

Decision Making

Leaders must make decisions in the midst of uncertainty.

We rarely possess enough time, facts or prophetic input to bring certainty to a course of action. Effective leaders seek first to understand. They work hard to consider every possible outcome of the pending decision.

I've learned to exert extra caution when I'm presented with a slam-dunk option. Haven't we all experienced a slam-doh?

I once had a boss who exerted an amazing amount of effort to determine, "What can go wrong if I say yes or no?" The deeper question bellowed, "Will I get blamed if this doesn't work?" Self-preservation forces scaredy-cat-decisions and suboptimal outcomes.

Even "easy" decisions produce unexpected results and poor outcomes.

At least two types of errors occur in deciding a course of action:

- We accept our baseline hypothesis about the facts and act accordingly. (We accept the null hypothesis.)
- We reject our assessment of the hypothetical baseline. (We reject the null hypothesis.)

We accept the story told by the collection of inputs, or we reject it.

Some seek a third, fourth or fifth alternative. However, the story mutates as more alternatives arise. Baseline thinking warps through manipulation, weighting or forgetting.

Consider these three tips to produce better outcomes in your decision making:

1. Take a bias bath: As you come to the decision, what do you currently believe? Are you persuaded by facts or opinions? Do you have personal beliefs that cloud your vision? What underlying assumptions affect your thinking?

2. Dig for Data: Find organizational facts. How have others decided in similar situations? What are the opportunities and risks? Is money allocation an investment or an expense? Does this decision promote growth or retreat?

3. Take more time: Yes, everyone loves a decisive leader. But when the outcome materializes, few will applaud the speed of decision making. Time provides an opportunity to collect more data. How many lamentations begin with the phrase “If only I had known ...” Take time to know.

Most importantly, seek the full counsel of the Lord as you make decisions. Pray for the leading of the Holy Spirit. “Show me the way!”

The disciples witnessed signs and wonders while in training and in their own experiences. People then and now choose to accept what they see or reject it.

Some go so far as to reject scientific evidence of things seen. The Holy Spirit says, “Come.”

Eternal life begins with a decision. {eoa}

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