

DECISION MAKING IN RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

Some Guidelines from Behavioral Science, Business Management, and Public Administration

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Decision making constitutes a paramountly vital concern in the life of a religious institute — as in any organization. Superiors, officials, and the religious themselves constantly face the task of deciding questions both on material levels and specially are the spiritual levels, in regard to people, things, and concepts.

The recent decree from the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes (February 2, 1972; see *Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas*, vol. XLVI, number 514, April 1972, pp. 261f.) affords us an occasion to offer some guidelines for making decisions, from the sectors of behavioral science, business management, and public administration.

The said decree answers two questions. To the first query: whether the application of collegiality to the ordinary government of religious communities might eliminate the personal authority of the superior, the Congregation answered in the negative. To the second query regarding the eligibility of ex-religious men to hold ecclesiastical offices without special permission from the Holy See, the Congregation answered in the affirmative.

Restricting ourselves to the first question-answer, we notice that the Congregation in conserving the personal authority of the religious superior face to face with collegiality states as much as that certain matters should still belong to the final decision of the superior. Just the same, religious after Vatican II play a role greater than before in making the decisions governing their life and apostolate.

THREE SECULAR SCIENCES

In their delicate office of making decisions, superiors and religious might find some helpful points in the following recommendations we

shall offer below taken from three secular disciplines. But first let us say a few words about each of these three profane studies

Behavioral science investigates the patterns of human actions. In connection with decision making, behavioral science studies the factors that lead the human person to decide one way or another, whether wisely or unwisely. An acquaintance with the laws of human conduct not only enables one to make satisfactory decisions, but also forewarns him as to the reactions of others to his decisions.

Business management pursues the policy of making profits with the least outlays of material, financial, and human resources, at the least investment of time. From business mentors both superior and religious certainly could learn not a few practice-proven canons in the art of deciding matter—though superior and religious contemplate not so much temporal gains as religious ends. In recent history, business doctrinaires have worked out some sophisticated reliable techniques for making sound decisions. Religious administrators will do well to keep abreast of such developments in business sectors.

Public administration studies the ways and means whereby government could function with greater facility in serving the citizenry. A relatively new field of studies, public administration has borrowed much from scientific business management. However, public administration differs totally from business management by virtue of its goal: namely, to serve the people efficiently. The religious institute as an organization could profit much from the conclusions drawn by scholars of public administration on decision making process in government offices.

From behavioral science religious communities could learn the why and how people decide the way they do. From business management they could employ the rules and techniques developed by business theoreticians, not so much to make temporal profits, as to procure spiritual benefits. From public administration superiors and religious alike should find some efficacious instructions on how to serve the Church and souls at large with greater results.

TWO WORDS OF CAUTION

However, religious institutes must always bear in mind the supernatural dimensions of their societies. The danger always exists in utilizing secular sciences of sinking to the material level of these sciences. One tends to overlook spiritual values, to underrate the workings of divine grace in human actions and reactions. Religious superiors and communities in employing the guidelines taken from secular sciences for making decisions should always keep in view the supernatural ob-

jectives of religious life; and they should always regard persons, objects, and values through the supernatural looking glass.

Nonetheless, in the guidelines we shall offer below, the reader will come across not a few pointers already brought up by saintly writers on the art of spiritual governance. The similarity of thoughts between profane teachers and saintly authors points to the unity and universality of wisdom. Not rarely, the supernatural character of an art derives not so much from itself as from the purposes for which one employs it.

WHO MAKE WHAT DECISIONS

In determining which superiors should make which decisions, one should not start from the hierarchy of authority but from the import of the decision matter. A superior could lawfully decide any question falling within the purview of his authority. But authority does not guarantee that he will make the right decision or the best one. Lawful decisions need not lie always with good decisions.

One should rather inspect the decision matter to discover what special skill it demands and which level in the organization it most affects. If the decision matter requires the expertise of a personnel administrator, and it directly touches the unskilled laborers of a company, then not the higher official but the foreman directly in charge of the laborers should make the decision. Specific expertise and proximity of involvement pinpoints the decision maker, not the extent of formal authority.

BRIEFING AND REVIEWING

In placing a man in any post, it goes without saying that the superior must insure that the man possesses both training, skill, and concern or interest required by his work. However, these factors do not seem adequate to make sure that the subordinate not only makes right decisions, but that he also directs his decisions to fall in line with the plans of the official above him. In order to obtain subordination and coordination between the decisions of the inferior and the plans of the superior, the latter must brief his subordinate and helper on what he expects from him. Moreover, he must constantly review the decisions of his assistant — not necessarily to countermand them, but to insure by progressive instructions that his helper in making future decisions will converge more and more into the designs of his chief.

On the part of one newly installed in a position where he has to make decisions that jibe with overall policies and objectives, some period of

consulting the superior in order to learn his mind will prove wise, specially in the first decisions of his office. When he has learned fully the expectations of the superior, he could then bring to play his creative talents, and possibly make better decisions in regard to the wishes of his superior, than this latter himself could make to meet his own exigencies.

RESPONSIBILITY TO ONLY ONE HEAD

An official should account for his decisions to only one other person: his immediate superior. He must have derived his authority from this higher official; and therefore he should not feel obliged to answer to any other superiors but to the immediate source of his competence. No man can serve two or more masters without losing focus in the decisions he will have to make. And without the singularity of vision necessary for making good decisions, an official will either step beyond the bounds of his office (step on the toes of others), or make movements lacking any well defined directions. All because he will either want to satisfy superiors higher than his manager, or seek to please various heads of diverse departments on the same level with the superior.

In either case his decisions — though they might exhibit consummate skill of tact and diplomacy — serve no purpose on the operational basis. The decisions made by him exceeding his competence have no force. And the decisions which say everything in general — in order to please all or not to displease anyone — and say nothing in particular will defeat any attempts at implementation. Sound decision making dictates that the decision maker should answer to only one other person: his immediate superior.

NO COUNTERMANDING ALLOWED

A superior should almost never countermand the decisions made by his subordinate, when the latter has acted within the limits of his competence. Even though the superior might not consider the decisions of his inferior better than the ones he would himself make; nonetheless, once the inferior has made his decisions, the job of the superior consists in standing by his subaltern. The superior need not positively defend the merits of his inferior's decisions. Of course he could and should point out to his inferior the possibility of making better alternatives — in private.

Suppose the superior sees some greater benefits in substituting his inferior's decisions with his own, or even in inhibiting them, should he

not act accordingly, in order to procure more good to the organization? The advantages derived in specific instances will never measure up to the long term harms resulting from the decline of morale in the inferior.

UNDERMINING ASSISTANT'S MORALE

The superior will have lost an assistant. Though he might stay on, his performance will lag. He will tend to refer even matters within his competence to the superior: either to play safe or out of spite or both. If a lower official refers matters within his purview to his superior, then he has outlived the purpose of his existence. The superior who brought about such a posture in his subordinate by his habit of countermanding the latter's decisions must bear the responsibility himself for losing the utility of obtaining others in the personnel of his organization to work with him.

If the superior must by all means change the decision of his subordinate, there exists nonetheless a way to do it without emasculating the morale of his assistant. Let the inferior himself modify, suspend, or cancel his own decision. In really very serious cases where pursuing the decision of the inferior could not only fail to attain greater good, but also lead to detriments for the enterprise, the superior could lay the facts before his subordinate, and let him modify, suspend, or cancel his own decision.

The superior will do even better if he refers people who want to have the decision changed, deferred, or retracted, to the inferior, and have them deal directly with his subordinate. Superior and subordinate should even get together to find a way out that would not detract from the integrity, dignity, and authority of the inferior's office.

DELEGATION OF DUTIES

The task of the inferior does not consist in making those decisions which not even the superior himself could authoritatively formulate. If the superior has no power to make them, much less could the inferior cope with them. The job of the inferior consists rather in lightening the burden of his superior, so that this could attend to more weighty or general matters. If the superior could conveniently make all the decisions which he had assigned to his subordinate, then he does not need an assistant. One must find the right helper to perform a necessary service, not create unnecessary position to occupy superfluous people.

If indeed the responsibility of the superior reaches such dimensions, that he must employ assistants to enable him to carry out the functions of his department; then when he has obtained the competent subordinates, he must relegate to them whatever they could perform for him, reserving to himself only those questions which call for his personal attention.

In accordance with this canon the superior will abstain from making any decisions that his subordinates could make for him. Otherwise he will defeat the purpose for which subordinates exist under him, and learn that his performance and that of his department has declined — simply because he could not possibly attend to all the details of his office by himself alone. If you want to do a job well, do it yourself. Yes, if you have nothing more important or more general to attend to. Otherwise, let subordinates do what they can and should do for you.

KINDS OF DECISIONS

What kinds of decisions should a head relegate to his officials? Certain questions of an office cover routine matters; others entail strategic factors. Routine matters follow familiar directions. They do not concern an extensive area of the organization. Strategic decisions on the other hand occur with rare frequency. And they take a protracted time to make. They swerve whole sectors of an establishment toward new ventures. And they affect both the internal overall operations as well as external factors, like relations with the public.

A superior could easily assign decision making power to subordinates to handle routine questions; then he would have the time and mental clarity to attend to strategic problems. Strategic matters properly fall to him as to a general who must plan and direct a campaign involving various forces deployed over extensive space and time. Attending to strategic matters means no less to keep abreast of developments in the other sectors of the organization, and get acquainted with new discoveries and trends outside that might enhance one's department.

GOALS, WAYS, AND OPERATIONS

We could distinguish decisions according to whether they pursue goals and policies, or they have to do with general ways and means, or they deal with day to day operations. The top officials of an enterprise must concern themselves with decisions touching the goals and policies of their organization. They must leave to intermediary heads to handle decisions regarding ways and means for achieving the projected ends.

Finally, day to day operations should conveniently belong to foremen, superintendents, and supervisors, etc. Such a hierarchy of decision making authority works in huge institutions.

The trouble here lies not at all with the lowly foreman telling the board of directors what goals or policies to pursue, as with the topmost officials occupying themselves with the quality of brooms used by janitors.

PARTS AND WHOLE

Still another way of dividing decisions breaks them up into those covering only one area, those touching several sectors, and those affecting the whole establishment. Decisions covering one area do not entail much uncertainty due to their limited repercussions. They belong to the head of the area concerned. Those involving several sectors contain complex factors. The official in charge of these areas, who should have a command of their situations, should make the best decisions to govern them all. Lastly, those decisions affecting the whole enterprise require the attention of one, who should have general and total grasp of the entire organization, and he should proceed in terms of the corporate health.

DECISION MAKING BY ONE MAN

The one man decision has the quality of quickness to commend itself. At least normally it should take less time for one head to make up his mind than for several. In an emergency, when it takes time to bring different decision makers together and it takes additional time for them to ponder the question, one can see the advantage of having a single brain to decide matters.

Moreover, the responsibility of seeing to the execution of the one man decision lies with one person, who because the decision came from him alone will feel the full stimulus of carrying it out. In the case of a decision collectively issued by a group, most likely none in the group will feel himself responsible for the efficacious implementation of the corporate decision. The minority who submitted to the majority will experience a most natural indifference, if not downright antagonism toward the happy execution of the decision. Among the majority, those who fought for the adopted decision will not necessarily show the same fervor as regards the responsibility of carrying it into effect. Not much leadership exists in the implementation of a group decision.

them. And in order to reach a definite decision, the joint decision makers have to make some mutual concessions, so that they could come up with a solution acceptable to all. But a solution born of compromise might placate the objections of everyone, and yet still does not make up the best or the better decision.

The recourse to majority decision serves effectively to break the impasse—if one can manage to obtain the required majority. The decision, however, of the majority still need not represent the best or the better course of action. Numerical superiority does not warrant quality.

Group decision making in which everyone enjoys an equal say tends to break up the group itself, on account of inevitable conflicting views and interests. The minority who lost to the majority will feel alienated. They will tender their token assent, but not necessarily their involved cooperation in carrying out the decision. The divisive trend in group decision making constitutes the most serious objection against it.

THE ADVISORY GROUP

The advisory group in decision making makes up some middle way between the one man decision process and the determinative group judgment. Unlike the determinative group where each member enjoys equal power with the rest, above the advisory group stands the chief who adopts the final decision. The rest essentially play the role of consultants. Although the head normally echoes the mind of the group; nonetheless, he need not follow the recommendations of the group—not strictly. But he must have very good reasons to take a path different or even against the view of his advisors, specially when these have reached a consensus.

If no consensus prevails in the advisory group, the chief could make his mind from the recommendations given. Not rarely the leader formulates his decision from other data not accessible to his advisory staff. Sometimes the head possesses knowledge which he could not share with his subordinates. Thus the inferiors could discuss the divergent sides of the question, but they know that the chief could, after listening to their debates, come up with a decision totally different from any of their suggestions, and yet not really in disregard of their combined wisdom. The leader exercises a unifying force in the group.

LEADERSHIP

But supposing that the head chooses a course of action patronized only by a faction of the advisory group or clearly unacceptable to the

On the other hand, if a decision depends upon a single person, it tends to savor of arbitrariness. Besides, one could certainly question the inerrancy or at least the absolute impartiality of the sole decision maker. Never can one man alone see all the pertinent angles of a question, foresee all its possible consequences, and meet the expectations of every concerned party. Rarely does a single person possess vast and repeated experiences required to make right decisions.

GROUP DECISION MAKING

Due to the shortcomings of the sole decision maker, it would seem that several brains could do a better job than one. However much collective decision making has its disadvantages, it also carries some very sound points as well. On the assumption that democracy excels autocracy, group decision making should produce more benefits, for it leads to a decision of the people by the people and for the people—to some extent.

Since the group decision comes from the group mind of several persons, it should obviously please more people than the one man decision. The group decision should satisfy the people responsible for it, otherwise they would not have articulated it.

When several brains get together to study a problem, they together see more aspects of the problem than a single head. And if they represent specialties from different fields, their joint expertise will enable them to penetrate more deeply the various facets of a question. Finally, several people will bring together a rich accumulation of experience that will certainly broaden the vision of the entire group.

Although experience in a person not rarely narrows his decision making faculties to the data of his limited past, preventing him from apprehending other possible alternatives; nonetheless, in a participative decision making process, the collective experience opens to the aggregated cerebrum a multiplex range of considerations, contingencies, and options. In decision making the danger more often than not consists not in taking too much into account, but in not taking enough into consideration. This peril plagues the group less than the solitary person.

MAJORITY VERSUS MINORITY

On the other hand, the group must arrive at some kind of common decision. Evidently, they could not simply agree to disagree agreeably — which does not settle anything: the matter still awaits a decision. If they have to make a decision, they must come up with one that represents

whole body, will he not alienate some or all of his men? Here lies the true test of leadership: the ability to persuade his followers as regards the soundness of his decision, though it does not appeal to some or to all of his men.

If the chief really stands as the leader of the group, the people under him will not find it difficult to acquiesce to his judgment. If they do not look up to him as to their leader, a decision made by him not agreeable to some or all of his subordinates will inevitably trigger a crisis of confidence, or more appropriately, a crisis of leadership.

The advisory group under an unchallenged leader on the one hand avoids the arbitrariness of the sole decision maker, and on the other hand reduces the divisiveness of decision making among a group of equals. It has both the benefits of the combined intelligence, expertise, and experience of many heads, and the integrative dynamism of one leader. In this connection the advisory group in decision making would seem to relieve a certain renowned soldier-statesman of his quandary: which to fear more: one bad general or two good generals.

The leader who could persuade his advisors to accept his final decision different or even against their view proves himself indeed the master of men. And if events should bear out the wisdom of his decision, he should enhance his power tremendously, and the people will worship him. But if events fail to back up his decision, and worse, should establish the disastrous nature of his decision, then the leader has ended his leadership days.

RATIONALITY IN DECISIONS

Good decisions have the quality of rationality. Rationality here means the fusion of all those considerations that dictate the adoption of a specific course of action in preference to others. Contrarywise, irrationality in a decision making process means to fail to take all possibly available informations into account—or at least not sufficiently into account. In order to make right decisions, one must increase the rationality of the decision making process and decrease any source of irrationality.

Mental concentration constitutes the first step in decision making. One must use intellect, imagination, memory, etc. intensively and extensively. To avoid hasty decisions with low rationality content, take time out to think. An emergency does not dispense decision makers from taking time out to think. It means less time to ponder the pros and cons; hence they must think faster. Making quick decisions does not mean making hasty decisions.

Approach complex problems systematically. Dissolve the intricate question into its component parts and aspects. Solve each segment and aspect of the problem and find out how the solution would fit into the whole question, before proceeding to another.

CRUX OF THE PROBLEM

Not rarely the key to an intricate issue consists in locating its crux. Once this essential point has surfaced, the right decision comes within sight. The crux of the enigma could lie in the least likely place.

For example the superior of a convent noticed that late comers have increased at conventual Mass, and some merely make a token appearance toward the end of Mass. To him the problem seems one of discipline and observance. Should he decide to enforce punctuality by enacting penal measures, he knows that the religious would rebel. So he studied the possible circumstances responsible for tardiness at conventual Mass, and learned that the crux of the problem lies with a new television program aired nightly from 11:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. He could counteract by issuing a rule against watching television after 11:00 p.m., which more probably would not obtain compliance. He could remove the television set from the convent, which could provoke a revolution.

Finally, he came up with a good solution, which both retains the television set and procures punctuality at conventual Mass. He has the program video-recorded and replayed the next evening during community recreation. Now his religious go to bed early and go to Mass early.

Religious houses not having video tape recorder in the audio visual section of their schools or other apostolates would have to look for some other solutions, after locating the crux of the problem. Just the same, half of decision making consists more often not in locating the crucial factor.

OPTIMIZATION

Experts of scientific business management talk about optimization, suboptimization, maximization, and minimization in decision making. In our present context, we could speak of optimization as the search for the best choice from among a number of alternatives. Suboptimization then would mean that in complex matters, the decision maker will break them up into their components and find out which option contains the best components.

Both optimization and suboptimization involve the processes of maximization and minimization. Maximization consists in speculating on the

most good results that the decision maker could obtain from the contemplated course of action. Minimization refers to how much of the evil consequences, that come with the adopted choice, the decision maker could offset: he will seek to reduce them to the minimum possible.

Sometimes maximization and minimization denote quite opposite things. Maximization then means projecting the most things that could go wrong with a decision; and minimization requires the decision maker to expect the least good from the contemplated choice. If after maximization and minimization of this kind fail to disrobe the contemplated decision of its attractive features, then the decision maker has a good guarantee of its soundness.

INFINITY OF OPTIONS

To decide means to select from a number of options. In order to select, one must know the options. Hence, the more options the decider knows the greater his range of choice, and the more likely will he not only pick the right one but the better one. The number of options increases with the number of viewpoints from which the decider could look at each. He has to consider also the short range and the long range consequences of his selection; the diverse sectors it will affect. Neither may he overlook its emotional, esthetic, moral, religious, and public values or objections, in concentrating on its more immediate and lucrative possibilities.

In order to collect as much alternatives as possible, and in order to see as many aspects of each alternative as possible, the decision maker must seek the help of others, specially experts who have no personal interest in advocating one or another preference, but point out only its good and bad sides.

Employing a think tank serves the purpose very well of penetrating into all the intricacies involved in choosing the optimum answer. A think tank brings together several people of the greatest differences possible: in back-ground, ages, academic refinements, temperaments, specializations, etc. Each one will contribute whatever constructive, destructive, positive, negative ideas that come to his mind toward the solution of the proposed problem or against the materialized thoughts of others. By this process of brain-storming, extensive discovery of possibilities and their evaluation take place; and the decision maker eventually sees the best way out.

SOME CONSTRAINTS

Constraints refer to those factors which disadvise the decision maker from embracing an option otherwise favorable. In thinking up all the

possibilities, repercussions, and contingencies involved in making a decision, almost as many constraints come up as plausible solutions, so that the most acceptable alternative should implicate the least constraints. There exist however two constraints which the decision maker and executive should bear in mind, in order to save himself time and trouble in going through improbable answers. These two constraints cover the goal and the structure of the organization.

On the assumption that the goal and the structure of the organization must not undergo change or compromise, any solutions that impugn the goal or the structure of the establishment by no means merit further consideration. Decision makers must therefore use the goal and structure constraints as two imperative guidelines in the choice of a decision.

On the other hand, one could ask the question whether the establishment's goal and structure really and absolutely possess an untouchable nature. Sometimes the very survival of the organization depends upon the introduction of new goals, if not the alteration of the original one; or the restructuring of its operational mechanism.

PASSIONS AND INTUITION

Just as making good decision requires mental concentration, so also making poor decisions stems from the neglect of rational approach. One of the rules for making bad decisions runs thus: Make decisions when emotionally disturbed. The passions will lead you to make hunches, to take your chance and hope for the best. Sometimes not so much excited emotions move the decision maker to espouse or shun one or another plan, as a certain vague presentiment for or against an idea, a thing, or a person. In all such cases, the decision maker must deal with his passions and intuitive leanings rationally.

He must find out how much of his fear, hostility, attachments, and impulses could contribute to the solution or further embroilment of the problem. Sometimes they could dictate good decisions, because they arose from past experiences which created instinctive judgment for the evaluation of good and bad. Oftentimes they simply cloud or limit the vision of the decider, so that he could not see clearly the objective issues or he would not look beyond the satisfaction of his personal emotions: fear, anger, antipathy, attachment to people, pride, cupidity, etc.

PREMATURE CLOSURE

An effective way of making poor decisions or at least not making better ones consists in foreclosure of the decision making process at the first appearance of an adoptable suggestion. Native human indolence

accounts for failures to explore further possibilities or to look into other angles of the problem or of the solution preferred. Undue optimism which refuses to consider possible shortcomings or hostile developments independent of the decision explains also many instances of premature closure of the decision making process. "If only we had thought further, we could have come up with some better idea, then we should obtain more..."

In this connection, when possible, trial study of the few restant decisions realized from a rigorous screening process will disclose the best option to embrace.

PRE-SET MINDS

Bad decisions also come from pre-set minds men who have the habit of choosing the option before going through the decision making process. In this event the decision making process serves not to find the best answer to a question, but to concoct the most convincing excuses for the answer. The self-deceiver authors an even greater tragedy if he succeeds in persuading others to accept his self-delusion.

The pre-set mind would not tolerate the devil's advocate among his advisers; and he gets only people who agree with his pre-set decision. Hence, he could not know the valid objections against his preemptive selection, except until disaster takes place due to his narrow decision.

The self-fulfilling prophecy represents one of the trends of the pre-set mind. Businessmen would project so much profits for the coming period of operations. And then even though they come to learn of the hollowness of their projections, they will nonetheless make their succeeding decisions tend toward the achievement of their prophecies, straining their companies precariously. They also succeed in unleashing a rash of ulcers and not a few nervous break-downs among their personnels. The vice of self-fulfilling prophecy generally afflicts people with megalomaniac tendencies, specially when forecasting results.

Pre-set mind also stems from an obsession with sunk costs. Since a company (or a religious community) has invested so much in human and material resources for a certain project, it seems a waste to abandon it or to pursue other directions. Hence the pre-set mind would not see further than the possibilities allowed for by sunk costs, closing thereby his creative imagination to the boundless horizon of other feasible ventures.

TEMPORIZING

Because the pre-set mind makes decisions prior to the decision making process, his decisions savor of haste. On the opposite side, the deci-

sion maker who temporizes in the name of forthcoming data makes an even bigger blunder, because he keeps everyone in a limbo. To make a decision means to move forward, to proceed in another direction, to turn backward, or to stay put—one needs also to make a decision to maintain the status quo. The temporizing executive puts his people on a razor edge where they neither move in any direction nor do they enjoy any secure stability.

Procrastination in decision making indicates a reluctance to assume responsibility on the part of the decider. The office holder who defaults in issuing the required timely decision indeed fears the onus of possible reverses more than he hopes for the credit of success. But often he fears as well the burden of commitment: the work, time, and sacrifices he would have to expend to see his decision all the way through.

Every new decision involves its author in new obligations, restricts his liberty further, and makes his life more complicated, until he has pursued it to its denouement. The mean spirit prefers to temporize in the face of challenge.

EXCESS OF TECHNIQUES

Bad decisions could come as well and no less from the excess of decision making techniques employed. Notwithstanding the conclusions of scientific studies in the fields of human behavior, business management, and public administration, common sense must still govern sound decision making. A sense of proportion will dictate how much time, attention, and technical expertise to devote to every decision. Even an intricate question sometimes needs only little mental and material outlays to solve, as long as common sense sees at once the key to its secrets.

Sometimes the decider knows which decision: one way or another, to adopt. But either because he does not want to bear the opprobrium of its unpleasant consequences to some people, or because he wants to enhance its marketable worth, he will call on outside experts, launch project studies, or make use of sophisticated methods, all consuming time and money, in order to finally formulate the decision which he knew all along.

When common sense dictates the decision, decision makers should not waste time and money in computers, operations research, quantification, models, linear programming, simulity, and come up with a poor decision. Such an approach calls to one's mind the supposedly primitive method of preparing roast pork by burning down the house.

SOME CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Every decision must have the quality of firmness. Still, if possible, the provident decision maker will try to equip his decision with safety valves: allowances for changes and even reversals should the decision prove unworkable due to unexpected developments. The brave man will make his decisions; but the braver man will change or retract them when necessary.

No decision will please everyone. No two decision makers will make the same decision when faced with the same problem. However, the decision maker must see to it that most people would accept his decision. He should abstain from any decision that will surely earn the antagonism of a good number of people under him, if not all; for then the decision will serve no purpose on the operational level, except as a stumbling block to his personnel.

Due to the human mind's inability to see all the sides of a question, to take all factors into account, and to forecast possible future developments, no decision ever meets all the tests of the hypothetical best decision. And no decision ever embodies exclusively good points. Every decision involves some risks, some compromise between the good and the bad. But the good decision maker strives to reduce risks as much as possible, to tolerate only the minimum evil unavoidable.

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