



LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS: AMPLIFIED IMPACT OF THE DECISIONS YOU MAKE

It is now more important than ever for leaders to ensure their decision-making is effective, nimble, inclusive, transparent—and that it supports psychological safety, candor, and trust. The stakes are even higher now than they were during “business as usual” ... and you can think of it from the point of view of health outcomes or business outcomes. The margin of error is greatly diminished these days.

Have you noticed the impact on teams that is created by people’s perceptions regarding how decisions are made? We have. To ensure a high-performance team and a “great place to work” — *and to make the best decisions* — we recommend using these known management tools:

- Make sure your decision-making is **transparent**. Articulate why you made a certain decision, how you made it, what other solutions you rejected and exactly why... Don’t make the mistake many leaders make of cutting to the chase with: “My decision is made and here it is...” This leaves your leadership team and the rest of the organization in the dark. Not only could this be a teachable moment, an opportunity for learning, but it is an opportunity to build relationship and trust.
 - In our executive coaching practice, we occasionally see feedback to leaders who do not employ transparency in decision-making. Their stakeholders feel devalued, distrustful, and confused. If a senior team member sees that his/her recommendation has been tossed out in the final decision, they will not feel the psychological safety to be candid the next time *unless they understand the whys and wherefores that led to the rejection of their recommendation*.
- Make sure your decision-making is **inclusive**. You can’t afford to miss some of the data that should drive a decision now. It is crucial to include different points of view. No one person (or one type of person) can see all the angles. This does not mean drifting into analysis paralysis – it just means gathering and considering data you might not otherwise have had readily available to you.
 - In our work with leadership teams, leaders have told us the unfavorable consequences when a senior leader has relied on “the usual clique” of advisors to make decisions. We often hear about tunnel vision that has led to some serious mistakes. *You need a wide-angle lens right now to ensure you are taking all circumstances and options into account.*
- Make sure your decision-making is **nimble**. Time and tide wait for no man (or woman) — or does the coronavirus. A decision that is right for today, may not be by tomorrow. Whatever your time horizon is on making decisions, cut it in half...or in tenths...as appropriate.
 - In gathering feedback for executives, we have also seen the frustration leaders in organizations feel when consensus-building goes to extremes (aka analysis paralysis). This may sound like it contradicts the concept of inclusivity. No. It just means that it is critical that you tailor decision authorities and processes to the urgency, importance, and “time and tide” of the question at hand. *Know what needs immediate resolution and what can wait until tomorrow.*

For additional ideas on adaptive leadership during this time of health emergency, see: [HBR.org/Principles-to-Guide-Adaptive-Leadership](https://hbr.org/Principles-to-Guide-Adaptive-Leadership).

Do you need to revamp your decision-making apparatus? Are your decisions building (or degrading) trust?