

Decision-Making

Have you ever been put in a decision of having to choose between two alternatives for your organization? You try to look at each item equally, but you just can't seem to make a decision? If so, these steps for decision-making may be useful to you and your organization.

1. CLARIFY THE PROBLEM OR SITUATION

The problem or need for a decision should be clearly stated. For example, the problem of trying to get better food in a cafeteria might be clarified as a problem of obtaining more fresh fruit, larger entrée portions, or more salad varieties.

2. COLLECT INFORMATION

Identify information to be gathered and the sources available to obtain the information. The following questions should be answered at this stage: how much; what will others think; where, what restrictions are there, etc.

3. LIST ALTERNATIVES

Brainstorm possible solutions and narrow the list down to the workable suggestions and those you would like to consider further. (See the *Brainstorming* handout)

4. EVALUATE THE REMAINING ALTERNATIVES

Consider what would occur if each particular alternative were selected. Identify the criteria being applied to evaluate each possible solution and be explicit. Resources like time, money, interest, and skills may all be relevant criteria in making a decision.

5. SELECT A TENTATIVE DECISION TO TRY

The alternative that best meets the evaluation criteria is usually the solution to implement. Be sure to present this decision to those who may be affected by it or possibly to a larger group for feedback.

6. LIST THE STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Determine what needs to be done, and in what sequence, to meet the goal of the tentative or final decision.

7. EVALUATE THE EXPERIENCE

This step determines if the decision is a good one, worthwhile, or has value. Answer the following questions to help identify possible weaknesses in the original decision, and clarify steps to remedy the problem(s): what good things have happened; what has gone wrong; what has been the reaction of others; what changes will make it better.

8. TAKE ACTION

As in step 4, consider the alternatives and then take action. The solution may be a modified version of the original decision, or an entirely different decision. Keep in mind the policy, steps or procedures to be followed.

9. PERIODICALLY REVIEW THE PLAN