

# Decision making process



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Date: November 10, 2011 LEADER DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

INTRODUCTION Decisions are at the heart of leadership success, however managers tend to treat decisions as events. But in fact decision making is a process that plays out over days, weeks, maybe even months, one that is charged with politics, personal conflicts; that needs to be backed up by each level in the organization in order to be implemented. In this paper the leader decision making-process will be explored, through an example concerning the resolution of the deep water horizon disaster (BP Oil spill), presided over by President Barack Obama and Tony Hayward (Ex-CEO of BP). 1] Then, we will see how decision processes can come along - either through advocacy or inquiry. Following that, the paper will discuss how leaders can draft a robust decision-making process, that has healthy conflicts, consideration of the opinions of others and closing on a decision at the appropriate time. Finally, it will show how the decision-making process impacts leaders, followers, and the organization as a whole. Example: BP-Oil Spill On April 20th, 2010 an oil rig belonging to British Petroleum (BP) blew up[2]. Even though several parties (BP, US Cost Guard, US.

Government, among others)[3] were involved with the tackling of the oil leak, it kept on spilling for nearly three months. This was because of poor leader decision-making by President Obama, the Executives of BP and the others involved. In disasters like this, leaders tend to lead the way, by forming an expert team of advisors to solve the issue. INQUIRY vs.

ADVOCACY Decision Making in teams can be facilitated either by inquiry approach, or advocacy approach. In an inquiry approach, the group

considers a variety of options, as a means of healthy debate and, using this approach, they work out the best solution.

This process focuses on collaboration and not on forceful persuasion. Intense conflicts do arise, but they are non-personal. People share unbiased information widely, so that as a group, these ideas can be challenged. Open-minded decision-making approaches promote solutions of a higher quality and more efficient implementation strategy. In an advocacy approach, decision-making is seen through a competitive lens. Members tend to believe that persuasion and convincing others is the main goal. This behavior often leads to situations in which group members put their egos and self-interests first.

This causes a win-lose situation, which might lead to contra-effective behavior like, blaming the other party, withholding information, ignoring opposing arguments and presenting data that only support the opinion in question. Advocacy - BP Oil Spill During the crisis management of the BP oil spill, advocacy behavior between government and company leaders could clearly be identified: Decision making was ineffective in controlling and cleaning up the spill. Disasters like this highlight the breakdown of interdependence and common responsibilities among leaders: Obama failed at addressing the issue effectively.

He reacted politically, and put the blame entirely on BP and avoided cooperation with the oil company to jointly solve the issue[4]. It took Obama 12 days to show up in the region. [5] Cooperation between Team Obama and Team BP came 50 days after the day of the spill[6]. Team BP, also failed in

this decision making process: the CEO of BP undermined the issue by stating, that the ocean is big enough to absorb the oil damages. [7] In addition, BP withheld crucial information from the US government and from the public[8], which caused a further delay and breakdown with the decision making process.

There are 3 C's that shape the process of leader decision-making. 1. CONFLICT Conflict is crucial for decision-making. " Critical thinking and rigorous debate invariably lead to conflict"[9] This means leaders must overcome conflict smoothly to make an effective decision. There are two kinds of conflict, cognitive or affective. Cognitive Conflict involves discussing all the details of certain case, by stating all the ideas, disagreements, assumptions, in order to solve the problem in a quicker and better way. Affective Conflict is, when the debate takes an emotional turn.

Personal rivalries and ego bashing often play a critical role in forming affective conflict. Players involved, downplay the situation, or even withhold information, in order to push their ideas further. Affective conflict thus leads to the advocacy decision-making. Therefore, the goal of leaders in decision-making processes is: To elevate the cognitive conflict, while trying minimize affective conflict. Affective Conflict - BP Oil Spill During the BP Oil Spill the lack of communication between " Team Obama" and BP, turned out to be a big disaster.

Each " team" blamed the other due to the lack of responsibilities, taking the matters into an affective conflict. [10] As mentioned before, the BP Executives also downplayed the situation, by hiding some information, about

the extent of the leak, which lead to the faltering of the decision making process. 2. CONSIDERATION Consideration is an important feature when decision-making involves many players. If there is no consideration given, then the players in the decision making process, will not strive to achieve the end goal with a positive outlook. No Consideration - BP Oil Spill

During the Oil Spill, the US Coast Guards came up with the idea to set fire to the area that was initially affected by the oil spill to terminate the spillage for once and for all. [11] This solution was ignored, because in an advocacy decision process, due to ego issues, substantial ideas by sub-team players, are not considered, unless coming from the parties with the dominant position in the decision making process. 3. CLOSURE Closure in decision-making process happens when a team agrees on a solution and method of implementation. Closure can neither happen too early, nor it an happen too late. Closure too early is when players are not speaking up because an advocate leader is dominating them. They conform to the advocate leader's opinion, thereby causing an early closure. Closure too late is when there is too much discussion over and over again about the same topic. This can happen when there is no consensus of which ideas should be used and implemented. Late Closure - BP Oil Spill The oil spill leaked into the ocean for about three months, severely harming the environment. " Obama, ... failed to demonstrate leadership or emotion in the crisis". 12] He put the blame on BP without any discussions, and continued discussing the same blame-game. Thus, in this case, closure between President and the leaders of BP happened too late, because it took them nearly 3 months to close the leak. IMPACTS OF LEADER DECISION-MAKING There are three parties, followers,

leaders and organisations, at stake, when it comes to leader decision-making. a. FOLLOWERS Leaders can strongly impact followers through decision-making processes, by exposing them to an inquiry environment with healthy conflicts and consideration.

Followers will be motivated to contribute with ideas and solutions because they know that their thoughts have a chance of being part of the final resolution and implementation. Leaders negatively impact followers - BP Oil Spill: - Advocacy Situation, when Team Obama and Team BP were blaming each other (Affective Conflict, no real contribution). - Voices of the other team players -were not considered, hence, delay in closure. b. LEADERS Once followers are thoroughly impacted by their superiors they indirectly impact their leaders in a positive way, by providing their leaders better information and options.

This causes leader to take better decisions. This good decision-making process strengthens the leader's credibility and authority within their followers. Followers negatively impact leaders - BP Oil Spill: - Obama's team wanted to keep this problem away from the President and delayed key decisions requested from local and state governments. [13] - BP withheld crucial information from the US government and from the public. - Lead to a Lack of credibility for BP leaders, and President Obama himself, when questions were raised about the delay in closure. [14] c. ORGANIZATIONS

An organization benefits when it has a wealth of good leaders/managers and an excellent collaborative team which thrives with healthy conflict, meaningful voices, and efficiently managing the deadlines, when it comes to

daily operations which flower out from decision making process. Negative impacts on Organizations (BP, country, environment) - BP Oil-Spill - BP posted its first annual loss since 1992, and because of poor decision-making, the stock price tumbled[15] - Fishing & tourism industries along the states of the Gulf of Mexico incurred huge losses[16] - The Environment was severely damaged, and clean up is still on going. 17] CONCLUSION A key step to becoming a successful leader is developing the skill of decision-making, with themselves and with others. Meaningful decisions can be made when managers can encourage their employees to supply them with the best information available in the timeliest manner. This happens when leaders create a decision environment, that fosters constructive values, feelings, and reactions within groups, no matter whether it is within their superior- or subgroups.

If a leader fosters healthy conflicts, considers the opinions and alternatives of key players and leads the way to a successful closure, the leader, then truly embodies the ability to make impactful decisions. [18] REFERENCES What You Don't Know About Making Decisions. Davin A. Garvin and Michael A. Roberto. Harvard Business Review. September 2001. Yes, the Gulf Spill Is Obama's Katrina. Rove, Karl. Wall Street Journal [New York, N. Y], <http://search.proquest.com.ezxy.ie.edu/docview/346065956> ; 27 May 2010 Some ideas were taken from the following web pages: <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/2010/0603/Obama-and-BP-Still-on-the-same-team-in-Gulf-oil-spill-clean-up> <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/2010/0510/Gulf-oil-spill-s-environmental-impact-How-long-to-recover> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2010/jun/02/bp-oil-spill-shares-fall-further> [<https://assignbuster.com/decision-making-process-process-essay-samples-3/>](http://content.</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

usatoday.com/communities/theoval/post/2010/10/obama-team-slammed-for-gulf-coast-oil-response/1 [http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/37463005/ns/disaster\\_in\\_the\\_gulf/t/obama-lashes-out-bp-gulf-visit/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/37463005/ns/disaster_in_the_gulf/t/obama-lashes-out-bp-gulf-visit/)

EXHIBITS [pic] Figure 1; Impacts of Leader Decision-Making -----

[1] Some ideas were taken from: <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0411/53037.html>

[2] Some ideas were taken from:

[http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/o/oil\\_spills/gulf\\_of\\_mexico\\_2010/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/o/oil_spills/gulf_of_mexico_2010/index.html)

[3] Some ideas were taken from: <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0411/53037.html>

[4] Some ideas were taken from:

[http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2010-05-27-Spill-poll\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2010-05-27-Spill-poll_N.htm)

[5] Some ideas were taken from: <http://rove.com/articles/235>

[6] Some ideas were taken from:

Some ideas were taken from: