



## Changing Culture By Improving Decision Making

### STEP ONE

A company culture with a bias for action knows how to make good decisions quickly. In today's matrix structures that's more crucial than ever. Too often, organizations are paralyzed with "command and control" decision authority and escalating too many decisions, when the matrix requires decision control be pushed lower.

**Before you can** speed up decision making, you have to consider whom you want to empower – not everyone is ready. While empowering usually means giving someone authority to make a decision, it is primarily about building stronger leaders. Keep the coaching leash short for the first project or two.

### Elements for Empowering

There are three key conditions to empower someone:  
The foundation of developing and mentoring people for their next job.



**Your job as a leader is to balance all three!!!  
The goal is to help someone transition, not "sink or swim"**



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### STEP TWO

The next step is to use a **best practice decision-making process**:

- 1) **What is the goal?** Most decisions get stuck when you don't have a clear enough goal. Define it clearly, make it visual – **Post it or write it down.**
- 2) **What is the decision?** (sometimes it's framed as a problem, sometimes as a solution) – **Name it.**  
Is this the **right decision?** (often a group will spin their wheels on an either/or choice between options, when they *really* should be exploring several ways to achieve the goal, vs. narrowing and choosing).
- 3) **Whose decision is it? [This is the decision right]** Name ONE person. (It's never a team).  
Is that the *right* person to decide, or should they be empowering someone else?  
Who else needs to weigh in on the decision? (facts, analysis, opinions, recommendations).  
CRUCIAL POINT: Soliciting feedback from those who will be directly impacted before you make the decision helps pave the way for buy-in later. On the flip side, stakeholders who want input must agree to support the decision and the decision-maker once they have weighed in and been heard. This avoids endless escalation, which derails speed. It requires a great deal of trust and willingness to suspend one's personal agenda for the good of the team or organization.
- 4) **Decide how to decide.** A. What is the most appropriate decision making method. (eg: next page)  
B. Identify the most important criteria – in priority order – to consider in making the decision. (eg: speed of implementation, lower risk, bigger impact, most buy-in, etc.)
- 5) **Who to inform.** Be sure you discuss who you will share the following about the decision: The goal we are trying to accomplish, the factors we considered, why this decision, and how it will impact everyone.

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[Tool - Changing Culture Through Tough Conversations](#)

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