

Decision Analysis Glossary

Adverse Consequences The negative impact of a risk.

Alternatives The options or choices available when making a decision.

Assess Risks The third process step in Decision Analysis. It has two action steps: Identify adverse consequences and Assess the threat. Determining the risks inherent in a particular choice if that choice were selected and implemented.

Assess the Threat The second Assess Risks action step in which the degree of risk (probability and seriousness) is determined for each adverse consequence.

Audit Objectives A refinement in Decision Analysis in which the role of each objective is examined and confirmed.

Clarify Purpose The first process step in Decision Analysis. It has four action steps: State the decision, Develop objectives, Classify objectives into MUSTs and WANTS, and Weigh the WANTS. Identifying the needs to be fulfilled by a decision by determining the scope of the decision, the criteria that will influence the decision, the role the criteria will play and their relative importance.

Classify Objectives into MUSTs and WANTS The third Clarify Purpose action step in which objectives are sorted according to how they will be used to influence the decision. Those objectives that are mandatory, measurable, and realistic are called MUST objectives; those that are desirable are called WANT objectives.

Compare Alternatives Against the WANTS The third Evaluate Alternatives action step in which the relative performance of alternatives are evaluated against each WANT objective.

Decision A kind of concern where you feel the need to make a choice, but are not sure what to choose.

Decision Analysis A rational process for making a choice or recommendation. It consists of four process steps: Clarify Purpose, Evaluate Alternatives, Assess Risks, and Make Decision.

Decision Statement A short statement that describes what is to be decided or recommended. It consists of a "choice" word; a result; and one or two modifiers.

Develop Objectives The second Clarify Purpose action step that involves identifying the criteria that will influence the choice.

Evaluate Alternatives The second process step in Decision Analysis. It consists of three action steps: Generate alternatives, Screen alternatives through the MUSTs, and Compare alternatives against the WANTS. Identifying the alternatives that will be considered, screening their performance against required criteria, and determining which alternatives offer the best benefits against the desired criteria.

Generate Alternatives The first Evaluate Alternatives action step in which possible choices are

identified or created.

Identify Adverse Consequences The first Assess Risks action step in which future threats to the best performing alternatives are identified.

KT Clear Thinking Process A necessary sequence of steps by which information and judgments are organized so that a conclusion can be reached and appropriate action taken.

Level of the Decision The point at which the Decision Statement broadens or limits the options to be considered. Using more general modifiers will increase the number of options; more specific modifiers will reduce the number of options.

Make Decision The fourth process step in Decision Analysis. It has a single action step: Make the choice. Selecting the best performing alternative with acceptable or manageable risk.

Make the Choice The Make Decision action step in which the alternative selected best satisfies the objectives, based on what is known, with acceptable risk (the benefits far outweigh the risks).

Mandatory An objective is mandatory if it is absolutely essential to the outcome of the decision.

Measurable An objective is measurable (has a set limit or threshold) if there is a clearly defined boundary that a choice must meet. Set limits can be measured with numeric values or with a “yes” or “no” answer.

Measures Specific indicators of the behaviors or results of performance in the areas of quality, quantity, timeliness, or cost. Measures can be quantitative or qualitative. If qualitative, include clear guidelines of how performance will be judged.

MUSTs One of two classifications of objectives in a Decision Analysis (the other is WANT). MUST objectives are mandatory, realistic, and measurable (contain a set limit or threshold that the decision absolutely must meet).

Objectives A short statement that describes the short- and long-term benefits or results wanted from the decision. Objectives can also include restrictions or constraints that the decision must meet.

Process A systematic set of steps to meet a goal.

Realistic An objective is realistic if it is capable of being met.

Recommendation Contributing to a decision for which you are not ultimately the decision maker.

Reflected WANT How well an alternative performs beyond the binary threshold or MUST limit.

Risks Things that might go wrong with the alternative chosen or the action taken.

Scoring Indicating how well each alternative satisfies a given WANT objective compared to the other alternatives. Numeric scores are usually used, with 10 indicating the best score.



Screen Alternatives Through the MUSTs The second Evaluate Alternatives action step in which each alternative is examined to see whether it meets the minimum requirements.

State the Decision The first Clarify Purpose action step that involves writing a short statement describing what is to be decided or recommended.

Test the Level of the Decision A technique in Decision Analysis in which the intent of the choice is examined and confirmed.

Using Scoring Benchmarks A refinement in Decision Analysis in which the performance of alternatives is evaluated against a pre-defined standard.

WANTS One of two classifications of objectives in a Decision Analysis (the other is MUST). WANTS are all the objectives that do not qualify as MUSTs.

Weighing Indicating the amount of influence each WANT objective has on a decision. High/Medium/Low or numeric weights can be used.

Weigh the WANTS The fourth Clarify Purpose action step in which relative values are assigned to WANT objectives using a 10-1 scale.

Weights The numeric value between 10 and 1 given to an objective that represents how important the objective is to the decision. The higher the weight, the more important the objective.