

Plus minus and interesting decision-making tool essay sample

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Good business decisions are the core of any successful organization. Good decision-making is a balance between getting the most of what we want with as little risk as possible. It means that we include the appropriate people and use a process that encourages participation while keeping our focus clearly on the decision at hand. It allows us to make the decision with a high degree of confidence and efficiency.

We all make decisions every day. Most are somewhat simple, but many of them are critical and would produce better results with greater confidence if we had a decision-making process by which to go by. A process would also help us with recommendations that many of us are called on to make as well as improves our ability to think clearly. A company that adopts a common decision-making process improves the outcome and efficiency of all their decisions.

Some individuals, when faced with a serious decision, will make a list of the positive aspects on one side and all the negatives on the other. However, if they are not suspending their judgment and emotions, they will usually automatically close in on the side in which they prefer and ignore the other side of the argument.

PMI is a basic decision-making tool formalized by Edward de Bono in 1992. He enhanced the pros and cons technique often used in decision-making by developing the " plus/minus/interesting" tool. It is a valuable improvement to the weighing pros and cons technique that has been used for centuries. The pros and cons technique is basically a two column list of reasons for (" pros") and against (" cons") a particular decision. The idea is that once you have

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listed all the pros and cons you make the decision with the most pros. PMI is similar to a pro-con list, except that it adds the “interesting” element. PMI is a technique that helps you consider all sides of a particular issue without any preconceived notions or prejudice. It enables you to look at the benefits, dangers, and interesting aspects before making a judgment or decision.

PMI charts are a type of graphic tool in which an individual examines the Plusses, Minuses, and Interesting things (or Implications) associated with a particular decision, idea, or topic. These charts can be used “to help organize thoughts about making a decision (like getting a pet), evaluating the pros and cons of a debate topic (like examining the implications of the adoption of a new invention), or comparing the advantages and disadvantages of an action (like thinking about what would happen if going to school was not mandatory)” (“PMI Chart,” 2003).

To use PMI, one will need to create a table with the following headings listed under each column: Plus, Minus and Interesting (or Implications). In the “plus” column you list benefits or anything you feel positive about. You may want to ask yourself “What did I learn?” or “What was useful to me?” In the “minus” column you list all the negatives, such as things that were unclear or may have gone wrong.

PMI offers another dimension usually omitted from the thinking process and that is the “Interesting/Implications” side. This is the clue to truly widening the parameters of our perception. In this column you would list the consequences, areas of curiosity or uncertainty, or attributes that you simply do not view as positive or negative. The “interesting/implications” category

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simply allows exploration of the idea or choice outside the context of judgment – you do not have to evaluate the attribute into a positive or negative category.

“ The purpose of this third and most important area is to get us thinking in terms in which we would not ordinarily think. It is tapping into the right side of the brain and playing with any concept that comes to mind. We are not committing to any course of action here, so it is totally safe to do so. And it is often in this area, the “ Interesting/Implications,” that new innovations are discovered” (“ PMI (Plus/Minus/Interesting”, n. d.)

For fairly simple situations, once you have filled the columns, it should be obvious whether or not you should implement the based on what information is presented. However, for more complex decisions you may want to attach a positive or negative score to each item listed in the columns as appropriate. After you’ve listed your numeric score, simply add up the scores. The scores you attach are purely subjective and are based on what you consider to be the degree of benefit or detriment posed by each item. A strongly positive score shows that an action should be taken, whereas a strongly negative score may indicate the decision should be avoided.

As simple as this technique seems to be, this is a powerful tool that is often neglected. Most individuals believe they list the pluses and minuses of a decision before making it, but in actuality, many people make a decision or form an opinion before they even consider the evidence in an orderly way. Only after they have committed themselves to a decision do they hunt around for a reason to support it. Considering the evidence posed on all

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sides before committing yourself emotionally and psychologically to a position will have a major impact on the quality of your decision making.

There are several times when I have had to use the PMI technique to formulate a decision. For example: when I was deciding whether or not to purchase a new car versus an old car. The chart I created illustrated the following:

PlusMinusInteresting/Implications

My old car is dying out Too expensive What if I leased a new car and kept the old one?

Better mileage Monthly payments What if I bought a modern used car?

Able to drive more Old car still runs Consider taking public transportation

Investment Depreciation

Safer Little trade-in value for old car

It would make me happy Insurance

Other examples of times when I used the PMI technique were when I was deciding whether or not I should change jobs, deciding what college to attend, and determining who to vote for in political elections. The PMI technique has helped me to organize and evaluate issues, compare advantages and disadvantages, and make conscious decisions.

The PMI technique is a great enhancement perception tool for making decisions, solving problems, resolving differences and conflicts, exploring other alternatives, etc. It is also a great tool for groups, teams, and workplace departments to use. You will begin to realize the value and benefit of including the perceptions of others (different from your own), rather than the traditional approach of judging the ideas of others as being “right” or “wrong” in relation to your own.

References:

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