THE COMPLETE LEADER

COACHING GUIDE

DECISION-MAKING

The ability to make an informed choice from a number of options.



LEADERS ARE CLEAR THINKERS

One of the 25 leadership competencies

SECTION 01

WHY DECISION-MAKING MATTERS

Decision-Making is one of the 25 core competencies that define a complete leader. As you grow this capability, you'll notice real shifts in how you lead yourself and influence others.

This guide is built for a 90-day journey. You'll explore the foundations, assess where you stand today, practice new behaviors, sidestep common traps, and track your progress, at your own pace or alongside a coach.

WHAT STRONG DECISION-MAKING LOOKS LIKE

- You make sound decisions in a timely way, even when they are difficult
- You synthesize personal opinion, team needs, and corporate directives into balanced choices
- People trust your judgment because your rationale is clear

> **REFLECT**
>
> *Why does Decision-Making matter to you personally? How might developing it change your effectiveness as a leader?*

SECTION 02

FOUNDATIONS OF DECISION-MAKING

THE DEFINITION

The ability to make an informed choice from a number of options.

Like any skill worth mastering, Decision-Making rests on a few core building blocks. Understanding them gives you a vocabulary for your own growth.

THE CORE ELEMENTS

1 **Balanced analysis**

Giving equal weight to all the parties and concerns involved. Decision-makers who over-focus on one factor satisfy some needs and miss others.

2 **Gathering input**

Good decisions are rarely made in a vacuum. Ask for and respect the input of everyone the decision will affect before you make it.

3 **Owning the outcome**

Acting decisively despite resistance, accepting the consequences, and being willing to correct a decision that turns out to be wrong.

REFLECT

Which element feels most familiar? Which one feels like a stretch right now?

SECTION 03

YOUR STARTING POINT

Before you move forward, take an honest look at where you are today. Read each statement and mark how often it's true of your leadership.

I find it easy to make the right decision at the right time for optimal results.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I recognize which decisions are mine to make and which should be delegated to someone else.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I write down the significant decisions I make, and review the results nine to twelve months later.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I have a specific decision-making process I use for decisions with long-term or significant impact.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I seek input from the people a decision will affect before I make it.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

When a decision turns out badly, I work to identify the cause rather than defend the choice.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

> **REFLECT**
>
> *Looking at your answers, where is your greatest opportunity for growth? What patterns do you notice?*

SECTION 04

DECISION-MAKING IN PRACTICE

Competencies grow through deliberate practice. Work through the activities below in order, or choose the ones most relevant to your context.

ACTIVITY 01 40 min

Thinking About Decisions

We make decisions daily, but rarely examine how they actually get made, or who they affect.

TRY IT

1. Choose three decision topics from your work and write out the steps each one involves.
2. For each, identify who makes the decision and what organizational level is required.
3. Where you don’t know, do a little research so you understand the process better.

ACTIVITY 02 40 min

Developing Solution Options

For a current or upcoming decision, define the problem carefully before you reach for an answer.

TRY IT

1. Write a careful definition of the problem you’re deciding about.
2. Determine whether a decision actually needs to be made at all.
3. Work toward three genuinely different possible solutions.

ACTIVITY 03 40 min

Analyzing the Options

Run each option through the same practical filter so you're comparing like with like.

TRY IT

1. For each option, rate ease of implementation on a 1–5 scale.
2. Note the human resources needed, completion timeline, and cost.
3. List outstanding questions for each, resolve what you can, then decide.

ACTIVITY 04 20 min

Decide Under Uncertainty

When you don't feel you have enough information, test how much that actually matters.

TRY IT

1. Name a decision you've been holding because you want more data.
2. Ask: what is the worst thing that could happen if I decided right now?
3. Either decide, or let the answer strengthen your resolve to gather specific missing data.

ACTIVITY 05 15 min

The Temporary Solution

When a situation forces speed, you don't have to make the permanent call under pressure.

TRY IT

1. For an urgent decision, implement a deliberate temporary solution.
2. Schedule a date to revisit the issue once the immediate crisis has passed.

3. Revisit it with all the relevant factors and people involved.

ACTIVITY 06 15 min

Track and Review

Reviewing past decisions is the fastest way to improve future ones. Revisit the log monthly.

TRY IT

1. Start a written log of your significant decisions and the rationale for each.
2. Note who you consulted and what you expected to happen.
3. Review entries nine to twelve months later and record what you learned.

SECTION 05

COMMON DECISION-MAKING TRAPS

As you practice, watch for these common pitfalls. Naming them now makes them easier to catch in the moment.

01 **Deciding in a vacuum**

Good decisions are rarely made alone. If the people affected never got to state an opinion, expect resistance you could have avoided.

02 **Arbitrary across-the-board choices**

Cutting every budget line by the same percentage looks fair and decides nothing. Balanced decisions come from analysis and priorities, not uniformity.

03 **Letting pressure override values**

Stress, deadlines, and other people's urgency can push you into decisions outside your value system. Always behave ethically.

04 **Defending a decision past its evidence**

Willingness to correct an erroneous decision is a strength, not a loss of face. Holding the line on a bad call costs more than reversing it.

REFLECT

Which trap feels most familiar? How will you stay aware of it as you practice?

SECTION 06

YOUR 90-DAY PRACTICE

Lasting change comes from a few focused habits, practiced consistently and tracked honestly. Build your plan below, on your own or with your coach.

CHOOSE YOUR THREE HABITS

Based on everything above, which three habits will make the biggest difference in growing your Decision-Making over the next 90 days?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

BUILD IN WEEKLY ACCOUNTABILITY

Write questions you can answer each week to measure progress and surface obstacles. The best ones are answered with “yes,” “no,” or a number.

Q1 _____

Q2 _____

Q3 _____

Accountability partner: who will you share these with?

_____

Completion date: when will you evaluate & celebrate?

_____

Measurements of success

How will you celebrate?

SECTION 07

GO DEEPER

Keep building your Decision-Making with these resources. Explore them, then capture what stands out to you.

BOOK	**The Complete Leader, Ch. 1.7: Decision-Making**	The full framework and examples behind sound decision-making.
PODCAST	**The Complete Leader Podcast**	Episodes 98, 99, 112, 117, 119, 129 & 151 explore decision-making.
ONLINE	**Decision-Making competency library**	Videos, articles, and podcasts at TheCompleteLeader.org.

CAPTURE YOUR INSIGHTS

As you work through these resources, which ideas most apply to your own growth in Decision-Making?

KEEP GOING

YOU'VE GOT THIS

Developing Decision-Making is an investment in yourself and everyone you lead. Return to this guide often: revisit the activities, reread the traps, and celebrate small wins along the way.

Every complete leader started exactly where you are now.