

An analysis of the rational decision making model essay sample

[Business](#), [Decision Making](#)



Decisions made by groups when dealing with complex problems and issues occur everyday in the life of an organization. The decisions made by these groups can have serious, far-reaching consequences throughout the organization if not properly thought through. This is the reason for the existence of decision making models. Decision making models are logical, systematic, and methodical approaches to problem solving. Many decision making models exist. According to Lahti (1996), there are four group decision making models that can be identified. The models are the rational, political, process, and garbage can models. Each model possesses distinct advantages and disadvantages over the other models which is not the focus of this paper. The focus of this paper will be the analysis and real-world application of the rational model.

The rational model is the baseline against which other models are compared (Lahti, 1996). The model follows a scientific, methodical, and rational approach to decision-making. The model follows a step-by-step process which decision makers use in the quest to solve a problem. The steps followed by the rational model, as defined by Robbins (2002, p. 74) are 1) define the problem; 2) identify the decision criteria; 3) weigh the criteria; 4) generate alternatives; 5) rate each alternative on each criterion; and 6) compute the optimal decision.

The first step of the model involves the process of defining the problem or goal. The necessity of this step is underscored by the fact that an assumption of the model is that decision makers will have the same frame of reference regarding the definition of the problem.

Decision makers in step two, are required to establish objective criteria to assess the solutions formulated in the first step. The criteria will also be used to evaluate the failure or success of the chosen solution.

Step three of the model requires that decision makers mathematically weigh or rank the criteria formulated in step two.

The gathering of information on alternative solutions occurs in the fourth step. This involves active searches for information on solution alternatives. As previously stated, the model assumes that all alternative solutions are readily available.

The fifth step of the model involves rating the solutions using the ranking criteria established in the fourth step.

Selection of the optimal solution occurs in the sixth step of the model. The optimal solution is chosen according to the ranking established in step five. According to the model, the decision chosen in this process will be the most optimized decision.

Now that the rational model has been defined and its processes explained, the next logical progression to this paper is to apply the model to a "real-world" situation. The situation occurred while I was employed as the chief systems engineer at a professional services firm that specialized in wireless local area network engineering. I was assigned by the company as the lead systems engineer in a project at the largest options trading floor. The primary mission of the project was to implement a wireless network that

would be utilized by the floor traders to access backoffice applications using pen based handheld computers.

The complexity of implementing the wireless network was made exponentially more difficult by the fact that there was no regulation of wireless network devices, a. k. a access points on the trading floor. This lack of regulation created a trading floor environment in which member firms were allowed to install their own access points anywhere on the trading floor. The radio technology used by the access points allowed for the interference free operation of 15 co-located access points. The lack of access point regulation resulted in the implementation of over 60 access points by the time we began the project.

One of my first tasks was to determine the optimal method with which to migrate member firm users from their own access points to the shared network.

A task force consisting of member firm representatives, exchange representatives, and my team of systems engineers were involved in the decision making process of which I was the facilitator. The steps of the rational model were followed in the decision making process, though not in the order that was earlier described. The formulation of objective evaluation criteria and the creation of the ranking system occurred after the gathering of alternative solutions.

As a group, we defined the problem and our goal which was to determine a migration solution which 1) has minimal impact on the operation of the

existing member firm access points and 2) implemented backup mechanisms on a per user basis to guard against migration problems.

Next, we were able to identify three alternative solutions using various tools including surveys, interviews and brainstorming. Once these solutions were identified, we agreed upon a list of criteria with which to evaluate the alternative solutions, inserted the criteria into a matrix, and assigned a weighted point system to each of the criteria.

In the end, the group decided on a migration solution where users would be incrementally migrated from their own wireless network into the shared wireless network. The solution was implemented and occurred over a period of six months which was one week behind the schedule that we had set.

The rational decision making model, provided that certain assumptions are met, can be a very effective tool in the problem solving or goal setting process. The effectiveness of the model lays in it's logical, methodical, and scientific approach to problem solving.

Works Cited

Lahti, R. K., (1996). " Group Decision Making within Organization: Can Models Help?" 28 June, 2004

Robbins, S. P. (2002), Essential of Organizational Behavior, 6th edition, Prentice-Hall Inc. A Pearson Education Co., Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 74-75.