

# Authors jeffrey pfeffer and robert i sutton article review sample

[Business](#), [Company](#)



## **Article: “ Evidence-Based Management”**

In the article “ Evidence-Based Management” Jeffrey Pfeffer and Robert I. Sutton give an overview of the main principles of their own newly-established management method of efficient decision-making – evidence-based management. Dwelling on the importance of making the right decision for managers, the authors emphasize the obvious at first sight, yet not fully researched and not always considered, step towards this tough process that every manager faces on a daily basis – before the actual decision-making, a good manager is required to study the issues inside out and only after the evidence of a real benefit of this decision for a company can be presented and proven by the facts, the manager can finally make a decision and bear the fruits of it afterwards. On the other hand, when a decision is made without all the necessary information and complete research of the problem and evidence of its efficacy, it can very often lead to fatal results for a company.

Summarizing the main steps a manager should take in order to imply evidence-based management to a firm, the authors define four major clues to effective decision making. First of all, no suggestion can be taken seriously into consideration unless it is supported by the necessary data. Secondly, a profound logical analysis of possible faulty cause-and-effect reasoning should be performed. Furthermore, a decision may become much easier to make when certain experiments regarding its efficiency take place beforehand. Lastly, continuous learning is presented as the basis for a manager to master their skills of advanced decision-making that will eventually lead a company to success and prosperity. All above mentioned

principles (and neglecting them) in practice are accurately demonstrated in the article by real examples of decision making in the companies.

Jeffrey Pfeffer and Robert I. Sutton appeal to medical sphere in order to clearly indicate how lack of necessary information about the upcoming decision can mislead and result in more and more company ills. It is stated in the article that only 15% of the medical decisions are made using evidence-based approach, while authors hint at even smaller number of managers who practice it. Instead of doing research, physicians (as well as most managers) rely on their previous experience, knowledge they got in school, traditions and ideology that is rarely based on real facts and proofs, and skills they believe they are most professional in. One more reason of making inefficient decisions can lie in the widespread desire to imitate and repeat the experience of more successful companies, neglecting the differences in size, structure, age, conditions and prerequisites. All this will definitely throw a manager or physician off course and let them think they made a right decision when they did not. The parallelism of medical and business spheres helps readers understand a real importance of having evidence before taking further steps. The authors claim that just like medicine, management requires a lot of practice and experience, however, it is also necessary to constantly gain new knowledge and improving their skills and make sure to research the problem inside and outside the company before making a decision, and not just relying on the previous experience or the experience of other companies.

Apart from presenting and describing evidence-based management, the article also points out why it can be sometimes hard to imply this method in

a company. The main reasons for it are as follows.

First, there is way too much information in the modern business world and this, consequently, makes it rather tough to filter and choose the most logical, reliable and applicable to the problem. It is vital to define the context of the information a manager consumes and whether or not it can be useful for a company's specific context. Very often inapplicable information can lead to wrong decisions.

Additionally, managers can also be misled by other people. Authors give an example of business consultants – a good manager should be aware that usually consultants are interested in only partial problem resolving as it means there is more work for their consultant firm. Thus, a lot of attention and accuracy are needed when taking into consideration evidence provided by other people.

One more problem that can occur while trying to be evidence based is that a manager can mislead him- or herself. It is a human's nature to hear what we want to hear, that is why very often if something does not match with our beliefs or ideology, we simply try to ignore it.

Moreover, it is a common practice, as the authors mention, that when focusing on the cure a decision can have for the company, some managers forget to take into account the side effects that it can cause.

What is more, when making a decision it is vital to remember that only qualitative data can be considered as evidence.

In the article Jeffrey Pfeffer and Robert I. Sutton also suggest six main substitutes for the real logical evidence that most managers, just like doctors, use in order to speed up their decision. They are: specialist skills,

obsolete knowledge, personal experience, dogma, hype, and mindless mimicry of top performers. That is the reason, the authors suppose, why evidence-based management can hardly be found in practice.

Within the article team work is also depicted as a very important prerequisite of the evidence-based management. A smart manager is supposed to listen and hear the people who work with them. Coordinated actions of a group of people having the same idea and goal in mind and being fully committed to their business, can contribute much more to the company than an individual 'guru'. Of course, it will require being equal with the manager at some point, so a good manager should be ready for it if he or she really wants to achieve success.

The general value of the article cannot be overestimated – despite the fact that it explains obvious things in decision-making, they are rarely done in practice. A good manager should understand that if he/she wants a company to succeed, it is obligatory to think twice before making a decision, and thinking it over implies thorough research of the problem and ability to face the fact, that sometimes things do not work out even if your experience and skills says it will. Thus, management requires being wise and studying everything inside out before taking any further steps. Every decision should be based on the facts and evidence and then it will definitely work out.