

Using Decision Analysis Under Time Pressure

Purpose

To apply the concepts of Decision Analysis to situations where quick action is required.

Introduction

It is clear that a person will not go through a complete or written analysis for every decision made in the course of a day. Many decisions must be made quickly; sometimes, even very important ones have to be made rapidly. It is not unusual to get a telephone call that requires you to make a decision before you hang up. Or, an employee comes into your office and needs an answer in the next five minutes. Or, you are talking to a customer who asks for a “yes” or “no” decision right then. This is a normal part of any busy day.

In these urgent situations, it is important to think about your objectives. A quick mental review can help you examine the alternative being considered. Raise the question, “Is there another way?” This ensures a better alternative is not overlooked. When the pressure is extreme, a quick mental rundown of adverse consequences may be your best guide to a “yes” or “no” decision.

Instructions

1. Briefly describe a recent situation where you had to make an important decision under time pressure and the result was not satisfactory.

2. What Decision Analysis questions could have improved this result?

3. Identify one kind of time pressure decision you must repeatedly make on your job.

4. What two or three specific Decision Analysis questions will improve your results in handling this kind of decision?

5. How can you make sure you use these questions in handling this type of situation?
