

Abstracts 4 articles decision making

[Business](#), [Management](#)



Reading 1. 3 Jackall, R. (1988) Theories of decision-making process deliver to managers many essential tools such as risk and cost/benefits analysis, etc. which in turn routinizes administration. These tools cannot be used appropriately to manage of incalculable entities. The functional rationality approach is when activities precisely planned and estimated to reach some goal. This method is unlikely to be used by top managers because another important factors are involved such as ego or personal altitude.

If there is no special procedure for a particular problem, manager should focus on how to turn a situation into the right way in accordance with expectations from their boss. Some managerial people cannot make their own judgments. Instead, they are looking up and looking around for someone else's opinion and finally they rely on it because of personal fears or inexperience. Another example of it is the mid-level decision-making paralysis in many American companies when a manager is trying to avoid of making a decision. In the case of inevitable decision, he or she would engage as many colleagues as possible for self-protection.

Many examples of recent administrative and economic problems within American companies have showed the tendency that managers are oriented to the short-term period when making decisions. This is due to the fact that MBA programs provide tools which are focuses mostly on a short-term attitude. The second reason would be that managers are under pressure for annual, quarterly, monthly and daily results and these factors push them out of thinking about the future, even though they realise that today's minor difficulties could be tomorrow's big crises.

Managers are also aware of blame time and when things go wrong it is necessary to be protected from consequences. This is the reason why they gravitate towards this fear being punished rather than reflecting critically. Bureaucracy disrupts working processes into parts and the results of the work therefore disconnected with the decisions, which had been made. Manager's productivity depends on the position within management circle or their supervisors. There is no codes or systems for tracking personal responsibilities to be established.

To be successful manager means to move quickly within the levels of managerial hierarchy. It protects from going into problems too deeply at every level. Example I worked for four years as an instrument engineer in the Natural gas industry in Russia. I was involved into the decision making process associated with planning resources and finances for further projects and discussions about engineering-related difficulties. Firstly, when the question was complicated and involves financial resources, I checked the parameters of equipment many times and sent the results to my boss.

When I received the confirmation from him, I printed it out and managed the necessary signatures on it. I did not want to be responsible for any inconvenience because my boss has to carry out this kind of responsibility. It was extremely important for me as a lower-level manager to have the document that proves that all things are done in time and approved by middle-level manager. In case of inconveniences such as the late commissioning phase of facilities I showed the documents that all the steps were completed by me on time. Reading 4. 2 Reason, J. (1990)

The general view on accident's causes within complex technological systems includes theoretical framework which is not only provides the data on how dangerous factors could be combined themselves, but also where and how to predict these tendencies and take necessary measures beforehand. There are many elements of production, which are also involved into accident causation. Fallible high-level manager's decisions are a major contributing factor to an increase in risk, followed by the lack of line management, which in turn causes dangerous preconditions and unsafe acts (intended and unintended).

The latter are based on human's psychological characteristics and conditions and are described as a combination of both potential hazards and errors, which could cause injury or damage. Likewise, a trajectory of an opportunity includes all these factors plus safeguards and productive events. Each of these has a window of opportunity in terms of an accident incidence. Therefore damage is highly possible when this trajectory is crossing all the windows at all the stages of production. The safe operation control consists of two features – feedback and response.

The theory points out that the most successful approach to manage the safety is by taken into consideration the failure types rather than the failure tokens. According to Westrum (1988) there are three groups of actions – denial, repair and reform. The successful organization is taken actions in responding to safety data from the reform (bottom level). The fundamental distribution error relates to a personal incompetence of employee while on the other hand the fundamental surprise error is the situation when personal observation differs to a reality.

Thus, taken into consideration these terms and experience from the past major accidents such as Chernobyl, the nature of a malfunction has to be considered not only as pure technical but also as socio-technical. The people's contribution to accidents is dominating the machine failure risk. Example I investigated many serious accidents related to the natural gas transportation process. For instance, one emergency stop of the 3.2-megawatt gas turbine was caused by the malfunction of a frequency meter. After an analysis of reports I concluded that technical maintenance of this device was conducted improperly.

A responsible worker forgot to finish one procedure related to the metrology accuracy of this piece of equipment. Another example is when other gas turbine was stopped by alarm during normal working cycle. The reason for that was unplanned and uncoordinated upgrade of its automatic control system (ACS). From my point of view, the modern technology is very reliable and ACS is highly faultless but social factors as well as poor decision making are of the major reasons for emergency situations. For instance, social factors in Russia are included a low salary and the lack of a proper education.

Reading 6. Beach (1993) A descriptive Image theory focuses on people's individual decisions rather than group ones, and it is directly opposite to prescriptive classical theory of making decisions. There are also three decision-related images (structures), which have to be possessed by a decision maker. The value image is based on personal principles, behavior and beliefs. These are the source for generating goals. Thus, the ultimate criteria for this is when the decision maker consider the values to be

relevant. Therefore potential goals and actions, if they are inconsistent with the relevant principles, will be refused.

The second image, which is called the trajectory image, includes potential goals, which have to be set and the third one, the strategic image, focuses on actions and plans that have to be performed for achieving targets. The important parts of the third image are tactic and forecast, which would be a crucial factors for monitoring a realisation progress of a particular goal. Decision-making process consists of two types of decisions such as adoption and progress which include the implementation of the compatibility and profitability tests.

The compatibility test is based on both types of decisions and compares candidates to three images, whereas in contrast the profitability test relates to the adoption decision only and uses the outcome after performing the compatibility test. For instance, the compatibility test selects few candidates, who successfully crossed through a selection criteria and the profitability test therefore chooses the best candidate from the previous sorting. Another important part of the Image theory is the process of framing decisions which is the action when the goal is identified and the plan is called back if one exists. The data from the practical research suggests that it is unlikely that the decision maker tend to change the selection criteria without changes in principles, goals and plans. Example I was involved into the process of interviewing new workers within the Natural gas industry. I had to employ personnel with sufficient technical knowledge and skills because they have to work within hazardous areas and on potentially dangerous equipment. As

a team leader I was hoping to find highly qualified workers with extensive experience for an average amount of salary.

After performing several meetings and consultations with potential staff within this salary category I concluded that no one was able to pass the criteria and possess theoretical knowledge and practical achievements from previous work experience. Because of that I decided to change the working images by changing the criteria. Therefore, I focused on workers who possess theoretical knowledge with engineering ideas in complex. Although they did not have extensive experience, they satisfied basic criteria and were able to perform tasks within their role (maintenance and repair).

And after this correction of principles I recruited staff for my team successfully. Reading 7. 3 Janis (1971) Groupthink is a way of thinking when members behave with a high level of concurrence and tend to adopt a soft line of criticism on colleague's ideas or even on every critical issue. This is why they make inhumane decisions easily with serious consequences such as the huge number of people's deaths. The more cohesive the group, the more the risk that the decision will be proposed without the deep analysis of other choices.

There are eight major symptoms of groupthink such as invulnerability, irrationality, ignorance of moral principles, stereotyped and unrealistic positions, group pressure against any critical views, member's self-censorship, unanimity tendency within a group and the mind guard which is to protect the decision from any kind of the feedback. These indicators are typical for a bad decision making process which in turn may result the

inhumane decision with serious consequences. Several steps could be adopted to prevent any group from group thinking.

In this case criticism should be accepted not only by members but also by a leader. Wide range of alternatives should also be taken into account as possible options. In a case of vital decisions several groups with different leaders should be established to work on the same problem. Before the final decision is made each member should discuss considerations in its unit of organisation and then provide a final response to the group. An outside expert should be invited to all meetings. One decision-maker within the group should criticise a position of the majority.

In the case of consensus the group should organise the final meeting for listening and discussing any doubts against the final decision. Although these actions have also drawbacks. For instance, when growing crisis requests an immediate solution there is no time for discussions and implementing many steps for decision making. Another example might be that the risk of the leakage of vital information would significantly increases when outside specialists are involved. All in all, it seems to be clear that top priority should be given in the prevention of any policymaking unit from the group thinking.

Behavioral scientists should also be involved into these processes. Example During my work in Russia a groupthink was played a crucial role because of many factors. Firstly, my colleagues were really close to each other and the company's social policy was developed for this purpose. Therefore, we spent some days playing games and sports altogether. This resulted in the number of small close-connected teams within the group. Another point is that my <https://assignbuster.com/abstracts-4-articles-decision-making/>

boss had a top role during all the process of discussion. Therefore, I had seen many examples of bad decision-making. For instance, the only criticism from experienced and old colleagues was taken into account despite obvious things that were given by young professionals. Another factor is that the small teams did know how to play games within this environment and how to speculate. From my point of view, taking into consideration the long-term period, most of the final decisions were satisfactory but insufficient. It means that the projects were performed according to the rules and practices within timelines.

But it can be clearly seen that due to the lack of criticism, for example, the total cost of the projects was increased. This way if the rules and steps of good decision practice were implemented, the cost and efficiency would significantly increase. Reading 8. 2 Callon (1987) The development of the technology has been explained by many social scientists using different available methods but they have not taken into account the point that the issue of the technology itself can also be represented as a sociological tool for an analysis. This also leads to the changes in understanding the dynamics of technology.

There are two sociological views on the dynamic of consumption, which were developed by sociologists Touraine and Bourdieu. Touraine showed that French consumers' behavior mostly dictated by large monopolies and industry, whereas in contrast Bourdieu pointed out that competition between social classes within French society taken the first place in terms of consumption of goods and services. Therefore these theories were shown by

battle between engineers of two powerful French companies in the early 1970s: Electricite de France (EDF) and Renault.

Despite the fact that both of them successfully proposed the concept of an electric car (VEL), the EDF's theory failed because of unsolved technological difficulties related to the area of science and economy of the VEL, but the Renault did survive in the market because it focuses on not only the technological factors but also on rational views. This is the controversial result, because from the sociological point of view Renault's specialists won this battle by a chance nor by implementing genius technological ideas.

This experience of engineers-sociologists is possible to use as a new methodological tool for exploring large sections of society as well as researching within the value of role of social movements in the progress of consumption. There is also a helpful tool which is named the actor network. It is the case when company's technological strategy supported by many sections of society. It describes the dynamics of society in completely different way without using sociological explanations.

Firstly, in the case of implications of radical innovations within a technological sector engineers must mix technical and scientific analysis with sociology. Secondly, the actors network approach is efficient because it takes into account outside factors, which are related to common concepts of systems. Example I was responsible for implementing the concept of using compressed natural gas (CNG) as fuel for private cars and municipal buses instead of regular petrol. I was focused on the public transport such as buses because of the potential reduction of pollutions as well as the decrease of the total cost of fuel consumption.

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Moreover, it was easier to install the necessary equipment on buses because the government agreed to subsidise the cost of these modifications. Whereas in contrast I concluded that private car owners would not agree with this idea because the Siberian region in Russia is a large area and the number of CNG filling stations was limited to only 7. Thus, it was clear for me that using CNG fuel people could not travel between major cities which is crucial factor. This approach was based on social behavior of people and their habits. Therefore, the main target for our new policy was a municipal transport within major cities.