

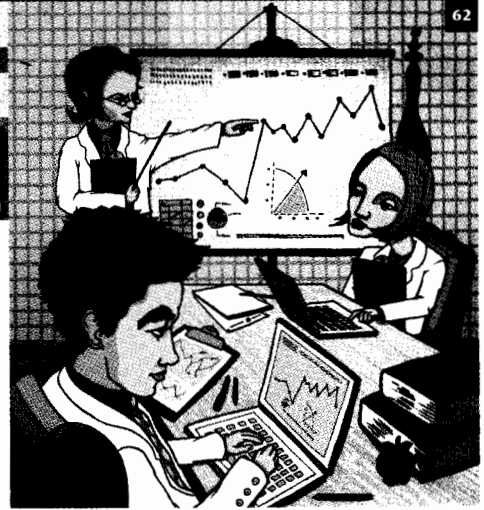


January 2006

52 Who Has the D? How Clear Decision Roles Enhance Organizational Performance

Paul Rogers and Marcia Blenko

Decision-making bottlenecks can erode performance even in highly successful companies. The most important step in unclogging them is to clarify roles and responsibilities. A practical approach sorts out who makes recommendations, who must agree, who gives input, who makes the final decision, and who gets it done.



62 Evidence-Based Management

Jeffrey Pfeffer and Robert I. Sutton

Where do most managers turn for guidance when they have decisions to make? Surprisingly, just about everywhere *except* the latest and best knowledge of what actually works. It's time to change that.

76 Stop Making Plans; Start Making Decisions

Michael C. Mankins and Richard Steele

Your company's strategic-planning process may look good on paper, but chances are it's being sidestepped by senior executives because it focuses on business units instead of issues. Here's how to create a process that can really help you make informed decisions.

88 Decisions Without Blinders

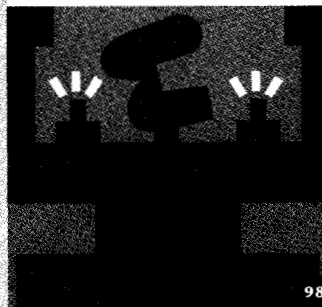
Max H. Bazerman and Dolly Chugh

Even when spared a deluge of data and given ample time to make decisions, most executives fail to take into account the most critical information at the right time. Understanding such *bounded awareness* is the first step toward overcoming it.

98 Competing on Analytics

Thomas H. Davenport

A new breed of competitor is dominating rivals by amassing and analyzing mountains of data. Inside this type of organization, technology serves strategy, and employees live and breathe the numbers.



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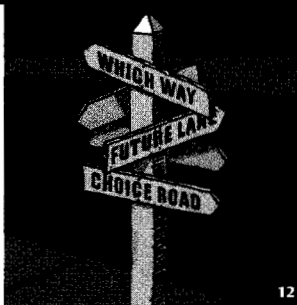
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12 FROM THE EDITOR

Did You Ever Have to Make Up Your Mind?

Managers spend their days making (or avoiding) choices and are judged on the outcomes. Yet most managers have only the foggiest idea how they came to those choices. Hence this special issue of HBR, devoted to giving executives clear frameworks and processes for making better, faster, and smarter decisions.



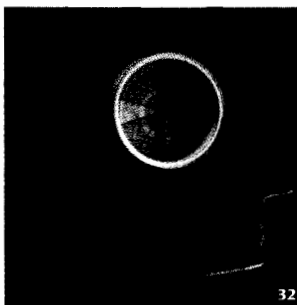
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All the Wrong Moves

David A. Garvin

Executives at Nutrorm used to make decisions smoothly. However, a series of egregious business mistakes and a sudden PR crisis have brought problems in the company to the fore. Can Nutrorm's decision-making process be saved?

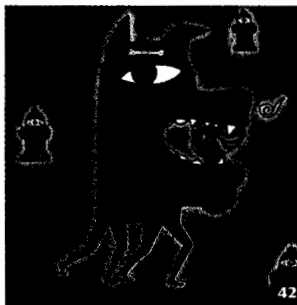


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32 A Brief History of Decision Making

Leigh Buchanan and Andrew O'Connell

From oracles and entrails to the scientific method, executive information systems, rock-paper-scissors, and gut instinct, our efforts to improve the way we make decisions have hardly marched straight toward rationalism.



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Decisions and Desire

Gardiner Morse

The closer scientists look into our brains, the clearer it becomes how much we're like animals. We have dog brains, basically, with human cortexes stuck on top. And these ancient dog brains confer with these modern cortexes to influence their choices—for better and for worse—without us even knowing it.



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Conquering a Culture of Indecision

Ram Charan

Leaders set the tone for a decisive or indecisive corporate culture. The ones who insist on honest dialogue and follow-through will be rewarded with organizations that execute consistently and well.

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The Hidden Traps in Decision Making

John S. Hammond, Ralph L. Keeney, and Howard Raiffa

Making decisions is the most important job of any executive. But hidden flaws in the way our minds work can undermine even the most carefully considered decisions. Discover eight mental traps that managers often fall into, and get practical suggestions for avoiding them.

128 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

People can feel like impostors not just because of gender or family pressures; racial differences and a spiritual disconnect in the workplace also play a part.

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The View from Above

Don Moyer

Only a few are empowered to make the big-picture decisions that move entire companies, but everyone can benefit from an understanding of where his or her particular decision piece fits into the larger puzzle.