Decision Making Assessment from MindTools

Decision Making from Mindtools

No one can afford to make poor decisions. This Mindtools short assessment was developed to help you assess your current decision-making skills. We'll examine how well you structure your decision-making process, and then we'll point you to specific tools and resources you can use to develop and improve this important competency.

Score Interpretation = 68

|  |
| --- |
|  |
| **Score** | **Comment** |
| 18-42 | Your decision-making hasn't fully matured. You aren't objective enough, and you rely too much on luck, instinct or timing to make reliable decisions. Start to improve your decision-making skills by focusing more on the process that leads to the decision, rather than on the decision itself. With a solid process, you can face any decision with confidence. We'll show you how. (Read [**below**](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_79.htm#Explanation) to start.) |
|  |  |
| 43-66 | Your decision-making process is OK. You have a good understanding of the basics, but now you need to improve your process and be more proactive. Concentrate on finding lots of options and discovering as many risks and consequences as you can. The better your analysis, the better your decision will be in the long term. Focus specifically on the areas where you lost points, and develop a system that will work for you across a wide variety of situations. (Read [**below**](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_79.htm#Explanation) to start.) |
| 67-90 | You have an excellent approach to decision-making! You know how to set up the process and generate lots of potential solutions. From there, you analyze the options carefully, and you make the best decisions possible based on what you know. As you gain more and more experience, use that information to evaluate your decisions, and continue to build on your decision-making success. Think about the areas where you lost points, and decide how you can include those areas in your process. (Read [**below**](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_79.htm#Explanation) to start.) |

As you answered the questions, did you see some common themes? We based our quiz on six essential steps in the decision-making process:

1. Establishing a positive decision-making environment.
2. Generating potential solutions.
3. Evaluating the solutions.
4. Deciding.
5. Checking the decision.
6. Communicating and implementing.

If you're aware of these six basic elements and improve the way you structure them, this will help you develop a better overall decision-making system. Let's look at the six elements individually.

Establishing a Positive Decision-Making Environment

(Statements 3, 7, 13, 16)

*Your score is 17 out of 20   http://www.mindtools.com/m/stars/Stars4.jpg*

If you've ever been in a meeting where people seem to be discussing different issues, then you've seen what happens when the decision-making environment hasn't been established. It's so important for everyone to understand the issue before preparing to make a decision. This includes agreeing on an objective, making sure the right issue is being discussed, and agreeing on a process to move the decision forward.

You also must address key interpersonal considerations at the very beginning. Have you included all the stakeholders? And do the people involved in the decision agree to respect one another and engage in an open and honest discussion? After all, if only the strongest opinions are heard, you risk not considering some of the best solutions available. Click [**here**](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_00.htm#Step1) to learn more about [**creating a constructive decision-making environment**](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_00.htm#Step1).

Generating Potential Solutions

(Statements 4, 8, 11)

*Your score is 12 out of 15   http://www.mindtools.com/m/stars/Stars4.jpg*

Another important part of a good decision process is generating as many good alternatives as sensibly possible to consider. If you simply adopt the first solution you encounter, then you're probably missing a great many even better alternatives. Click [**here**](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_00.htm#Step2) to learn about some powerful tools for generating good alternatives, expanding the number of ideas, and considering different perspectives.

Evaluating Alternatives

(Statements 1, 6, 15)

*Your score is 10 out of 15   http://www.mindtools.com/m/stars/Stars3.jpg*

The stage of exploring alternatives is often the most time-consuming part of the decision-making process. This stage sometimes takes so long that a decision is never made! To make this step efficient, be clear about the factors you want to include in your analysis. There are three key factors to consider:

1. **Risk** – Most decisions involve some risk. However, you need to uncover and understand the risks to make the best choice possible.
2. **Consequences** – You can't predict the implications of a decision with 100% accuracy. But you can be careful and systematic in the way that you identify and evaluate possible consequences.
3. **Feasibility** – Is the choice realistic and implementable? This factor is often ignored. You usually have to consider certain constraints when making a decision. As part of this evaluation stage, ensure that the alternative you've selected is significantly better than the status quo.

Click [**here**](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_00.htm#Step3) to see a list of tools that you can use to improve the way you [**evaluate alternatives**](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_00.htm#Step3).

Deciding

(Statements 5, 10, 17)

*Your score is 12 out of 15   http://www.mindtools.com/m/stars/Stars4.jpg*

Making the decision itself can be exciting and stressful. To help you deal with these emotions as objectively as possible, use a structured approached to the decision. This means taking a look at what's most important in a good decision.

Take the time to think ahead and determine exactly what will make the decision “right.” This will significantly improve your decision accuracy. Click [**here**](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_00.htm#Step4) to learn about the different tools that you can use to make a good decision.

Checking the Decision

(Statements 2, 9)

*Your score is 5 out of 10   http://www.mindtools.com/m/stars/Stars3.jpg*

Remember that some things about a decision are not objective. The decision has to make sense on an intuitive, instinctive level as well. The entire process we have discussed so far has been based on the perspectives and experiences of all the people involved. Now it's time to check the alternative you've chosen for validity and "making sense."

If the decision is a significant one, it's also worth auditing it to make sure that your assumptions are correct, and that the logical structure you've used to make the decision is sound.

Click [**here**](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_00.htm#Step5) to learn more about tools that you can use to do this.

Communicating and Implementing

(Statements 12, 14, 18)

*Your score is 13 out of 15   http://www.mindtools.com/m/stars/Stars4.jpg*

The last stage in the decision-making process involves communicating your choice and preparing to implement it. You can try to force your decision on others by demanding their acceptance. Or you can gain their acceptance by explaining how and why you reached your decision. For most decisions – particularly those that need participant buy-in before implementation – it's more effective to gather support by explaining your decision.

Have a plan for implementing your decision. People usually respond positively to a clear plan – one that tells them what to expect and what they need to do. For more information on developing these types of plans, read our articles about [**project management**](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newPPM_00.htm) and [**change management**](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newPPM_87.htm).