

PHL|HP Consulting Group

Building & Sustaining High Performing Organizations



A Message From Dr. Philip Levy, Founder & President

“Decision-making is a skill that can be developed and enhanced through practice, coaching, and reflection.”

“What Does It Take to be a Good Decision Maker?”

One of the most important things a leader does on a daily basis is to make decisions. It is unavoidable. A business is a dynamic organism that can only survive and thrive by moving forward. Obviously, some decisions are more important than others based upon their impact and therefore require greater thought and time, but in the course of a day, many decisions must be made without a great deal of time to ponder them. Decision-making is a skill that can be developed and enhanced through practice, coaching, and reflection. What does it take to be a good decision maker?

First and foremost, is to surround yourself with confident, diverse, and competent people and then to create an environment that encourages them to speak up. The most effective decision makers are good listeners who reflect back what they hear and who respect diverse and divergent views. The foundation of this is the belief that diversity is of great value and makes an organization stronger and that the aggregate wisdom and knowledge of a team is greater than that of any individual. This requires a leader with great confidence, but also humility. Decision makers, who adhere to this belief, must take different views and synthesize them. Pentland terms this “social exploration.” It’s the process of gathering, winnowing, and testing out ideas from many different team members with diverse views and, as the decision maker, having the courage to make the ultimate decision, knowing that there is typically no one right decision, rather the best fit for that situation, in that company, at that time. This approach permits decision makers to “tap into the wisdom of the crowd” and integrate divergent views into a well thought out and calculated outcome.

One cannot fear being wrong or making a mistake. Remember a hall of fame baseball player only is successful three times out of ten, and Michael Jordan only made half of his shots, but it never stopped him from wanting to take the last shot and believing he would make it.

Have confidence in your ability to make decisions, while possessing the wisdom of listening to and incorporating the views of others and then look back upon the decision and assess what you might do differently in the future to improve on the outcomes of your decisions.

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