

Columbia College Calgary

Decision Making Step-by-Step

Introduction

This document was designed to assist individuals to make more effective decisions. While some decisions require immediate action — such as when there is an emergency — most decisions should be made to solve a problem or to improve the efficient and/or effective operation of a team or organization. They may even be used by an individual in their personal life or when working with others in their community.

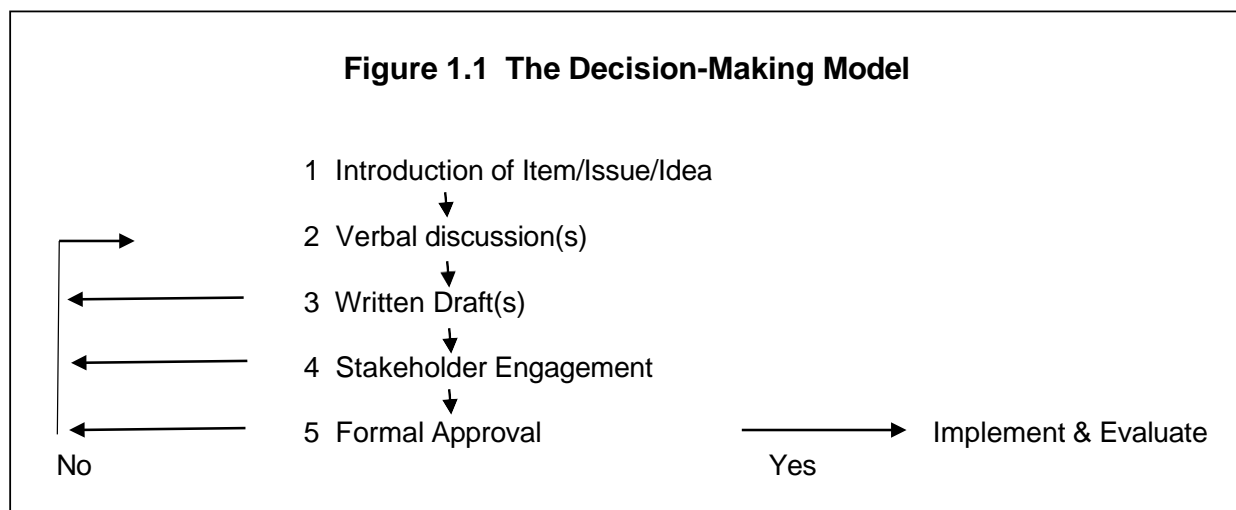
This decision-making process consists of 5 steps (see Figure 1.1). It begins at Step 1, with an item/issue/idea that needs to have a decision made about it.

Step 2 is normally a period of discussion, questions, and reflection, followed by further discussion. This step may be included with Step 1 if the decision is simpler. However, ideally, team members should be allowed time (one or more days/weeks) to reflect on the item before discussing it again.

Step 3 is the development of a written draft that is shared with team members. This step may involve ongoing changes in content, and may therefore take a number of drafts.

Once team members are satisfied with the written draft, Step 4 is to share the most current version of the document with stakeholders outside the team that may be affected by the decision.

Once all affected stakeholders are on side, Step 5 is to present the written document to their supervisor, who may or may not have the authority to put it into action. This individual may also consult with others outside the department for input and, when needed, approval (e.g., The accounting department may need to be involved if a decision requires financial support).



As is noted in Figure 1.1, the decision-making process may move back one or more steps when needed prior to moving forward again.

When to Follow the Steps

Follow these steps when revising or developing department documents (e.g., policies, procedures, regulations) that are to be followed by current and future department team members.

These steps should also be followed when considering changes to existing organizational documents or developing new documents. Economic conditions, environmental conditions, and changes to governmental laws, policies, rules, and regulations may also require changes within the organization.

PART 1: DECISION-MAKING STEPS

1. Introduction of Item/Issue/Idea

1. Identify an item/issue/idea that requires a decision to be made.
 - 1.1. Share the reason why a change may be needed (the problem, challenge, opportunity, or improvement).
 - 1.2. Suggest what may be a possible solution or improvement.
 - 1.3. Hand out related documents (if any).
 - 1.4. Answer questions regarding the item/issue/idea.
 - 1.5. Agree on a meeting date/time to continue this discussion. Allow individuals time to review the material, reflect on the document(s) that were handed out, and prepare any relevant comments or questions.
 - 1.5.1. **Note:** Any team member, manager or supervisor who is considering introducing an item/issue/idea that may lead to formal change in their department may find it valuable to discuss it with their supervisor prior to introducing it to team members or potentially affected stakeholders. This initial discussion may save time in the long run.

2. Discussion

2. After allowing time for individuals to read, assess, reflect, and prepare to provide their feedback, meet to review the item/issue/idea.
 - 2.1. Reintroduce the item, the rationale for change, and the suggested solution.
 - 2.2. Discuss any handouts that were provided in Step 1.
 - 2.3. Discuss any documents provided by others. Unless these documents are very brief, allow time for individuals to read and reflect on them.
 - 2.4. If further time is needed for further reading and reflection, set a future date to discuss the item/issue/idea further. Repeat this step one or more times until it is clear that the item/issue/idea can be put in writing.
 - 2.5. When appropriate, set up a meeting date that will allow the presenter time to write up their item/issue/idea and to circulate it to others, and the people to whom they have circulated it time to read and reflect on it prior to the meeting.

3. Written Draft(s)

- 3.1. Meet to review the written draft.
- 3.2. Discuss any questions, comments, and proposed changes to the written document.
- 3.3. Alternately, consider having individuals provide their feedback by noting them on the draft document and giving it back to the writer.
- 3.4. Revise the written draft as many times as needed and return to group each time for further review and feedback.
- 3.5. When the latest written draft receives at least 75% of team support, it should go to the department head. It is best when all team members agree.
- 3.6. The department head must agree with **all** the content in the written draft before it goes to potentially affected stakeholders outside the department. This may require the draft to go back and forth several times.

4. Stakeholder Engagement

- 4.1. Any document that will impact stakeholders outside the team and/or department must be reviewed by them. The department head will normally be responsible for this.
- 4.2. Stakeholders review the written draft and either mark down changes or meet with the department head to discuss questions and concerns.
- 4.3. The department head shares content changes with their team members and determine if they have any issues with these changes. This may require several discussions between the department head, the team members, and other organizational stakeholders.
- 4.4. The department head should also consider the potential impact on customers (students, employers, competitors, suppliers, etc.). This may require contacting them and obtaining their support or approval.

5. Formal Approval

- 5.1. Once all affected stakeholders (within and outside the department and possibly the organization) agree to the changes, a formal copy of the document should be presented to senior management for approval.
- 5.2. Senior management should review the document and prepare to discuss any questions they have with the presenter(s). These discussions may or may not result in further changes to the document.
- 5.3. Senior management may need to check with other impacted departments (such as Accounting) to get their okay prior to signing it off. Before a decision is made, senior management also need to consider how this change will impact others outside the organization (customers potential students, clients, patients, employers, competitors, suppliers, etc.).
- 5.4. When senior management is satisfied, they will sign off on the document and set a date of implementation.
Note: The ultimate authority to sign off on all decisions in the organization rests with the Board of Directors. Their authority is normally transferred to the President, department heads, and supervisors by way of their position descriptions or by special arrangement.
- 5.5. A date should be established to evaluate and assess the impact the change had on the team/department/organization.

PART II: DECISION-MAKING PRIORITIES, TESTS, STAGES, AND QUESTIONS

On the road to effective decision making, managers and team members should ensure their recommended decisions adhere to our college priorities and the Four Quadrants Test. These are found in **Attachment 1**.

Attachment 1 also includes a document that will help a team identify ways to increase its efficiency and effectiveness. This is followed by another document that helps teams to understand that each decision goes through four stages in its development and adoption.

PART III: ENHANCED DECISION-MAKING SOLUTIONS AND CHALLENGES

Some decision-making processes may be more complex or challenging, or may need the initiator or team to be more creative or innovative in identifying an effective solution. When this occurs, the team may engage in one or more divergent or convergent thinking activities that could assist them. Teams can experience other difficulties that negatively affect their decision-making abilities. Jeff Butterfield recognized each of these possibilities and addressed them in his 2013 book, *Problem Solving and Decision Making* (Illustrated Course Guides). Six key pages from this book are in **Attachment 2**.

Introduction to Total Quality

There are times when a problem may require a more objective method of gathering and analyzing data. To assist us in solving these types of problems, David L. Goetsch and Stanley B. Davis present a list of tools in their book, *Introduction to Total Quality*. Chapter 10 of this book is in the Columbia College Document Manager and is titled (ADM-P112).

This chapter includes the following tools that can be utilized to help solve a problem in a more objective manner:

- Problem Priority Matrix
- The Fishbone Diagram
- Cost-to-Benefit Matrix
- Cause and Effect Diagram
- Flow Chart
- Pareto Chart
- Run Chart
- Histogram
- Scatter Graph
- Control Chart

DECISION-MAKING: PRIORITIES

Introduction

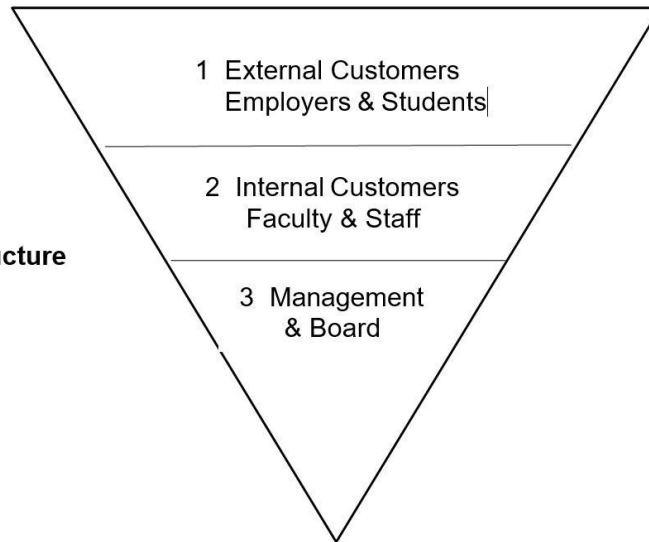
All decisions should be made according to the following three priorities and conditions:

1. What is in the long-term best interest of our external customers who, in reality, pay our wages? For example: What is in the long-term best interest of the employers who hire our students, and of our potential, current and past students?
2. What is in the long-term best interest of our internal customers, whose primary role is to satisfy the needs of our external customers? For example: What is in the long-term best interest of our professional staff and faculty (employees).
3. What is in the long-term best interest of our department heads, senior management, board, founders, and investors, each of whose primary role is to support our internal customers so they can help our external customers succeed?

Condition

The needs of all three groups must be considered when making each decision.

Inverted Organization Structure

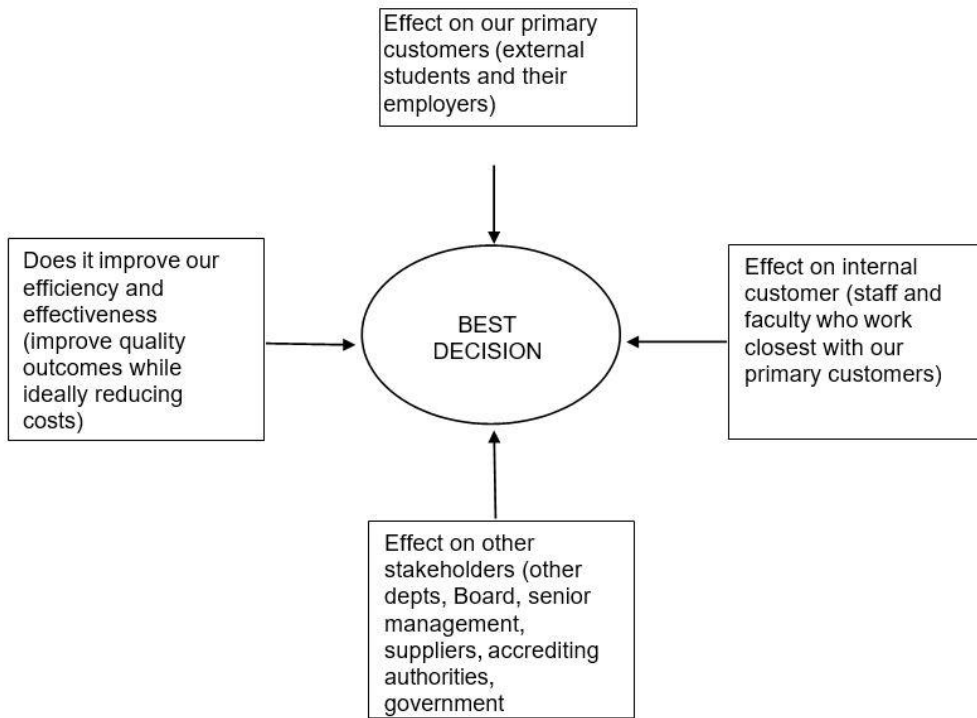


DECISION-MAKING: THE FOUR QUADRANTS TEST

Introduction

Before finalizing any decision, an analysis should be conducted to determine if a decision will have a positive, negative, or neutral effect on each of the four quadrants shown below.

The best decision is one that is a win for each quadrant, or at least has no negative impact on any quadrant.



DECISION-MAKING: ACTIVITIES THAT INCREASE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

Areas of Focus

First try to determine what area you, as a professional, want to increase your efficiency and effectiveness or the efficiency and/or effectiveness of your team/organization. Then review each statement below to see how it may assist you in making a more efficient and/or effective decision.

1. Creating the Right Mindset

- 1.1. Recognize that everything we do can be improved.
- 1.2. Understand that most people resist change unless it is something they agree with.
- 1.3. Look at problems as challenges or even opportunities.
- 1.4. Ask “why, why, why?” to everything you do, then suggest, “why not this or that?”
- 1.5. Think about what is in the best interest of the external customers first, and about what is in the best interest of the internal customer.
- 1.6. Put on the external and then internal customer’s hat and see things through their eyes.
- 1.7. Learn to work smarter, not harder.
- 1.8. Present the problem/challenge first and then share how your solution will improve things.
- 1.9. Look for solutions that present a win, win, win (external customers, internal customers, senior management, Board, etc.).

2. Idea Stimulators

- 2.1. Small, simple changes can result in major benefits over time.
- 2.2. Look for shorter, simpler, faster, better, easier, and safer ways of doing things.
- 2.3. No idea is a bad idea, and any idea is better than no idea.
- 2.4. Small, simple ideas are often better than big fancy ideas.
- 2.5. Remember to be positive, constructive, and focus on changing procedures not people.
- 2.6. Look at ways to simplify steps or procedures (Keep It Simple, Silly – KISS method).
- 2.7. Look at ways to be more organized in such areas as organizing your office, your filing system and/or work area, your day or week, your priorities, and your activities.
- 2.8. Saving time in one area can provide additional time in another more important area.
- 2.9. Reduce repetition, duplication, steps, requirements, time consuming activities, and effort.
- 2.10. Increase speed by reducing time wasters.
- 2.11. Improve written documents, verbal directions, forms, and procedures.

3. Approaches that may be Followed

3.1. Generating Random Ideas

- 3.1.1. Ask willing team members to write down one specific idea that will improve efficiency and effectiveness in the area being focused on.
- 3.1.2. Ask who wants to share their idea first.
- 3.1.3. Ask a volunteer to write the idea on the board or large paper for everyone to see.
- 3.1.4. Allow the group to ask questions that will ensure they understand what change is being proposed. If needed, re-write what is on the board, or large paper.
- 3.1.5. Encourage the team to assess this idea. Depending on the idea, this may include any number of the following activities. Most of these activities are found in this document.

3.1.5.1. KISS Test

Does it meet the KISS analysis? For example, is it simple, practical, easy to implement, low or no cost, and 'could' increase efficiency and effectiveness with little or no negative impact on others.

3.1.5.2. Pro and Con Analysis

Conduct a pro and con analysis and determine if it clearly has more benefits than drawbacks.

3.1.5.3. Cost-Benefit Analysis

Conduct a cost-benefit analysis to determine if there are more benefits than costs.

3.1.5.4. Impact Analysis

This analysis will determine who will be affected and what the consequences 'could' be.

3.1.5.5. The Four Quadrant Test

Conduct a four-quadrant test in order to assess the impact this idea may have on members of each quadrant.

1.1.1.1. Beta Testing (The Basics)

Ask if two to three team members are willing to 'informally' try the idea in the workplace. They should agree to report back their experiences (e.g. number of attempts and the outcomes of these attempts with the team on a specified date). This report may include a time-task analysis which compares the amount of time the task normally takes with the amount of time taken when applying the new

idea (approach, procedure). Alternately, their assessment may indicate the degree of improvement in the level of satisfaction experienced by staff members, customers, or others.

3.1.5.6. Beta Testing (More Detailed Analysis)

Some decision-making processes may require a more detailed analysis. In this case, team members may want to follow the Deming Cycle, named after Dr. Edward Deming, or the Perry Johnson Method. Each of these approaches is described in the document *Introduction to Total Quality*, located on the **Success** section of the Columbia College website.

Helpful tools in this section include Cause-and-Effect Diagrams, Flow Charts, Pareto Charts, Run Charts, Histograms, Scatter Diagrams and Control Charts.

3.1.5.7. Formal Proposal

If two thirds of the group members feel this idea successfully passed the relevant preceding activities, then the presenter will be asked to formally write up a proposal to adopt this idea. If needed, the group may also go back and repeat one or more steps. They may also agree to modify the idea in order to support it.

3.1.5.8. Decision Making Step-by-Step

Each idea that is formally written up will now be reviewed by the team who will follow the formal steps in *the Decision-Making Step-by-Step* document. This may include seeking agreement with other stakeholders.

1.a.i.1. The group may begin discussing a second, third, fourth idea once the previous one is agreed to by the group verbally and it may now move to the Beta Testing activity.

3.2. Conducting Task Analysis

3.2.1. Have the group analyze the sequential steps that a team member will follow starting from a specified point in time. The starting point may be when they are first contacted by an internal or external customer — when they receive a first email from a customer, for example.

3.2.2. A task analysis may include any number of activities listed in the Generating Random Ideas section outlined above.

3.3. Shoot From the Hip

3.3.1. Shoot from the hip. Sometimes any approach will help stimulate you and/or members of your team. Share your thoughts in as respectful manner as a professional.

3.3.2. An analysis of this approach may include any number of actions listed in the Generating Random Ideas section outlined above.

3.4. Other

FIVE STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

- Forming:** Introducing new ideas, procedures, or challenges
- Storming:** Discussing new ideas, procedures, or challenges
- Reforming:** Agreeing on methods to resolve new ideas, procedures, or challenges
- Performing:** Resolving new ideas, procedures, or challenges
- Adjourning:** Returning to previous groups or returning to the forming stage as new ideas, procedures, or challenges are introduced.


NOTES:

- Evaluation and feedback should occur at all stages.
- Humans tend to not like change unless they are the ones asking for it (e.g., babies like it when their diaper is changed)

Objective
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Part 4

Using Divergent Thinking

Groups can develop creative ideas and solutions to problems because their collective knowledge is greater than that of a single person. However, groups seldom behave creatively on their own. The team leader or other facilitator needs to engage the group in activities that foster creativity and collaboration.

Divergent thinking describes thought processes or methods used to generate ideas. As the name suggests, divergent thinking techniques generate many ideas that are often not related to one another. Divergent thinking is usually spontaneous, free flowing, and unorganized. Later, the group can organize the ideas and apply them to solving the problem. Table 4-2 describes the do's and don'ts of divergent thinking.  After meeting with Grace Wong and the new corporate travel team, you are ready to generate ideas about how to increase the amount of tours designed for business travelers.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

1. Brainstorming

One of the most popular and well-known techniques for divergent thinking is brainstorming, which was introduced in Unit B. Groups use brainstorming to generate ideas and solutions to problems. The group considers a question, task, or project, and then generates as many ideas as possible, usually in a short period of time. Every idea is recorded, and no idea is disregarded, criticized, or analyzed. As ideas are suggested, they often stimulate others. The group continues to contribute ideas until everyone has exhausted their creativity.

2. Group mind mapping

Mind mapping, also introduced in Unit B, uses simple graphics to generate, visualize, and organize creative ideas. A group member lists a main idea or problem at the center of a page, white board, or flip chart. Each participant is invited to share reactions and ideas. These are drawn as radial lines or spokes. When someone's idea builds, or piggybacks, on another, it is drawn as a branch in a tree structure. The visual nature of a mind map helps some people to think about a problem more creatively and may yield different results than traditional brainstorming. The map itself is a useful record of the group's contributions. See Figure 4-4.

3. Free writing

Free writing is a form of brainstorming where group members focus on a subject and then write about it nonstop for a short period of time. Participants write any idea that occurs to them without pausing to consider the value of the idea or to proofread or edit their writing. This exercise is designed to encourage creativity and explore alternatives. When done as a group, free writing can be followed by a brainstorming or mind mapping session to collect ideas for the group.

QUICK TIP

Allow people to submit their entries anonymously if the question is controversial or politically charged.

4. Journaling

People often think of creative ideas spontaneously and can easily forget them if they do not act on them or record them. Distribute journals to members of a group and ask each to write down thoughts and ideas. A journal can be an inexpensive spiral notebook or specialty blank book. Team members can keep the journal at their desks to note ideas when they occur to them. They can share the ideas with the group at a later meeting or submit them directly to a team leader. The quantity of ideas generated through journal writing is not as great as some other techniques, but the quality and range of the ideas are often superior.

YOU TRY IT

Practice using divergent thinking by generating solutions to a problem. Open the [PS4-Y27.docx](#) document and follow the steps in the worksheet. When you are finished, submit the document to your instructor as requested.

FIGURE 4-4: Group mind map

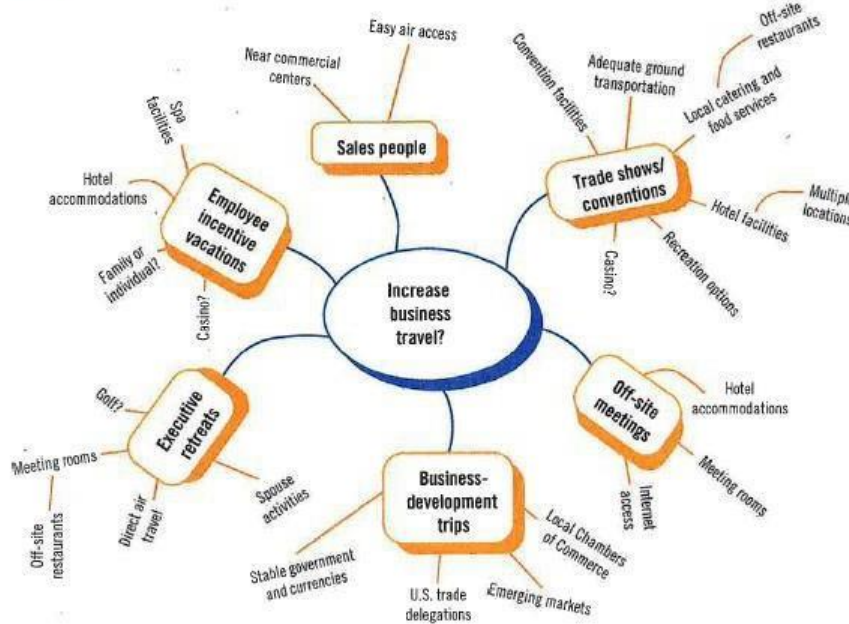


TABLE 4-2: Divergent thinking do's and don'ts


guidelines	do	don't
Brainstorming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate ideas and solutions as a group Record ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't disregard, analyze, or reject an idea during brainstorming
Mind map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visualize and organize creative ideas as a group Draw ideas as a tree or spoke-wheel diagram Retain the mind map as a record of the group's ideas and decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't get bogged down in the mechanics of drawing a mind map Don't evaluate ideas until you are finished
Free writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use to stimulate individual creativity Write thoughts about a subject nonstop for a short time Follow up with a group brainstorming or mind mapping session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't pause to edit, proofread, or review as you are writing
Journal writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use to record spontaneous thoughts and ideas Share journal contents with the group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't expect to generate as many ideas with a journal as with brainstorming or mind maps

Mind mapping software

You can use digital tools to boost your divergent thinking. Exploratree (www.exploratree.org.uk) provides what the Web site calls "thinking guides," which are templates you can print or use online to map ideas, solve problems, and explore topics in new ways. This free tool lets you save your mind maps and refer to a community database of problem-solving ideas. Bubbl.us (www.bubbl.us) is a free Web application that lets you conduct brainstorming sessions online. You write your thoughts in graphical bubbles and connect those to other

bubbles without the distraction of drawing and formatting. Bubbl.us helps you brainstorm quickly instead of getting bogged down in the mechanics of creating and linking bubbles. MindMeister (www.mindmeister.com) is a simple, free tool that lets you quickly create mind maps just by pressing the directional arrow keys on your keyboard. XMind (www.xmind.net) is also free, but lets you create fishbone, organizational, tree, and logic charts in addition to mind maps.

Using Convergent Thinking

In the early stages of solving a problem, you use divergent thinking to develop as many creative ideas and potential solutions as possible. At some point, however, the group needs to review and evaluate the ideas in an organized, understandable, and structured format. **Convergent thinking** techniques narrow the options to a manageable set. The decisions and solutions that the group eventually makes will be based on these organized ideas. Table 4-3 lists the do's and don'ts for convergent thinking.  Now that the corporate travel team met to generate ideas, Grace Wong plans a meeting to organize and evaluate the ideas. She asks you to learn about techniques for structuring group ideas and solutions.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

1. Cull your ideas

If your group's divergent thinking has gone well, you should have a sizable set of ideas, options, and possibilities to consider. One of the first tasks for the group is to carefully review these ideas and cull, or remove, the impractical ones. A popular culling approach is the **three-pile method**. Review each option and have the group vote to put the idea into either a Yes, No, or Maybe pile (or category). A simple plurality of votes is needed for each. The No pile is eliminated from further consideration. The Maybe pile is held in reserve and may be revisited if necessary.

QUICK TIP
Identify pros and cons in an informal discussion, or more formally with someone recording the feedback for all to see.

2. Identify the pros and cons

Have the group consider each option or idea one at a time and identify the associated pros and cons. The objective is to have the group consider each option in an objective manner. Ask the group if there is a **fatal flaw** inherent in any of the ideas. A fatal flaw is some aspect of an idea that would make it unacceptable.

3. Perform a cost-benefit analysis

Each idea that is proposed will have some benefit to the group or organization. It will also have some associated costs. Good ideas typically have benefits that outweigh their costs. Costs and benefits may take different forms such as monetary return, cost savings, improved efficiency, reduced problems, and others, and comparing one to another may be tricky. A **decision balance sheet** is a formal way of organizing an idea's costs and benefits. See Figure 4-5.

QUICK TIP
An impact analysis alone should not drive the final decision, but can help to better differentiate between alternatives.

4. Create an impact analysis

It is easy to consider ideas, options, and potential solutions by themselves and not consider other related factors. Use an **impact analysis** to broaden your view. Have the group list the consequences of each idea. Who or what would each option affect? Would the consequences be minimal or manageable? Which idea would cause the least amount of loss or harm? See Figure 4-6.

5. Use reverse brainstorming

Brainstorming is usually thought of as a divergent thinking technique. However, when used in reverse it can be a helpful convergent tool. Present each idea or option to the group and ask everyone to identify possible weaknesses or problems. The goal is not to come up with new ideas, but to generate criticisms instead. This exercise forces people to take a hard look at each option and helps minimize problems associated with groupthink. The group can reexamine the ideas to generate possible solutions for each of the weaknesses identified.

YOU TRY IT

Practice using convergent thinking by generating solutions to a problem. Open the [PS4-Y28.docx](#) document and follow the steps in the worksheet. When you are finished, submit the document to your instructor as requested.

FIGURE 4-5: Decision balance sheet

Should Quest expand to provide tours and services for the business traveler?

	Gains	Losses
Quest Specialty Travel	Add to customer base	Detract from current customers
	Develop new sources of revenue	Increase expenses
	Build on current tours	Manage conflicts
	Create stability	Manage change
	Increase sales to both sets of customers	Dilute current services
Customers	Can select from a full range of services	Might be confused about company focus
	Can combine business and personal travel	Might not be willing to pay higher prices for business services

FIGURE 4-6: Impact analysis

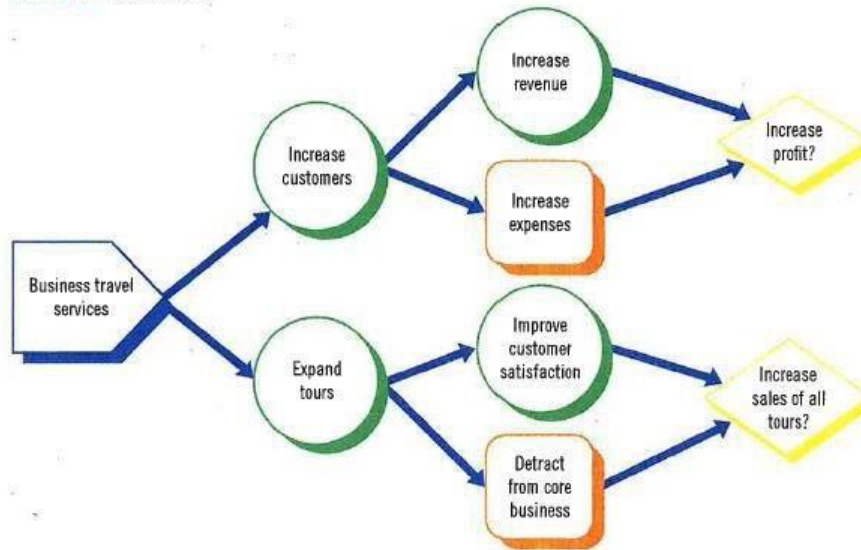


TABLE 4-3: Convergent thinking do's and don'ts

guidelines	do	don't
Cull ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review ideas and eliminate some Reduce number of ideas to a manageable amount Use three-pile method to have group vote on each idea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't reject ideas arbitrarily; use criteria the group agrees on
Analyze ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List the pros and cons of each idea Perform a cost-benefit analysis Create a decision balance sheet Create an impact analysis List the consequences of each idea Use reverse brainstorming to identify weaknesses and avoid groupthink 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't overlook the fatal flaw in an idea Don't focus on one type of cost or benefit—consider different forms Don't consider ideas, options, and potential solutions on their own—consider related factors Don't introduce new ideas

Problem-Solving and Decision Making

Avoiding Common Group Traps

When a group meets regularly and develops into a working team, it can solve problems creatively and thoughtfully. However, some groups fall into traps that slow progress and distract members from their problem-solving objectives. Most of these problems are due to the difficulties of participating in or managing the group itself, which are different from the challenges of solving problems on your own. **Case** The managers at Quest Specialty Travel have decided to offer business travel services on a limited basis. The corporate travel team is continuing to meet to monitor the progress of the new project. Grace Wong advises everyone to avoid common group traps.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

QUICK TIP

Focus on what is important, and do not let yourself get caught up in managing overhead.

QUICK TIP

Keep an eye on other commitments and deadlines that group members may be facing.

QUICK TIP

If your team is suffering from groupthink, invite an outside expert to play the devil's advocate.

YOU TRY IT

1. Organize the overhead

Groups require time, attention, and effort to organize and manage. They need communication, scheduling, and coordinating to function properly. This overhead is particularly demanding for large groups or teams with members from different departments or units. Managing a group can be overwhelming if you try to do everything yourself. If you are responsible for a team, delegate responsibilities and tasks to others in the group.

2. Watch out for stress

Groups focused on tasks or projects that are important, risky, or tightly scheduled usually experience stress and anxiety. Stress can lead to making inappropriate decisions, cutting corners, and overlooking relevant options. Reduce stress by using a positive, optimistic tone during meetings. Bringing refreshments to meetings can help people feel more relaxed and motivated. Acknowledge the stressful conditions and discuss them with the rest of the group. Use the pressure as motivation to rise to challenges and perform better than expected.

3. Avoid the Superman complex

If a group develops a collective sense of invulnerability, it has a **Superman complex**. Teams that have been working together for some time and are comfortable with their roles within the group sometimes assume that their decisions are always correct, that their plans are optimal, and that they are not responsible to a larger audience. Occasionally attending meetings of other teams and inviting outside participants to team meetings can help bring perspectives back into focus. With outsiders, conduct a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threat (SWOT) exercise to make sure the group's success is not blinding members to potential problems. See Figure 4-8.

4. Look out for groupthink

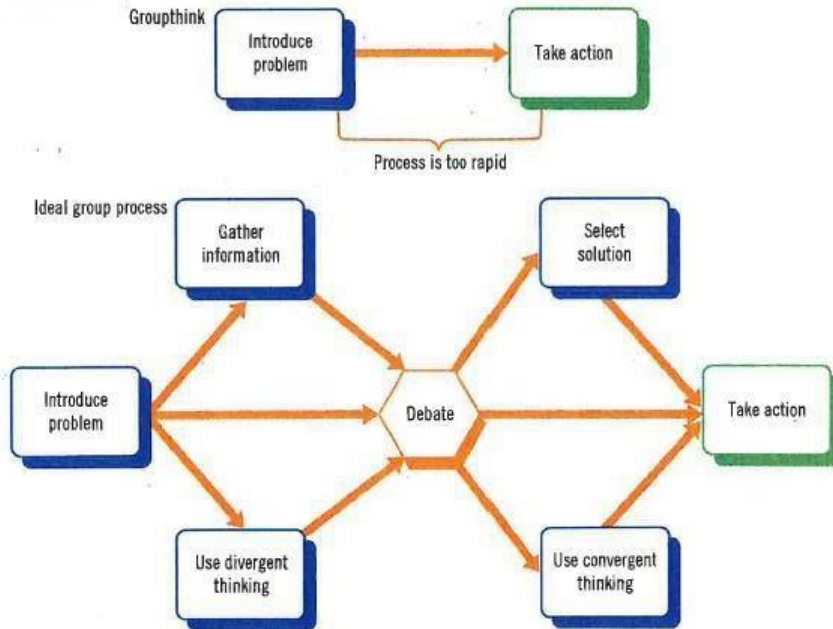
Groups can become so cohesive that the members minimize conflict and support consensus without critically considering the merits of ideas and decisions. When individual creativity and independent thinking are lost to group cohesiveness, the condition is known as **groupthink**. In this condition, group members shy away from presenting ideas that may fall outside the group's comfort zone. Figure 4-9 contrasts an ideal group process with one suffering from groupthink.

Practice avoiding common group traps by analyzing a description of a meeting. Open the [PS4-Y30.docx](#) document and follow the steps in the worksheet. When you are finished, submit the document to your instructor as requested.

FIGURE 4-8: SWOT analysis



FIGURE 4-9: Groupthink



Problem-Solving and Decision Making