

What's the Best Way to Make a Decision?

Here are the four most common approaches to making decisions:

"**Reframing**" is the best approach, but in a recent study it was found to be used only 12% of the time. The starting point for reframing is that anything is possible. If sales don't meet expectations, maybe the manager should change expectations. Reframing lets the manager "set new norms" for the company.

"**Target**" decision making means setting new goals in the process. This tactic keeps the manager's options open to a "whole range of means to achieve your end." This is the method used in 29% of decisions.

"**The Problem**" method races to find the causes-such as low morale or motivation-of distress symptoms such as poor sales. The drawback with this approach is that although the "causes" may only be other symptoms, they often are considered to the exclusion of other possibilities.

" **The Idea**" method, which ironically could be termed the "bright idea" approach, takes a similar shortcut to improving performance. In this case, the manager may say, "Sales are poor; I know, let's do more discounting!" Yet there may be little evidence that discounting is the issue.

The "problem" and "idea" approaches to decisions are more constraining but are used in nearly 60% of decisions. We favor the "reframing" method because "the broader the search for solutions, the better the results."

This article appeared in Mike Henning's Family Firm Advisor newsletter.

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