how to initially split up the work when we are awarded multiple projects from a client. He likes to set up a meeting with the whole team, i.e., engineers and designers, to discuss as a group what we consider to be the best path forward. Although the project manager and the team control most of the conversation in the meeting, he also requests another project manager and the engineering director to sit in and provide their opinion. I believe this technique allows him to

get an unbiased perspective of the upcoming challenges and gives him enough insight to make the right decisions.

Richard Pearson

Richard Pearson

Aug 29, 2020Aug 29 at 10:03am

Mariano,

I always find it is tough to balance the act of bringing more people into the room to provide more perspective vs having too many opinions and then working through all the different perspectives. Have you been in situations where the Engineering Director provides their opinion and it doesn't coincide with the opinions of the project manager or group at large? How are those situations dealt with?

Mariano Paoli

Mariano Paoli

Aug 29, 2020Aug 29 at 11:18am

That can certainly become an issue; however, that is where the project manager would take charge of the meeting. As mentioned in the post, the idea of the meeting is to let the team hash out what we think the best path forward is through rational conversations. Setting ground rules for the meeting is vital in making this happen. First, the roles have to be well defined. The Engineering Director and the visiting project manager are only there to point out blind spots. If they get to point where they are crossing that line, it is the role of the project manager to restore order. As far as having too many opinions from the team, this can sometimes be mitigated by breaking down tasks and pre-assigning project roles. The team member in charge of that task bears more weight in the argument as they set the “anchor” on the proposed solution. The rest of the team is there to voice their concerns, but ultimately the project manager can act as a filter to maintain the order and productivity of the meeting. For the most part, it works well, but our meetings are composed of roughly ten people. I can see how it would become increasingly harder to keep control when the attendance increases.

Kaleigh Philips

Kaleigh Philips

Aug 29, 2020Aug 29 at 2pm

There are so many decisions that get made on a daily basis throughout our work and personal lives. A specific example I can think of where I feel good decision making practices were followed is as recent as the threat of Hurricanes Laura and Marco, and how my work and kids schools responded.

Often, we are frustrated with businesses not shutting down soon enough and employees being stranded at the office, or schools not making the call soon enough and then having to get out on the roads during a storm to pick up kids. With the threat of two possible hurricanes, both work and school chose to call it early enough before the potential storms to give people time not only to get home, but to make plans to leave town if that is what they chose to do.

Even though we did not receive the weather that was anticipated, it gave time for families to plan and make accommodations rather than being rushed at the last minute. This same scenario could have very easily been an example of bad decision making if the storm had made a direct hit, and communities chose to not shut down quick enough.

Amy Hollabaugh

Amy Hollabaugh

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 9:03am

Kaleigh,

I can totally relate to this, I live in the mountains so we worry more about forest fires and snow storms but the same principle applies. I think it is comforting when community leaders make proactive decisions to keep everyone safe from whatever disaster is about to hit. Also, I think in our society as a whole we have a herd mentality, so if everyone is going to work/school we all feel some pressure to follow rather than listen our intuition and say to ourselves "I don't feel comfortable/safe I'm not going into work/school today." And when the community leaders make a choice for the entire community to keep us all safe it helps affirm your intuition.

Zachary Smith

Zachary Smith

Aug 29, 2020Aug 29 at 7:58pm

Roughly two years ago, I transitioned to a sales position at my company and my boss for this new role had just been hired. Prior to my sales role, I had been in varying roles at my company since 2013 and had a good understanding of our target clientele and our risk profile. My new boss, was a little unaware of how crucial our risk profile was with our management's decision-making/approval process - it's also important to note that our risk profile is very risk averse. In one instance, a promise was essentially made where we would execute a project with little to no profit with the expectation that we'd be in line to be awarded for more work in the future from this client. Regardless of the ethics associated with this predicament, the opportunity for us to execute this project was shutdown by our management, rightfully so, and we had to renege on our promise with the potential customer. My company's well thought out risk profile and it being integral to our decision-making/approval process often prevents us from making business decisions that could potentially hurt the company's commercial status and reputation.

Logan Presnall

Logan Presnall

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 5:03pm

Zachary,

Being risk averse is something that my organization is as well. Although I understand the decision, I sometimes find myself wishing that we were able to take more risks in changing processes or accepting contracts. I believe, at least in my case and from an engineering view, that new challenges promote new growth, new ideas and more potential for new business.

Troy Philips

[Troy Philips](#)

Aug 29, 2020Aug 29 at 9:57pm

A recent example of a good decision making at my company is their new work from home policy. They proactively took step to ensure all employees, nationwide, were able to work in an environment that would be in the best interest of the employee. While they could have easily waited for a state mandates to closes offices around the country, they recognized the situation, assessed it, and made a decision that would minimize business disruptions. Not only did they make the work from home mandatory, they made it clear in company meetings that there would be no chance of going back into the offices until the end of this school year. This allowed employees with children the opportunity focus less on what they would do if they had to return to work and the child's school was closed, and more on their work.

[Megan Wallace](#)

[Megan Wallace](#)

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 10:18am

Troy,

Making the move to a WFH environment can be a serious undertaking, at least from a technology standpoint. I briefly had a job in a work from home call center supporting the Netflix service, the company had just moved to primarily WFH and it was an absolute mess. Their infrastructure wasn't set up to support so many personal machines in such a way. For example, permissions were assigned based on computer name as opposed to MAC address, so if there were two computers with the same name (like JOHN-PC), everything broke in the middle of the workday. It's interesting to see how different companies are taking steps to ensure the safety of all employees.

Edited by [Megan Wallace](#) on Aug 30 at 10:19am

[Taylor Anderson](#)

[Taylor Anderson](#)

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 9:20pm

Troy,

My company made the same decision and transitioned to working from home where applicable before they were forced by the state. While there were some technical issues at the beginning, I agree that this was in the best interest of all the employees and am grateful to work for a company like yours that puts employees first. Within this new transition, it has also been found that there are multiple groups that can be just as productive in a WFH setting as they are in the office and will possibly be staying in a WFH setting. This decision to put employees at the forefront and attempt to keep everyone safe and healthy could save costs in the long run and solve office space issues.

Megan Wallace

Megan Wallace

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 10:14am

While I'm still very new to my current company (just finished my second week in the office), I've seen a little bit of our process and am excited to know that it's all very collaborative. We're a small company, 2 co-owners, 3 support techs, and our administrative assistant, but in anything we've done so far, everyone is involved. While I don't necessarily have a specific example, I appreciate that, despite my newness to the business, my thoughts and opinions are still taken into account for decisions we make for our clients. Unfortunately, sometimes choices will be made despite our input, but we're able to adapt and find solutions regardless. At least from what I've observed, though, that's being improved upon, where those of us who are involved in delivering solutions are being included in the decision making discussion. I'm looking forward to learning more about how my company functions in the coming weeks and months and hopefully being able to effectively contribute to the team.

Logan Presnall

Logan Presnall

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 5:12pm

Megan,

That's awesome that you feel like you can be heard already starting at a new company, no matter the size. On my team we struggle with that, we have some of the more senior people that still believe in the "until you've proven yourself" mantra. It seems to have a more negative overall impact and people are a lot less likely to speak up when they do have a good idea because they got shot down when they were a new employee.

Robert Carrano

Robert Carrano

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 6:46pm

Hello Megan,

From what I read, that sounds like a great company to be a part of. As you mentioned, sometimes choices will be made despite your input, but you're still able to contribute and voice your ideas. You're present and part of a team. One unit in which I used to belong, never took any of our suggestions and barely listened. No one wanted to work there, it was an environment in which you clocked in and then out at the end of the day. Coworkers didn't have interest in each other, and how could they when they feel they didn't belong due to upper management's leadership style?

Respectfully,

Rob Carrano

Tanner Welch

Tanner Welch

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 11:48am

An example of good decision making within my company was the strategic decision to align ourselves with a major client's greenfield project by offering our services at, or below market value at the time of the initial contract signing. Since the initial contract signing, the client has experienced significant exploratory successes and has contracted three more of my company's assets under a unique commercial enabling agreement. This agreement has made my company the predominant player within the geographic region, as well as within our client's portfolio, leading to additional contract work awarded to my company.

A recent poor decision made by my company was to commit to the alteration of existing critical safety equipment by installing unproven technology. While the unproven technology passed and exceeded all preliminary testing trials, was awarded governing body approval, and deemed suitable for operations, upon installation and field use, the equipment has experienced catastrophic failure. While this failure will result in the loss of a substantial monetary amount, the failure is compounded as the technology was installed throughout the company, and not simply on one asset. I feel that the implementation of new technology on such a critical piece of equipment would have been better implemented on a single asset for a trial run integration phase.

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 12:12pm

Tanner,

I agree with your last sentence, it would've been a better decision to use it in one asset to evaluate performance through time and then analyze the data and implement it in different assets if the results were as expected.

What is your company planning to do about it? Is there any plan in sight to make the changes back to old technology?

Edited by [Rosanna Popa Rangel](#) on Aug 30 at 12:14pm

[Ken Wagner](#)

[Ken Wagner](#)

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 5:12pm

Hey Tanner,

I found the second part of your discussion interesting. What kind of testing trials were done to make it seem suitable? While obviously not the case, I would assume that testing would require it to have been done on a single asset or a mock up environment to show that it actually works in the environment. While this be as simple as a patch or will they have to revert the systems back to the old software/equipment?

[Christopher Huebel](#)

[Christopher Huebel](#)

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 8:33pm

Hi Tanner,

Both of these are great examples of good and bad decisions. One thing that really piqued my interest was the addition of the technology being implemented into multiple assets before "in house" trials were conducted. The reason it piques my interest is for your good decision example, your company had 1 initial contract that inevitably led to multiple contracts and growth throughout the region. This, in my humble opinion, seems like what your company should have done with your newly implemented technology. This is also how great lessons are learned and better decisions are made in the future, in which I have no doubt your company learned. Thank you for the examples.

Regards,

Chris Huebel

[Tanner Welch](#)

[Tanner Welch](#)

Sep 1, 2020Sep 1 at 7:59am

Rosanna, Ken, and Chris,

I'll attempt to address all of your questions in this response.

The change in equipment, which is more or less a robust valve that shears tubulars and seals the wellbore, was necessitated by a change in governmental policy requirements stemming from the BP Macondo disaster. The original equipment manufacturer retrofitted a proven piece of equipment to meet these new stipulations. The retrofit kit was laboratory tested, which included FMEA, was accredited by industry trade associations as well as class society accreditation. While the engineering behind the equipment is sound, and works flawlessly in a laboratory setting, once deployed into the field, submerged subsea, and put through the harsh environmental nature of oil and gas drilling, the equipment has shown to fracture if closed with

debris across the sealing face. We are now in the process of removing this retrofit kit and reinstalling the original design.

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

[Rosanna Popa Rangel](#)

Sep 1, 2020Sep 1 at 8:26am

Tanner,

Thank you for replying back. It seems like it's a difficult environment/conditions that can be tested beforehand. I think the decision of getting rid of the retrofit kit and be able to install the old kind was the best corrective measure to take. Thanks for sharing!

[Damian Dalcour](#)

[Damian Dalcour](#)

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 1:16pm

[TCMT-612-700-702 Module 1 Discussion Revised.docx](#)

[Jeremy Smith](#)

[Jeremy Smith](#)

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 5:02pm

My company tends to sell a product line without investing/developing the full line first. They only invest finances into a needed new product or upgrade once there is a project that is willing to pay for the work. Since this type of work is viewed as high-risk/low-reward it exudes an example of the representative heuristic bias. They are trying to conserve resources, but it hurts long-term business. It forces a developmental value stream to be wedged inside an operational

value stream's aggressive schedule. This helps short-term numbers, but limits long-term market growth.

These developments in short time-frames lead to a second decision to only test per project requirements (confirmation bias). This short-term decision cascade has influences on product risk and creates technical debt that has to be solved in the future. For example, we had a tool that was developed several years ago, but my current project would impart out-of-plane loading on the tool. The project had to run months worth of analysis, at the expense of the project and the company's image, to verify that the tool was fit-for-purpose versus the tool being fully qualified initially.

Ronnie Hurst

Ronnie Hurst

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 9:37pm

Jeremy -

Wow. The process you described seems like it would be very risky and prone to quality issues. What KPIs or metrics does your company look at post-project to determine if you were successful or not? Or is it simply a binary failure on delivering a product within the stressed confines of a project life-cycle?

Jeremy Smith

Jeremy Smith

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 11:19pm

Ronnie,

You hit the nail on the head. There is a lot of stress in the projects and product groups with rampant quality issues. Although it is said that metrics are reviewed and/or lessons learned taken, in reality it is binary as you said. You make it to delivery, you win that round and move on to the next round. After talking to others, I found that there were 3 different projects all building the same product simultaneously at one point. I helped turn this behavior around at a

previous company, so I don't view these decisions as bad per say, just ill-informed by data, which is an easy opportunity to become better everyday in disguise. I agree that implementing appropriate KPIs is one of the key checkpoints on the path to right the ship to drive better decisions and behavior.

Ken Wagner

Ken Wagner

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 5:03pm

Due to how new I am with my current place of employment and that it has been completely online due to COVID, I cannot speak much to the decision making process. Previously, I served in the military and was fortunate (or unfortunate) to see many different decision making processes. Most of the decision making within our department were done in two ways: procedural or reactionary. Due to how the program was developed, everything was based on some sort of procedure that was in different manuals. How and when we stood watch, how and when we did maintenance, etc. Decisions that were not in technical manuals were reactionary based. Simple items such as when to eat and when to end the work day were based on fear or what-if's. At one point in my career, I became the Training Petty Officer and the co-Leading Petty Officer of my division.

Anyone who has held these positions know that they can be very reactionary. I took it upon myself to block those types of decisions if they had little foundation in getting it done now. One of my more appreciated decisions from the division was the development of the duty sections. Typically, duty sections are designed randomly, just making sure that every spot was filled. However, to help increase moral, I designed them based on other factors. One area I added to my position was to get to know every person I was in charge of. Due to this, I understood all of the social circles and work buddies and used this information to design them. While the results are subjective, I like to think that I improved everyone's situation and it resulted in more things getting done during duty days.

During my time in the military, I met more great leaders and decision makers than bad ones. When I see traits that I like and are able to mesh with me I will adopt them. The more negative or bad leadership stories stick with me more so I can ensure I never fall into that trap. My new boss at the end of my career had a more laid-back approach to decisions. After he came back from meetings with higher-ups, we would then tell each person who was in-charge of the area to decide how and when each item would be done instead of dialing it to 10.

[Christopher Huebel](#)

[Christopher Huebel](#)

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 8:16pm

Hi Ken,

I firmly believe that some of the greatest decision-makers of our time were in the military. Coming from my perspective in the U.S. Marine Corps I can attest to your decision making processes in procedural and reactionary. My time spent in the Corps, while not deployed, was most always procedural. Everything was developed and carried out via a certain procedure down to "lights out." However, when deployed a lot of the decisions I and my CO's made were on a reactionary level. At no fault to anyone, most of these decisions were almost always System 1 thinking, due to high risk and uncertainty of the situation. I can say without a doubt that there is a time and place for both of these decision-making practices. While System 1 thinking can be used in certain situations, System 2 thinking almost provides a backbone when making quick decisions for yourself and others. Thank you for your service!

Semper Fi,

Chris Huebel

[Robert Carrano](#)

[Robert Carrano](#)

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 6:08pm

I would like to share how my leadership has dealt with adjusting to COVID-19. They immediately prioritized our health over the mission, to include our families as well. To minimize the spread of the virus, we were quickly given the tools to telework instead of reporting into the work center. For those who were mission essential that voiced concerns of school closures and no childcare during this period, leadership found alternate personnel to relieve them of their duties to take care of their children. For members who had spouses laid off, resources were provided to ensure they were able to get by minimizing the struggles encountered. I saw food drives conducted, job opportunities presented, and mental health tools in place to help combat these rough times.

I witnessed fast decisions being made. The right decisions regardless of the impact on our primary mission. Leadership expanded on the means of communication we already had in place. We now have more meetings with news not just passed down, but where we could pass

news directly up, to include our lowest tiered personnel. Leadership not only communicated but listened and have responded appropriately thinking long term in regards to this pandemic.

Edited by [Robert Carrano](#) on Aug 30 at 6:09pm

[Harshvardhan Tirpude](#)

[Harshvardhan Tirpude](#)

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 8:28pm

Hi Robert,

This is a great example of how leadership had taken appropriate measures considering the COVID 19 situations across the world. Similar decisions were made in our organization as well, our company introduced a special insurance plan for COVID treatment with the minimal insurance payment amount.

Thanks,

Harshvardhan

[Grant Shirley](#)

[Grant Shirley](#)

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 8:41pm

Hi Robert,

This is a great example of effective system 1 thinking. COVID-19 quarantine came without much warning and organizations had to act rapidly. It sounds like your leadership did an excellent job of making fast decisions that supported the employee's well being, while sustaining the business through these difficult times. It's a testament that fast decision making can be effective and forward thinking without being too nearsighted or rash. This level of decision making will allow companies to sustain and come out of this pandemic stronger, with loyal employees. Thanks for sharing!

[Christopher Huebel](#)

[Christopher Huebel](#)

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 7:45pm

I have worked on the Gulf Coast in the Oil and Gas industry throughout most of my career. During my career, I have seen the impact that both good and bad decisions have played a role in our surrounding communities and the rest of the world. Most recently, I was working at a plant that was being commissioned from the ground up. This particular facility was to be the largest refiner of a certain "product" in North America and the second-largest producer in the world. In an attempt to get the refinery up and running promptly and to meet deadlines set by shareholders and management, certain designs were implemented in the refinery in an attempt to meet the deadlines and suffice operational guidelines. Throughout the startup of the refinery, the company ran into continuous issues surrounding the design flaws that limited the production capacity. While limiting the production capacity obviously limited capital gain, the impact of little to no production played a large role in quantity of the product produced in the world which in turn impacted the global market of the product. This example of a decision making practice, while sufficient in the short run, proved to be insufficient in the long run and was thus mitigated.

Chris Huebel

[Harshvardhan Tirpude](#)

[Harshvardhan Tirpude](#)

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 7:51pm

I currently work in a service provider company; our company has different clients across the world and deals with different technologies. Recently our Senior Leader decided and introduced a portal to employees where they can get certified on different skills such as various programming languages, Cloud architecture, testing skills, etc. This decision made by our Senior management has helped us to get the certifications free of cost, also helping employees to gain knowledge on new technologies and keeping ourselves up to date. I have also taken advantage of this portal and completed the first tier of certification in a python programming language,

which in turn helped me in my new project where the team used automation for test case execution.

[Troy Philips](#)

[Troy Philips](#)

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 8:17pm

Harshvardhan,

I think it's great your company invests in its employees. I have had to pleasure of working at companies that also offered course to employees that would improve their skill toolbox. My previous company Sysco had a wide variety of programs we could take, including PMP and Salesforce admin certifications.

[Kassie Mobley](#)

[Kassie Mobley](#)

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 8:18pm

The asset maintenance program followed within my department is an example of a good decision making process. Each group of assets has reoccurring maintenance work required at intervals from 3 to 10 years depending on the risk of each asset. The higher risk, the shorter the interval of maintenance work required. Each year, after the maintenance work is completed, we compare the results from the previous work to the current and, using various risk factors (both qualitative and quantitative) decide as a group the future maintenance schedule for each asset. This allows the opinions of each team member to provide expertise and perspective that allow for the best decision to be made.

From a community perspective, the school district my child will attend has chosen to make the first 6 weeks of school online. This is a decision that I am not excited about, but I cannot say whether it is bad or good. I can say it is understandable given the current social and political climate. It is interesting to try and place myself in the shoes of a school board member when voting for how school will be held for the 2020-2021 school year.

Grant Shirley

Grant Shirley

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 8:34pm

Hi Kassie,

Your asset maintenance program sounds like a good avenue for critical decision making. It's great that each team member is brought in to provide their unique know-how to form better decisions. I have definitely found it useful to bring in different perspectives when forming important decisions around a process.

The community perspective is something that is impacting all of us. Hopefully our council members are making thoughtful decisions and using rational decision making. It would be interesting to see behind the scenes and what decision making tools our community leaders have implemented.

Amy Hollabaugh

Amy Hollabaugh

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 8:43pm

Kassie,

I like that your company has scheduled maintenance for certain assets, there are a lot of companies that have a short sighted view on maintenance and usually it is because of budget. I have witnessed at my job a lot of groups wait for their machines/assets to just fail without any maintenance being scheduled and when the machines fail everyone is running around trying to fix the machine or replacing it as fast as possible and not always being diligent in their actions which leads to mistakes or put people in unsafe conditions.

Grant Shirley

Grant Shirley

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 8:26pm

Decision-making is arguably one of the most important facets of our personal and professional daily activities. Within my organization, decision-making practices vary greatly and are not standardized from executive leadership down to supervisors. We are currently working through a massive restructuring and often times, senior level leadership will deploy "system 1" thinking in order to expedite decisions. System 1 cognitive functioning is necessary at times, especially in the current turbulence surrounding my company's restructure. Certain decisions need to be made quickly to stop the bleeding. However, making fast and emotional decisions can come at a cost further down the road. We recently laid off ~10% of our work force. This edict was a surprise to most management and decisions had to be made rapidly. Certain critical positions were let go and we are feeling the ramifications months later. This would have been an opportunity to utilize a more methodical "system 2" thinking, coupled with the rational model of decision making, to dissect each cause and effect of the affected personnel's position.

Harshvardhan Tirpude

Harshvardhan Tirpude

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 10:10pm

Hi Grant,

This is a good example of how fast and emotional decisions may impact the organization in long term. Does your organization still plan to continue with a non-standardized decision process or have any plan to make any changes in the current process after this incident? I feel sorry for employees who paid the cost for the wrong decision taken by senior leaders.

- Harshvardhan

Taylor Anderson

Taylor Anderson

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 8:59pm

Often times the decisions being made by leaders in my organization are data-driven decisions. While these types of decisions typically lead us in a good direction there are downfalls to basing impactful decisions just off of a subset of data. The decision can only be as good as the data

that is being presented. There are many different ways to pull desired information from softwares that are used in my organization and often times this can lead to discrepancies when comparing information amongst multiple functions. The confirmation bias is most likely very prevalent when viewing information that is being displayed to the group of individuals making the decision. It is common for different functions to be looking at the same set of data and charts and each one come up with a different conclusion based on how that group typically operates. This type of bias usually causes my organization to be indecisive since each function has a different opinion.

Ronnie Hurst

Ronnie Hurst

Aug 30, 2020Aug 30 at 9:23pm

In examining the prompt, there are two very profound examples within my organization that exhibit poor decision-making practices.

There are many instances where leaders are not aware of their individual biases and allow them to heavily influence organizational decisions. For example, leaders in certain geographical regions often make decisions with assumptions that associates or customers think and behave the same way as their local experience would tell them. This typically results in misunderstandings and poor direction for the program/project the decision is tethered to. Additionally, confirmation bias and bandwagon effect often play significant parts in poor decisions by leadership.

Lastly, when our organization is presented with a new endeavor in our aftermarket services, the decision-making process on approving major initiatives, programs, and processes relies entirely too heavily on 20-30-year-old models. Models are great tools for making decisions if there is an understanding that the inputs and assumptions may change over the life-cycle of the tool and thus must actively be managed. When KPIs within these programs start to underperform, it is typical to find that a bad assumption or overlooked nuance was used to model the program initially.