

THE DECISION N MAKER

Unlock the Potential of
Everyone in Your Organization,
One Decision at a Time

DENNIS BAKKE

Hi, I'm Dennis.

I enjoy making
decisions.





Early on, I would sometimes ask others for advice, but I would make the final decision. Isn't that what leaders are supposed to do?

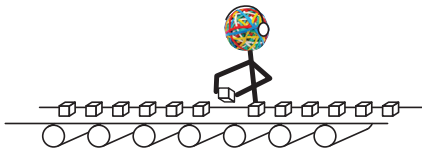
I soon realized that
the more decisions
I made, the less
engaged others
became, and the less
ownership they had
in the results.

The problem was me.



The Problem

Bosses are often less informed than people closer to the action.



In most organizations, bosses make all the important decisions. In fact, most people would tell you that's what leadership is. But are bosses always the best equipped to make all decisions?

The Problem

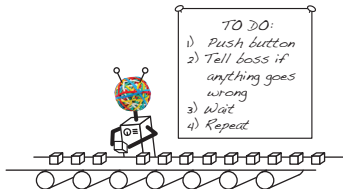
The people closest to the decision know the most, and feel the most ownership.



Often, leaders aren't the closest to a situation—and they're not the people most affected by a decision. The people closest to the situation are the best informed about the personalities and factors involved. And they have the most at stake.

The Problem

People are often treated like machines, not human beings.



Leaders don't often make use of the perspectives and expertise of the people who are closest to a situation. Instead, many organizations seek to control behavior through top-down leadership that enforces procedures and rules. But people aren't machines.

Result...



People don't get to make meaningful decisions at work, so they are not fully engaged.

But I believe people are capable of making decisions. My belief is grounded in the assumptions I make about people...



People Are



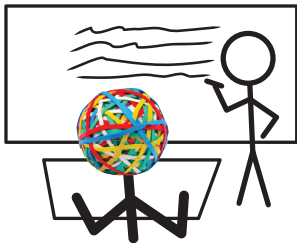
Unique

People Are



Creative Thinkers

People Are



Capable of Learning

People Are



Up for a Challenge



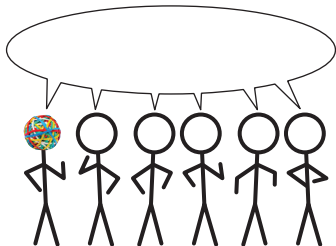
Distributing the decisions more broadly and inviting more people to be part of the process will lead to more engaged people and better decisions.

It hasn't been
easy to trust and
empower my people
to make meaningful
decisions. As a boss,
it's hard to let go.



*And people aren't perfect.
We're all fallible—including
leaders. That's why I developed*

The Decision Maker Process.



The Decision Maker Process.

In a decision-maker organization, the leader leads by choosing a decision-maker.

The decision-maker must ask for advice.

The advice process brings multiple perspectives together to guide a successful outcome.

But the decision-maker makes the final call—and takes responsibility for it.



Choosing the Decision-Maker



The leader leads by choosing a decision-maker.

Proximity. Who's close to the issue?
Are they well acquainted
with the context, the day-to-day
details, and the big picture?

Choosing the Decision-Maker



The leader leads by choosing a decision-maker.

Perspective. Proximity matters, but so does perspective. Sometimes an outside perspective can be just as valuable.

Choosing the Decision-Maker



The leader leads by choosing a decision-maker.

Experience. Has this person had experience making similar decisions? What were the consequences of those decisions?

Choosing the Decision-Maker



The leader leads by choosing a decision-maker.

Wisdom. What kinds of decisions has this person made in other areas? Were they good ones? Do you have confidence in this person?

The Advice Process

In a decision-maker culture, the decision-maker makes the final call but must ask for advice. Deciding who to get advice from can influence a successful outcome.

The Advice Process

Get advice from people who have:

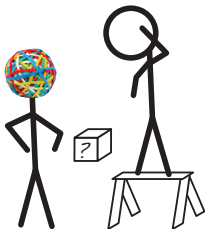
Experience. Has this person had experience with this problem? There's no teacher like experience.



The Advice Process

Get advice from people who have:

Position. People in different positions see different things. The decision-maker asks a leader, a peer, someone below them in the hierarchy—and even, if circumstances warrant, experts from outside the company.



The Advice Process

Get advice from people who have:

Responsibility. Decisions have consequences—and decision-makers should be held accountable for theirs. At the same time, nobody is right all the time. The most important part of any decision is that the decision-maker fully engages with the advice process, not just that he or she gets it “right.”



The Advice Process

Get advice from people who have:

Ownership. When people are asked for advice, they start to feel ownership. Ideally, everyone who offers advice works for the success of the project as if it were their own. The advice process isn't just about getting the right answer. It's about building a strong team and creating a process of communication that will improve all decisions in a company.



Benefits of the Advice Process

1. Everyone becomes more engaged.

People feel more ownership when their advice is sought.

2. On-the-job education.

No training can match real-time experience.

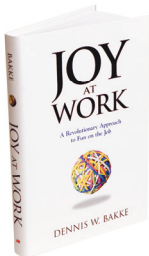
3. Better decisions.

When decisions involve more people who are fully engaged, an organization has a higher chance of a good outcome than it does with a conventional top-down approach.

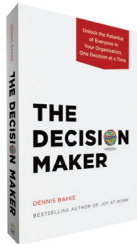


Accountability

After the decision is made, the decision-maker follows through by communicating and measuring the results of the decision.



*I've shared my story
of the decision
maker process in
these books...*



Now, it's your turn.





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