

RETHINKING DECISIONS AMID COVID-19 (C-19)

Decisions are essential to leadership. Typically, we focus on the work at hand without intentionally thinking through decision strategy.

The rapid evolution of Covid-19 has strained decision systems. In light of the complexity, stress, and uncertainty we now face, this document consolidates several frameworks for decision making.

LEADER GOAL:

Intentionally adopt style/approach to make the best decisions within situational constraints.

TEAM HUMANITY'S GOAL:

Flatten the curve

Priorities

Five situational factors impact decision quality, acceptance, and implementation of critical decisions:

1. CLARITY

- Are we clear about the problem? Do we understand the problem? Are we asking the right questions?
- **C-19:** How often do we reassess for clarity? How do we maintain focus to ensure we are addressing the right problem?

2. INFORMATION

- What information (facts/knowledge) do we need to make a good decision?
- **C-19:** How are we sourcing information? How often are we reassessing the information we do have?

3. ALIGNMENT

- Do key stakeholders share common goals? Are stakeholders and organization aligned?
- **C-19:** What are the different layers of alignment needed? What level/who needs to be engaged to maximize influence?

4. COMMITMENT

- What support is needed to implement a decision? What commitment do we have or need to implement a decision?
- **C-19:** When are decisions hierarchical? How do we navigate decisions that change with time? What is the right authority? What is the right influence style?

5. TIME

- What degree of urgency surrounds the decision?
- **C-19:** What investment of time and effort will it take to include others in the decision-making process? Is this a decision that needs input from others?

Five Approaches to Decision Making

Style	Approach	Assumption	Decision Process	Pros/Cons	Decision Type
DIRECTING	Rely completely on one's own judgment.	You can understand the situation and already have the information needed to make an informed decision.	Do not share the problem with others nor solicit information.	Pro: Fast. Con: May not take all variables into account.	I decide.
FACT FINDING	Identify specific information needed to make decisions.	You know where to go for the information that may be missing.	Do not share the problem but do solicit feedback; reserve the right to make the decision.	Pro: Decisive. Con: Assumes that one knows where to find the needed information.	I make a decision informed by additional information.
INVESTIGATING	Share the solution and solicit input in the form of suggestions and possible courses of action.	You selectively include stakeholders whose input is most relevant to the decision at hand	Accept the final input but clearly reserve the right to make a final decision.	Pro: Inclusive. Con: Takes longer than other approaches.	I decide with other people's input.
COLLABORATING	Share the solution and solicit input from all stakeholders identified as having a key interest in the decision's outcome.	You strive for inclusivity while taking many different opinions and perspectives into account.	Reserve the right to make a decision while valuing input of stakeholders.	Pro: Collaborative. Con: Time consuming.	I come to a decision through a process that involves many stakeholders.
TEAMING	Invite key stakeholders to share equally in the decision-making process.	You assume that inclusivity and buy-in are essential.	Ideally reach a consensual decision among key stakeholders.	Pro: Most likely to be accepted since buy-in is already established. Con: Very time consuming.	I don't decide but strive for consensus among all stakeholders.

FOUR DECISION-MAKING STYLES

Decision styles evolve as leaders grow and take on more responsibilities.

Frontline workers face simpler decisions where it is easier and more appropriate to be decisive.

As leaders move up, decisions faced are increasing complicated, multi-faceted, and less direct.

These challenges are best approached with a flexible and integrative style.

1

Decisive

Decisive decision makers:

- Value action, speed, efficiency, and consistency;
- Put a plan in place, stick to it, and move the dial forward on key projects;
- Value honesty, clarity, and loyalty; and
- Minimize processing and unnecessary meetings, since time is critical.

2

Hierarchic

Hierarchical decision makers:

- Rarely rush to judgement;
- Analyze all available information but also readily challenge others;
- Focused on making decisions that can stand the test of time.

3

Flexible

Flexible decision makers:

- Value speed and adaptability;
- Seek “just enough” data to make their next move;
- Remain agile and ready to change course if things aren’t moving forward according to an original plan.

4

Integrative

Integrative decision makers:

- Don’t look for a “single best” solution;
- Frame situations broadly and take multiple perspectives;
- Make decisions that lead to multiple courses of action;
- Crave input, value multiple points of view, and even welcome dissent.

*Based on Kenneth R. Brousseau et al., “The Seasoned Executive’s Decision-Making Style,”
Harvard Business Review (February 2006).*

FIVE STYLES FOR ADDRESSING CONFLICT

COMPETING is assertive and uncooperative. You try to satisfy your own concerns at the other person's expense.

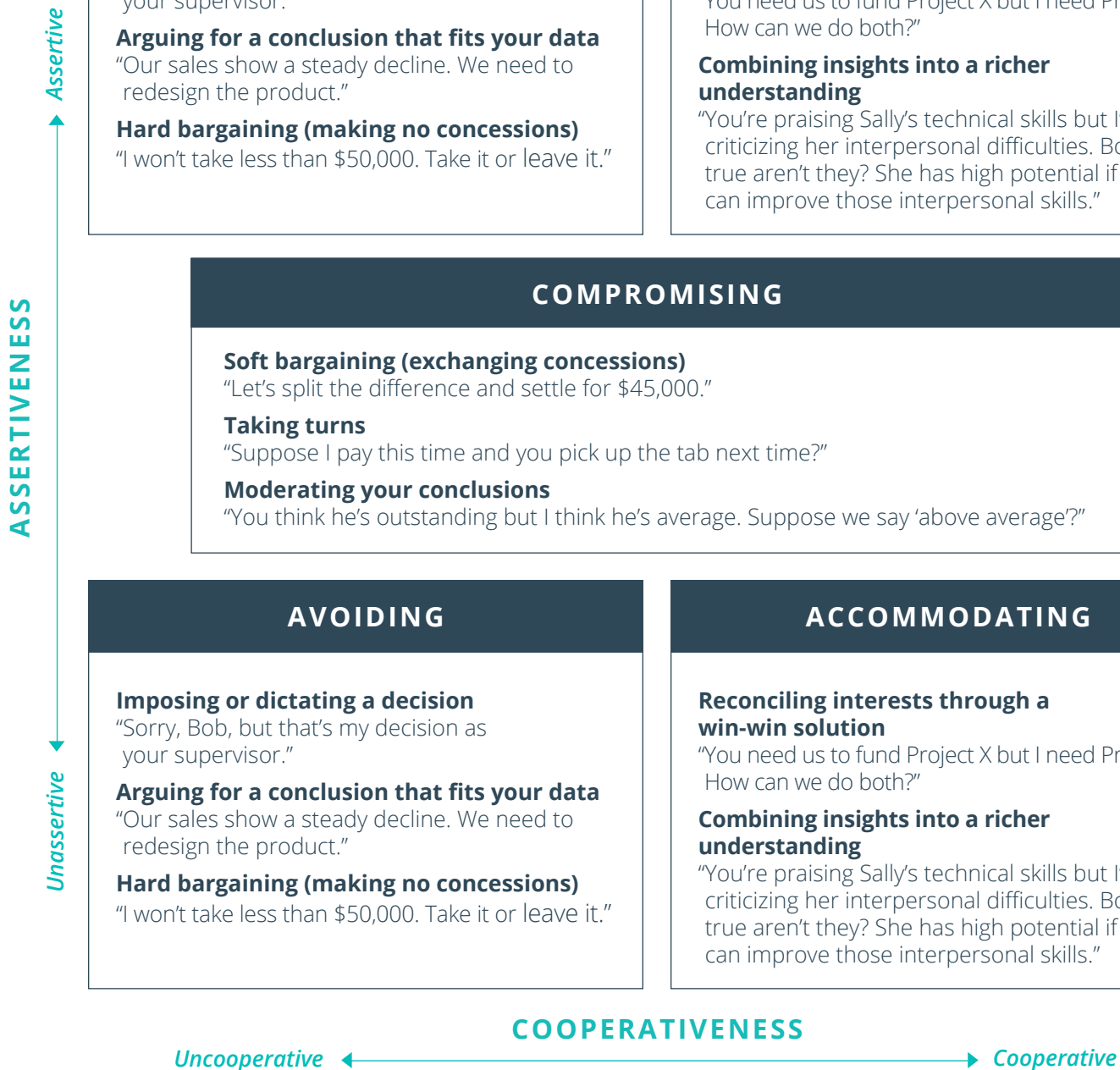
COLLABORATING is both assertive and cooperative. You try to find a win-win solution that completely satisfies both people's concerns.

COMPROMISING is intermediate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness. You try to find an

acceptable settlement that only partially satisfies both people's concerns.

AVOIDING is both unassertive and uncooperative. You sidestep the conflict without trying to satisfy either person's concerns.

ACCOMMODATING is unassertive and cooperative. You attempt to satisfy the other person's concerns at the expense of your own.



Core Questions

Communication

- ① ? What is the right level of information to share? How often should it be shared, and by what modalities?
- ② ? What level of understanding is needed to effectively implement information?
- ③ ? What are the costs of delayed communication?
- ④ ? What are the costs of changing communication later?

What is the right style of decision making given the challenges we are currently facing?

- ① **I decide:** Leader makes the decision and announces it to the group.
- ② **I decide with your input:** Leader invites information (re: problem definition, diagnosis, alternatives, or choice parameters); they may or may not share why they are seeking information.
- ③ **We decide:** Leader invites a group to decide via voting, consensus, or other mechanism.
- ④ **You decide:** Leader and/or group delegates the decision to a subgroup of expert members.

LEADERSHIP QUESTIONS

- ① ? What leadership style is needed at this moment?
- ② ? What information / thresholds trigger a re-evaluation of the problem?
- ③ ? How does one balance decision clarity while ensuring access and understanding to critical components?
- ④ ? In the face of C-19, how can you continue to manage your bandwidth (time, energy, and attention) to ensure you still have time to get perspective?
- ★ As time and circumstances change, revisit these questions. What is right today, might have changed by tonight.
- ★ Also, don't forget! Leadership styles change based on position and complexity. No one leadership style is the best approach in every situation. An exceptional situation such as C-19 may require you to do things differently.