

Laurier's Journey to



REJUVENATE

Our Hiring Process

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Learning Outcomes

- During this workshop participants will analyze the hiring process changes at Laurier and the lessons learned during this process
- During this workshop participants will work through a case study model of decision making
- By the end of this presentation participants will understand the benefits of using a “Framework for Decision making” to guide any changes made to their hiring processes

Framework for Decision Making

Framework for Decision Making



Framework for Decision Making



Case:

You are at Tim Horton's on a hot summer day in August. It is very hot out and you are parched. You decide to order a drink, but only have \$2.00 in your pocket. You are lactose intolerant.

Framework for Decision Making

The Problem

“It is the overriding issue in the situation. By this we mean that it is the biggest and most significant decision that has to be dealt with.”

Framework for Decision Making



Problem:

You are thirsty and trying to decide what drink to get from Tim Hortons.

Framework for Decision Making

Decision Criteria

(Also known as “The Situation”)

“The complete understanding of the situation means that everything relevant to the overriding problem is surfaced. This is critical because the situation, as described, provides the foundation for all further analysis.”

Framework for Decision Making



Decision Criteria:

- Drink should be cold
- Drink cannot contain dairy
- Cost must be \$2.00 or less

Framework for Decision Making

The Alternatives

“They are mutually exclusive solutions to the problem. Each alternative provides an acceptable solution to the problem but, because each is different, presents a different future. The more different each alternative is, the better, since this means a fuller range of solutions is considered.”

Framework for Decision Making



Alternatives:

- Iced Coffee (\$2.00 with tax)
- Bottled Iced Tea (\$2.10 with tax)
- Iced Cappuccino (\$2.50 with tax)
- Bottle of Water (\$1.00 with tax)

*Please note: This Tim Horton's has a very limited menu, these are the only items sold.

Framework for Decision Making

Analysis of Alternatives

“Profiling the future situation presented by each alternative with respect to the criteria identified under the situation. In other words, the decision maker projects what the future will look like by criterion if the alternative is chosen.”

Framework for Decision Making



Analysis of Alternatives:

		DECISION CRITERIA		
A L T E R N A T I V E S		Must be a cold drink	It cannot have any dairy	Be \$2.00 or less
	Iced Coffee (\$2.00 with Tax)			
	Bottled Iced Tea (\$2.10 with Tax)			
	Iced Cappuccino (\$2.50 with tax)			
	Bottle of Water (\$1.00 with Tax)			

Framework for Decision Making



Analysis of Alternatives:

		DECISION CRITERIA		
		Must be a cold drink	It cannot have any dairy	Be \$2.00 or less
A L T E R N A T I V E S	Iced Coffee (\$2.00 with Tax)	✓	✗	✓
	Bottled Iced Tea (\$2.10 with Tax)	✓	✓	✗
	Iced Cappuccino (\$2.50 with tax)	✓	✗	✗
	Bottle of Water (\$1.00 with Tax)	✓	✓	✓

Framework for Decision Making

Comparison of Alternatives

“The alternatives are compared criterion by criterion. The purpose is to see which alternative provides the most attractive future and at the same time how achievable that future is.”

Framework for Decision Making



Comparison of Alternatives:

		DECISION CRITERIA		
		Must be a cold drink	It cannot have any dairy	Be \$2.00 or less
ALTERNATIVES	Iced Coffee (\$2.00 with Tax)	✓	✗	✓
	Bottled Iced Tea (\$2.10 with Tax)	✓	✓	✗
	Iced Cappuccino (\$2.50 with tax)	✓	✗	✗
	Bottle of Water (\$1.00 with Tax)	✓	✓	✓

Framework for Decision Making

The Recommendation

“The recommendation includes: identifying the suggested alternative, stating how it deals with the problem and why it is the best alternative.”

Framework for Decision Making



Recommendation:

Purchase a bottle of water.

Framework for Decision Making

The Implementation

(Also known as the Plan of Action)

“This presents the actions required to put the recommended alternative into place. Describing the general tasks that are to be performed and their relationship to the recommendation helps show that the plan implements the recommendation. But to be actionable, the plan has to be detailed.”

Framework for Decision Making



Implementation:

Immediate Term - Buy Water

Short Term - Enjoy Water

Long Term - N/A

Let's Practice

Case:

Your Program's Chief Housing Officer has informed your professional staff team that you will be going on an overnight summer retreat in July. They have asked that as a team you decide where you will be going. You have been informed that the retreat will be paid for by the program and should cost no more than \$1000.00 including food, travel, tax etc.

Let's Practice

Problem:

The professional team needs to decide on a summer retreat location.

Decision Criteria:

Work in your group to come up with a maximum of three decision criteria for the problem above.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Let's Practice

Alternatives:

*These are the alternatives to consider as solutions to your problem.
All alternatives are feasible for your timeline*

- Colleague's Cottage (Total Cost = \$750.00)
- YMCA Camp (Total Cost = \$950.00)
- Team Building Resort (Total Cost = \$1700.00)
- Niagara Falls Hotel (Total Cost = \$1000.00)

Let's Practice

		DECISION CRITERIA		
A L T E R N A T I V E S		Decision Criteria #1	Decision Criteria #2	Decision Criteria #3
	Alternative #1 Colleague's Cottage			
	Alternative #2 YMCA Camp			
	Alternative #3 Team Building Resort			
	Alternative #4 Niagara Falls Hotel			

Let's Practice

	DECISION CRITERIA			
		Decision Criteria #1	Decision Criteria #2	Decision Criteria #3
A L T E R N A T I V E S	Alternative #1			
	Alternative #2			
	Alternative #3			
	Alternative #4			

Let's Practice

What was your solution?



Colleague's Cottage - \$750.00



YMCA Camp - \$950.00

Team Building Resort - \$1700.00



Niagara Falls Hotel- \$1000.00



LAURIER



Inspiring Lives.

Laurier's Journey

Issues with Experienced Staff Hiring

- Returning staff questioned if we valued their work
- Lots of coordinator time spent on hiring
- Minimal supporting documentation for why we weren't re-hiring staff
- Current supervisor had stronger say in outcome of staff hiring decision

Laurier's Journey

The Problem:

The Department of Residence does not have a realistic and defined process for hiring experienced student staff

Laurier's Journey

Decision Criteria:

- Valuing the work staff have already done
- Clearly defined role/responsibilities of experienced staff
- Can be implemented by new coordinators with limited direction
- Have whole coordinator team on board
- Value the coordinators time committed to process
- Justify the decision that was made
- Value experience/opinions of coordinators on applicants

Laurier's Journey

Alternatives:

1. Hiring based on past evaluations & application based process (no interview)
2. Evaluation response/reflection (stop, start, continue, what will do next). Marked based on understanding of evaluation
3. Carousel interviews with experienced staff with interview portion & scenarios
4. Performance Fall evaluation + condensed winter evaluation + coordinator recommendation
5. Self assessment by rubric + Coordinator assessment + discussion w/ staff & Coordinator
6. Coordinator fill out intent to hire (yes/no) with strengths/weaknesses, staff choose to submit written application or interview (yes/no)
7. Reflective presentation on choice/role of experienced Don without Coordinator & staff, Coordinator response in debrief
8. Case study analysis (approx. 10 people) – 2 on 1 Coordinator chat to reflect on eval etc.
9. Skill assessment through case study analysis discussion on competence & fit
10. DISC profiling
11. 2 coordinators oversee exp. Hiring
12. Interview with rubric given ahead of time
13. Have process only for incoming staff
14. Additional portfolio hiring separate

Laurier's Journey

Alternatives	Valuing the work staff have already done	Clearly desired role/responsibilities of experienced staff	Can be easily implemented for new coordinators	Have whole coordinator team on board	Value the coordinators time committed to process	Justify the decision that was made	Value experience/opinions of coordinators on applicants
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							

Laurier's Journey

Alternatives	Valuing the work staff have already done	Clearly desired role/responsibilities of experienced staff	Can be easily implemented for new coordinators	Have whole coordinator team on board	Value the coordinators time committed to process	Justify the decision that was made	Value experience/opinions of coordinators on applicants
8							
9							
10							
11 *idea*							
12							
13 *idea*							
14 *idea*							

Laurier's Journey

Alternatives	Valuing the work staff have already done	Clearly desired role/responsibilities of experienced staff	Can be easily implemented for new coordinators	Have whole coordinator team on board	Value the coordinators time committed to process	Justify the decision that was made	Value experience/opinions of coordinators on applicants
1	✓	✗ clarification	✓	7/9	✓ clarification	✓ Lack of in person opportunity	✓ ✗
2	✓	✓	✓	7/9	✓ clarification	✓ A lot contingent on staff	✗ # reflecting? Coordinator does reflection
3	✗	✗	✓	2.5/9	✗	✓	✓
4	✓	✓	✓	8/9	✓ ✗	✓	✓ Current RLAC bias
5	✓	✗ clarification	✓	5/9	✓ ✗ # of applicants	✓	✓ Current RLAC bias
6	✓	✗	✓	7/9	✓	✓	✓ Clarification
7	✓	✗	✓	6/9	✓ ✗	✗	✓ Depend on weighting

Laurier's Journey

Alternatives	Valuing the work staff have already done	Clearly desired role/responsibilities of experienced staff	Can be easily implemented for new coordinators	Have whole coordinator team on board	Value the coordinators time committed to process	Justify the decision that was made	Value experience/opinions of coordinators on applicants
8	✓	✓	✓	3/9	×	✓×	✓×
9	×	✓	✓	4/9	×	✓	×
10	×	×	✓	0/9	✓	×	×
11 *idea*							
12	×	✓	✓	4/9	×	✓	×
13 *idea*							
14 *idea*							

Laurier's Journey

Alternatives	Valuing the work staff have already done	Clearly desired role/responsibilities of experienced staff	Can be easily implemented for new coordinators	Have whole coordinator team on board	Value the coordinators time committed to process	Justify the decision that was made	Value experience/opinions of coordinators on applicants
1	✓	✗ clarification	✓	7/9	✓ clarification	✓ Lack of in person opportunity	✓ ✗
2	✓	✓	✓	7/9	✓ clarification	✓ A lot contingent on staff	✗ # reflecting? Coordinator does reflection
3	✗	✗	✓	2.5/9	✗	✓	✓
4	✓	✓	✓	8/9	✓ ✗	✓	✓ Current RLAC bias
5	✓	✗ clarification	✓	5/9	✓ ✗ # of applicants	✓	✓ Current RLAC bias
6	✓	✗	✓	7/9	✓	✓	✓ Clarification
7	✓	✗	✓	6/9	✓ ✗	✗	✓ Depend on weighting

Laurier's Journey

Alternatives	Valuing the work staff have already done	Clearly desired role/responsibilities of experienced staff	Can be easily implemented for new coordinators	Have whole coordinator team on board	Value the coordinators time committed to process	Justify the decision that was made	Value experience/opinions of coordinators on applicants
8	✓	✓	✓	3/9	×	✓×	✓×
9	×	✓	✓	4/9	×	✓	×
10	×	×	✓	0/9	✓	×	×
11 *idea*							
12	×	✓	✓	4/9	×	✓	×
13 *idea*							
14 *idea*							

Laurier's Journey

Alternative Comparison:

1. Hiring based on past evaluations & application based process (no interview)
2. Evaluation response/reflection (stop, start, continue, what will do next). Marked based on understanding of evaluation
3. Performance Fall evaluation + condensed winter evaluation + coordinator recommendation
4. Self assessment by rubric + Coordinator assessment + discussion with staff & Coordinator
5. Coordinator fill out intent to hire (yes/no) with strengths/weaknesses, staff choose to submit written or interview (yes/no)
6. Reflective presentation on choice/role of experienced Don without Coordinator & staff. Coordinator response in debrief

Laurier's Journey

Recommendation:

1. Staff Application
 - a. Intent to return
 - b. Job description acceptance

2. Coordinator Assessment
 - a. Intent to hire
 - b. Assessment (Strengths/weaknesses, suitability, growth, potential for leadership, potential for mentorship, ability to take on additional role?)
*Need to ensure continuity when filling out

3. Self Assessment
 - a. Similar to Coordinator Assessment

4. "Interview" (conversation) based on assessments

Laurier's Journey

Implementation:

Immediate Term (1 - 3 weeks):

- Form Committee to complete Recommendation
- Committee create:
 - Experienced Don Job Description
 - Intent to Return
 - Coordinator Assessment
 - Student Staff Self Assessment
 - Questions for Interview Process
- Management team review & edit documents created

Laurier's Journey

Intent to Return & Job Description

Having read the above job description, do you intend to return to the Residence Program at Laurier for the 2015-2016 year?

Yes/No: _____

By printing your name and sending this intent to return to Lindsay Tayler, Residence Life Resource Facilitator at ltayler@wlu.ca you are accepting the role & responsibilities of an Experienced Don as listed above.

Print Name: _____ Date: _____

Department of Residence| Experienced Don Hiring 2015-2016| Coordinator Assessment

The Coordinator Assessment is an opportunity for professional staff to comment on whether or not an experienced staff member is suitable for another year in the program. There are 4 parts to the coordinator assessment.

PART 1

1. Would the experienced staff member be willing to accept the possibility of unexpected change (i.e. training, working in any residence building, etc.)?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Maybe

Comments:

2. Does the staff member in question have the best interest of the students they are responsible for mentoring at heart?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Occasionally

Comments:

3. Does the staff member in question have the best interest of the program at heart?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Occasionally

Comments:

4. Is the staff member in question able and willing to put the needs of the team above their own needs?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Occasionally

Comments:

Laurier's Journey

Self Assessment

Department of Residence, Experienced Don Self-Assessment

This self-assessment is an opportunity for you to reflect on your previous experience working in the Department of Residence, and to reflect on how your experience will impact you as an Experienced Don during the 2015-2016 academic year. The role of an Experienced Don comes with higher expectations. Should you be successful in receiving an Experienced Don position, you will be expected to perform the donning role better than you previously have done. It is expected that you will continue to maintain a high quality experience for your incoming residents, and have a strong commitment to your staff team and colleagues in the Department. Please be aware that your current coordinator(s) will not be reviewing this reflection, therefore it is important that you share an appropriate amount of detail about your current experiences in your role.

Before completing this assessment, please ask yourself the following questions:

- Am I willing to be an Experienced Don, despite having to do the parts of the donning role that I enjoy least?
- Am I willing to accept the possibility of unexpected change (i.e. to my community assignment, to training, etc.)
- Am I still willing to work in any residence building?

Experienced Don Interview **2015**

Applicant's Name: _____

Interviewer: _____

Could Not Assess:	Candidate did not answer the question, therefore, making it difficult to assess their response
Below Expectations:	Candidate's response lacked substance. May have directly answered the question, but the response did not indicate whether or not the candidate would perform well in the role of an Experienced Don
Meets Expectations:	Candidate's response was good. Directly answered the question, and response indicates that the candidate would be an effective Experienced Don
Above Expectations:	In addition to meeting the requirements of "meeting expectations", the candidate related their response directly to the role of an Experienced Don
Outstanding:	In addition to meeting the requirements of "above expectations", the candidate demonstrates foresight (they have a plan of how they will implement their insight as an Experienced Don) and/or creative thinking in their response

Hiring Themes: Building Community, Dedication, Authenticity, Show Care for Others, Professionalism, Openness

1.

Theme/Question	0	1	2	3	4
	Could not assess	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Above Expectations	Outstanding

Comments:

Score: /4

Laurier's Journey

Implementation:

Short Term (4 - 8 weeks):

- Have meeting with Student Staff to share new hiring process
- Provide student staff with hiring documents (Intent to return, job description, self assessment)
- Coordinators fill out Assessment
- Have staff sign up for interview times

Laurier's Journey

Implementation:

Long Term (8 - 12 weeks):

- Conduct Interviews with staff
- Provide staff with selection decisions
- Debrief process

Laurier's Journey

Successes, Challenges & Lessons Learned

- Measured success based on meeting Decision Criteria
- Clearly breaking out recommendation, helped to ensure everything was done
- Implementation plan helped with timelines
 - Needed more time to complete everything
- End result validated the process

Laurier's Journey to



REJUVENATE

Our Hiring Process

Let's Practice

Case Study

Case:

Your Program's Chief Housing Officer has informed your professional staff team that you will be going on an overnight summer retreat in July. They have asked that as a team you decide where you will be going. You have been informed that the retreat will be paid for by the program and should cost no more than \$1000.00 including food, travel, tax etc.

Problem:

The professional team needs to decide on a summer retreat location.

Decision Criteria:

Work in your group to come up with a maximum of three decision criteria for the problem above.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

DECISION CRITERIA				
A L T E R N A T I V E S		Decision Criteria #1	Decision Criteria #2	Decision Criteria #3
	Alternative #1			
	Alternative #2			
	Alternative #3			
	Alternative #4			

Recommendation:

Implementation:

Immediate Term (___ - ___ weeks):

Short Term (___ - ___ weeks):

Long Term (___ - ___ weeks):

A Framework for Decision Making

**Kenneth F. Harling,
Wilfrid Laurier University**

A good decision involves selecting the best alternative from among those available. Determining which is the best is most easily done using a framework that ensures systematic analysis of the alternatives. Different frameworks have been described over time. Which framework is best depends on the complexity of the situation being addressed.

When dealing with simple situations the sequential process of decision-making appears to work well. This approach is often the one presented in case courses students take early in their educational programs. Students are taught that they have to proceed through seven steps: problem definition, situation analysis, definition of alternatives, analysis of alternatives, comparison of alternatives, recommendation of an alternative, and a plan of action for implementing the recommended alternative. As they perform each step, they write down the information pertaining to that step. Apart from appearing to work well, this process is attractive because it is easy to teach. This process, however, does not transfer well to decision making in more complex situations found in later courses. Those who try to apply it find that, though they follow the method as instructed, they produce weak and inconsistent analysis. What has gone wrong?

The problem is that decision-making is never a linear process though reporting on it can be. Good decision-making is built upon recognizing all sorts of interrelationships among the steps, even in simple situations. The reason that decision making in a simple situation appears linear is that the student decision-maker is able to absorb and keep in mind all the notions in the case and extract them as required to satisfy a linear reporting process. Unfortunately, this creates the perception that decision-making is a linear process. Laboring under this illusion does not become a problem until one has to deal with complex situations. Then the decision-maker is no longer able to keep everything in mind because so many facts and so many interrelationships have to be remembered at once. Overloaded with data and information, the decision-maker misses many facts and interrelationships and so produces weak and inconsistent analysis.

To deal with more complex decision situations, a fresh approach to decision making is needed, one which is more robust than the linear process and can deal with a situation of any complexity. It must recognize the relationships among the steps explicitly. Good analysis is then guaranteed because the stopping point for analysis is that each step is consistent with the others. If there are inconsistencies among the steps, then further analysis is needed until all steps are consistent with each other.

Here we propose such a framework. It recognizes each of the steps of the simple process but embellishes that process by allowing the explicit consideration of the relationships among the steps in the process. This approach has proven itself in practice by both improving the quality of analysis in each step and the consistency among the steps. The framework is not tied to a particular set of variables or issues or to a particular discipline. Indeed, any set of criteria seen as central to a particular decision-making perspective can be inserted and used as the basis for problem definition and choice. All that is required is a decision situation.

An understanding of the framework and how it can be used is best developed by first describing its overall parameters. This is done in the overview of the framework. Having done this, we will then turn to fitting the individual steps of decision making into the framework. First each step is considered in its own right. The need to put specific content in each is critical, as this is what gives rise to consistent relationships among the steps. Once a thorough understanding of each step is achieved, the relationships among the steps are described. The outcome of this

explanation is a thorough understanding of the model. Use of the model will then produce sound analysis of any situation where a decision has to be made.

Overview of the Framework

The framework for decision-making is most easily appreciated as a matrix (see Figure 1). Putting it in this form provides a clear mapping of the relationships among the steps so that they are easier to remember. Decision-making is broken into two principal dimensions, time and focus. These dimensions appear on the top and left-hand side of the figure. The time dimension reflects the fact that the need for a decision exists at the present time and that making the decision means things will be different in the future. This means that the time dimension of the case can be separated into the present and the future. The present includes the current problem and the details of the current situation underlying it. The future deals with the solving the problem by defining alternatives, comparing them, selecting the best and working to put the selected alternative in place.

Focus, the second dimension, reflects the need to see the decision and the context within which it must be made. This dimension can be separated into a central and a general perspective. From the central perspective, one deals with the specific problem and alternative choices that will resolve it. From the general perspective, one deals with the contextual and general considerations relating to the decision. These considerations include the criteria for defining the problem and for assessing and comparing the alternatives, and the features of the plan of action for implementing the selected alternative. They are classified as "general" because what is included can be wide-ranging. They include the more specific and finer features of the situation.

Organizing one's thoughts within the matrix helps one organize his/her thinking about a problem, encouraging more systematic thought and greater recognition of what needs to be considered. It does so by helping one sort out and position diverse facts and ideas, which are then related to each other. Furthermore, once organized in the framework, facts and analysis can be manipulated so that consistency and thoroughness of analysis are achieved. We will now consider each of the decision making steps, placing each in the matrix, and showing how it relates to the other steps.

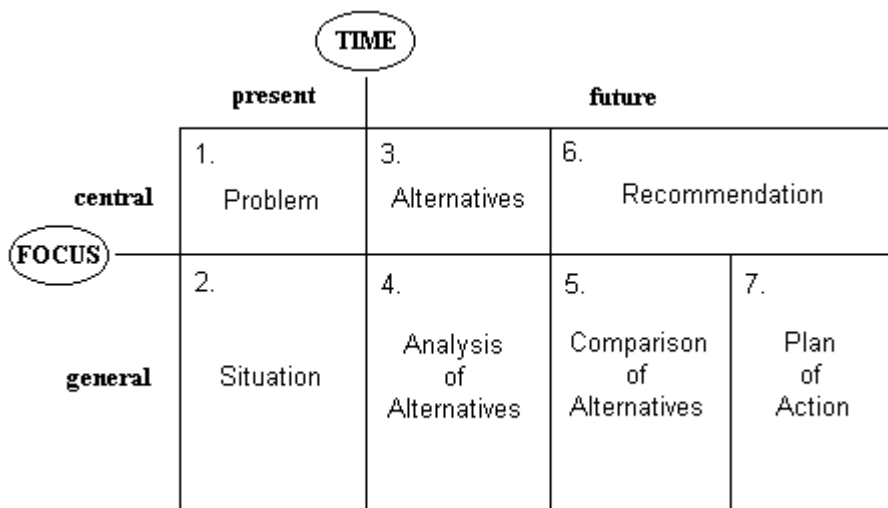


Figure 1: The Decision-Making Framework

Details of the Framework

The seven parts of the decision making process which appear in Figure 1 will be described sequentially. After these have been defined, the relationships among them will be described.

The Problem

The first part that we address is the problem that needs to be addressed, or alternatively the decision that needs to be made. It is the overriding issue in the situation. By this we mean that it is the biggest and most significant decision that has to be dealt with. There may be many other decisions but most of them fit within the big decision. Definition of the problem is very important since it provides focus and direction to the rest of the decision process. Furthermore, its definition implicitly sets the boundaries on what will be considered when making the decision. If it is too narrowly defined, then other issues will be left outside the decision process.

Definition of the problem includes identifying who is making the decision and what they are trying to accomplish. Identifying the decision-maker is necessary because each decision-maker has certain authority and responsibilities. This means that who makes the decision is critical when defining the problem. There is little sense in defining a problem that the decision-maker can do little or nothing about. Having identified the decision-maker, the problem is stated in terms of the end results he/she desires; in other words, the goals or benchmarks that the decision-maker will use to define a satisfactory solution.

The statement of the problem is best presented using three or four sentences that identify the central problem and case facts and analysis to support why this is so. Presenting it in general terms helps it provide overall focus to analysis. The danger of describing it in terms of case details is that doing so leads one to loss of focus--one loses sight of the forest for the trees. Nor should the problem be defined in terms of alternatives that the solution can be selected from. Doing so closes off the search for viable alternatives. Also, it does not fit within the framework because alternatives deal with the future, not the present.

The Situation

The situation, the second part, is the context within which the overriding decision is being made. Analysis of the situation has to produce two results: the definition of the overriding problem and a complete understanding of the situation relevant to the problem. Defining the problem involves finding a pattern in all that is known about the situation. The pattern itself reflects various aspects of or subsidiary issues associated with the overriding problem. The complete understanding of the situation means that everything relevant to the overriding problem is surfaced. This is critical because the situation, as described, provides the foundation for all further analysis. Only those aspects identified here can be considered in further analysis. Adding new information regarding the situation later on implies that the definition of the problem and analysis of alternatives was based on partial information and so was ill informed.

Knowing how to present information on the situation is and will always be a challenge because three separate objectives are being pursued. First, one is trying to bring rhyme and reason to what appear to be disparate facts. To accomplish this, one has to organize the facts so he/she can draw conclusions regarding them. Second, one is trying to show that the items identified support the overall problem. This means that each item must be allowed to capture some of the details and at the same time relate readily to the overriding problem. Accomplishing this is easier when hierarchical analysis is possible. By this we mean that facts are analyzed to produce

conclusions at the initial level, and these conclusions in turn become facts which are analyzed to produce a higher order conclusion and so on until the single, overriding conclusion is reached which reflects the overriding problem. Third, one is trying to organize material so that the analysis of alternatives is straightforward. Accomplishing all three involves considerable work and the analysis typically is seldom pushed far enough to satisfy all three objectives.

Though there is no right way to organize material, a managerial orientation is promoted by organizing material in terms of decisions that have to be made, or issues that have to be addressed (an issue is a decision posed as a question). The relevant information and analysis is then organized by decision or issue.

Whatever way is chosen to aggregate material, the groupings in effect define the criteria which will be the basis for all general analysis within the framework.

The Alternatives

The alternatives are the third part of the decision making process. They are mutually exclusive solutions to the problem. Each alternative provides an acceptable solution to the problem but, because each is different, presents a different future. Each alternative will be complex in its features and these differences are what set it apart from the other alternatives. The more different each alternative is, the better, since this means a fuller range of solutions is considered.

Analysis of Alternatives

The detailed consideration of alternatives is broken into two parts in this framework: analysis and comparison. This is done both to simplify the analysis and to ensure that the future posed by each alternative is fully appreciated before the alternatives are compared. Without this fourth part, called analysis, comparison of alternatives may be superficial, as the implications of pursuing a particular alternative are not well understood.

Analysis of alternatives involves profiling the future situation presented by each alternative with respect to the criteria (issues, decisions or key factors) identified under the situation. In other words, the decision-maker projects what the future will look like by criterion if the alternative is chosen. The feasibility of moving from the present situation to the future posed by the alternative also needs to be considered. This includes consideration of what is needed to implement change, what resources are available for making changes, what the costs and benefits are, what the adverse side-effects are, and what risks are associated with trying to achieve it. New information is permissible in the analysis but only to the extent that it deals with the future. The reason for introducing it, however, must build on the situation described earlier.

Comparison of Alternatives

The fifth part is the comparison of alternative futures developed under the analysis of alternatives. The alternatives are compared criterion by criterion. The purpose is to see which alternative provides the most attractive future and at the same time how achievable that future is. The result of this comparison is a statement, criterion by criterion, as to which alternative appears most attractive. If one is dealing with meaningful alternatives, each alternative can be expected to be superior in some regards and weaker in others. When one alternative is superior to all other alternatives on every count, rethinking the alternatives makes sense as the other alternatives appear to be little more than "straw men," alternatives that have been created simply so it can be said that alternatives were considered but they were not really meaningful.

The Recommendation

The recommendation is the sixth part. It includes identifying the suggested alternative, stating how it deals with the problem and why it is the best alternative. The latter steps are all part of selling the recommendation. Showing why an alternative is the best is rarely easy because one is rarely better in all respects. The way to handle this is to recognize the superiority of the alternative with respect to the most important criteria, and its weaknesses with respect to less important criteria. When the recommendation is that multiple alternatives be adopted, the alternatives need to be redefined because they are not mutually exclusive.

Plan of Action

The seventh and final part is the plan of action. This presents the actions required to put the recommended alternative in place. Describing the general tasks that are to be performed and their relationship to the recommendation helps show that the plan implements the recommendation. But to be actionable, the plan has to be detailed. The general tasks have to be specified in greater detail. Providing such specificity is possible because prior analysis of the situation and the alternative produced sufficient appreciation for the two that it is possible to say what needs to be done to bridge the gap.

The plan is best accompanied by a Gantt-type chart in which the key tasks that have to be performed are laid out, they are assigned to individuals or organizational units, and the time of starting and completing the various tasks is given. In addition to the chart, supporting material can include the results expected as the plan unfolds, specific resources needed to carry out each task, specific details on particular tasks, and contingency arrangements if the plan does not unfold as expected.

Relationships Among the Steps

The seven parts of the matrix are tied together through relationships among them. The fourteen relationships that tie together the various steps in the analysis are displayed in Figure 2.

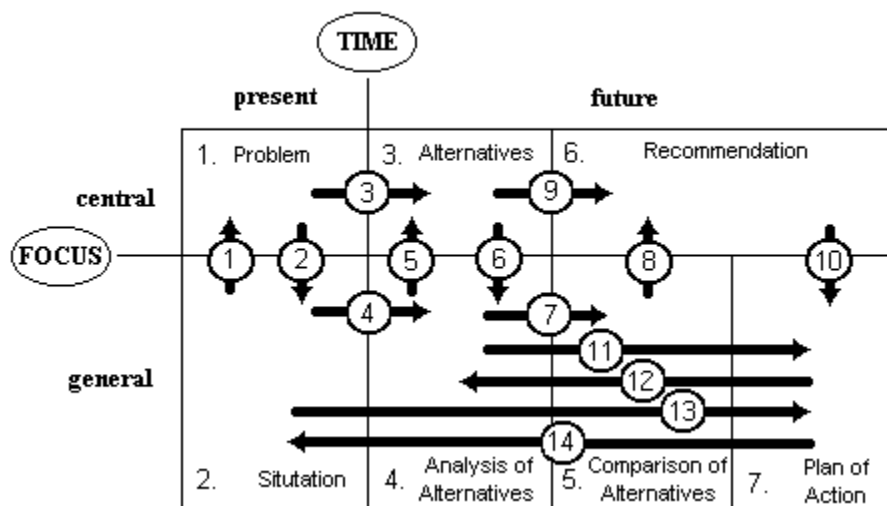


Figure 2: Relationships in The Decision-Making Framework

Let us now consider each of these relationships in detail

1. The size-up of the situation allows a pattern to be deciphered among the various issues facing the decision-maker. This pattern suggests what the overriding problem is.
2. Having determined what the problem is, one revisits the situation from which it was derived. If most or all of the issues in the situation are captured within the boundaries of the problem statement, one can be reasonably sure that he/she has produced an accurate definition of the problem. If the problem statement fails to include many of the situational issues, then the definition of the problem needs to be rethought. This test is especially useful when doing case analysis because good cases rarely include needless data.
3. The problem needs to be solved by finding a solution. Each alternative is produced so that it represents a satisfactory solution to the problem facing the decision-maker.
4. The analysis must deal with each of the key factors identified in the situation analysis. Since the issues in the situation were the foundation of the problem, then solving the problem means that each alternative must address these issues. Consequently, analysis of an alternative requires determining what will happen or have to be done for each issue if the alternative is accepted. Sometimes the alternative will have no impact on particular issues. This needs to be recognized as well when comparing alternatives.
5. In the process of analyzing the implications of an alternative, one may develop a greater appreciation for the character of the alternative being analyzed. This greater understanding can then be used to clarify more succinctly the definition of the alternative.
6. The definition and characterization of each alternative suggests how various issues identified in the situation section have to be dealt with.
7. The comparison of alternatives relies completely on the data that is generated in the analysis of alternatives.
8. The statements comparing each alternative in terms of issues are used to determine which alternative will be recommended.
9. The recommendation must be an alternative so that the problem identified is satisfied or solved.
10. The recommendation is put in place through actions described in the plan of action. When all the actions have been performed, the recommended alternative should be in place.
11. What has to be done is based on moving the organization to the future suggested by the alternative selected.
12. The plan of action has to be tested to see if it will produce the future described by the alternative.
13. What has to be done is based on moving the organization from the current situation.

14. The plan of action has to be tested to see that it starts with the situation the business currently finds itself in.

Working the Framework

This framework can be used both when writing and when analyzing cases. When writing a case, the decision-making framework can be used as a template. The writer can use it to ensure that the case has sufficient content to allow students to make a decision. The writer can increase the challenge posed by the case by including more data and concepts in the situation, by not stating the problem and by not providing alternatives. Note that not all cases allow use of the full model. For example, implementation cases may deal with moving from the present situation to the selected alternative. But in every instance, the model helps the case writer include sufficient material for satisfactory case discussion.

When analyzing a case using the framework, the initial step is to size up the situation. Then, as one turns to analysis, the relevance of material in various steps of the model becomes evident. The order in which the steps are considered is not critical if one is collecting data within the framework. Moving methodically from one step to the next does not necessarily create information. Rather the decision-maker sees one matter and when exploring that, recognizes other aspects, and so on. The logical process is much like putting together a picture puzzle or working out a crossword puzzle. As one deals with one piece of information or analysis, insights into other are created. As thinking develops and a more comprehensive understanding is developed, steps of the model can be expanded upon and later validated. Toward the end, consistency among the steps can be examined. Once analysis is done, it can be reported or presented in a linear, step-by-step order since, by then, the information has been fully digested. At this point the goal of producing well-formed, logical analysis has been achieved.

Summary

The purpose of this note has been to provide a framework for structuring decision-making that helps the reader organize his/her thinking about complex problems, encourages more systematic thought and increases his/her recognition of interrelationships among the various steps required to come up with a solution. These relationships are important because they provide the foundation for building consistency among the steps. As one works to build consistency through iterative analysis, the quality of the analysis is improved.