Decision-Making Best Practices Checklist

The Bridgespan Group
Collaborating to accelerate social impact

The following statements present best practices for making decisions effectively. Use the checklist to see how well you and your team are engaging on and implementing critical decisions in your organization.

THE SETUP

Get clarity on what is being decided and appropriate roles.

- ☐ 1. We clarify what is (and is not) being decided in advance.

- ☐ 2. We establish clear and appropriate decision roles.

- ☐ 3. We proactively create ways for those affected by the decision to participate, particularly those typically marginalized and with an equity lens to ensure the right voices are at the table.

- ☐ 4. We do not expect to be involved in every decision.

- ☐ 5. We clarify the decision criteria, process, and timeline upfront, and make sure the level of effort reflects the value of the decision.

- ☐ 6. We make explicit and interrogate assumptions, beliefs, and values that may influence the process.

DECISION MAKING

Agree on the practices and values your team will intentionally apply to the process.

- ☐ 1. We seek options that address inequity and promote equity, considering any unintended consequences and the impact on disparities.

- ☐ 2. We evaluate options using data that has been interrogated for bias first, judgment second.

- ☐ 3. We engage in open and constructive debate, challenging the status quo.

- ☐ 4. We strike the right balance between analysis and action.

- ☐ 5. We run decision-focused meetings that advance decisions and execution.

- ☐ 6. We make the best decision for the organization overall, not for our own function or department.

DECISION FOLLOW-UP

Confirm with the team the decision made and the path forward.

☐ 1. We support decisions once made, regardless of personal viewpoint.

☐ 2. We proactively communicate the process and outcome of the decision, especially to those most affected by the decision.

☐ 3. We plan for execution and allocate resources appropriately.

☐ 4. We hold ourselves and each other accountable for execution.

☐ 5. We track the outcome to learn and adjust, paying particular attention to the impact on disparities and advancing equity.

☐ 6. We do not re-open decisions unless significant factors have changed.

To learn more about how to structure your decision-making prcoess, check out the article "From Principles to Practices: Structuring Your Decision-Making Process."