

# 10 exercises to transform your decision-making

**In business, developing the keys to good judgment and decision-making shapes futures and relationships.**



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Decision-making in the corporate world is often approached from a purely instrumental perspective: Compare alternatives, choose the one that will deliver the best results. But this view is incomplete.

Teams that achieve results but feel demotivated, leaders who are “effective” but inspire fear, profitable organizations with deteriorating corporate cultures: all these show that calling something “good” isn’t the whole story, and that it isn’t enough to point to visible outcomes.

Moreover, every decision leaves its mark, both on the person who makes it and on those it affects, shaping how future decisions will be made. The best decisions don’t merely achieve a short-term goal; they lead us to keep making good decisions.

In a [new book](#) on the art and science of decision-making, [Miguel Angel Ariño](#), [Nuria Chinchilla](#) and Pilar Garcia-Lombardia look at how to make excellent decisions, drawing on the research of the late former dean of IESE, Juan Antonio Perez Lopez.

## The triple impact of every choice

To determine how good a decision is, [managers must analyze three dimensions](#):

- **Effectiveness:** Did implementing my decision achieve its intended goal?
- **Efficiency:** What have I learned? What habits am I reinforcing? What kind of person

am I becoming by making this decision?

- **Consistency:** How does my decision affect others? Does it erode trust and will? For example, a decision that achieves its goal but destroys team morale is ultimately a poor decision that undermines the organization's sustainability.

This requires balancing three aspects:

- **Freedom:** not being forced by impulse.
- **Rationality:** to foresee less obvious consequences, such as damage to relationships.
- **Willingness:** to do what is right, even when it is difficult.

Ultimately, organizations are living systems whose viability depends on the quality of relationships and leaders' ability to see others as people, not merely as instruments.

## Tools to improve your decision-making

The authors present a number of exercises designed to help managers transform themselves through their decisions and build high-quality relationships:

### 1. Pre-action traffic light

Before making an important decision, pause for five minutes and ask: Will I achieve the desired result? Am I strengthening my personal capabilities? Will this increase others' willingness to collaborate with me?

- If you can give a positive answer to all three, that's a green light to proceed.
- Two positives is yellow, so adjust before acting.
- Just one is a red light: stop and rethink the decision.

### 2. The uncomfortable question

We often justify decisions with rational arguments that don't reflect our real motivations. Write down the supposed reason for your decision and then ask yourself honestly if you would still proceed if no one would know the outcome. This reduces self-deception and strengthens alignment between intention and action.

### **3. Distance from impulse**

In uncomfortable situations, we often choose what's easy or what will make us feel better. But that is not always what is best. Good decisions go beyond urgent concerns and consider how it will affect others in the long term.

### **4. Anticipation and prediction matrix**

Don't rely only on past experience. Reflect on similar past situations and then explicitly formulate three rational predictions: likely outcomes; how your behavior may change; and how trust or others' volition may be affected.

### **5. Repairing inconsistency**

If a decision was ostensibly effective but damaged relationships, it represents negative learning. The solution is not just an apology but adjusting your decision-evaluation system going forward.

### **6. Balance of capabilities**

At the end of each week, classify your decisions: those focused on results (operational capability) and those focused on people's growth (governance capability). Strong leadership balances both.

### **7. Structural virtuality**

Identify the best option after evaluating consequences and compare it with what you most *want* to do. Then act for the best, even if it goes against your first impulse. This strengthens willpower and long-term decision quality.

### **8. Real relationship map**

Evaluate your five most important relationships: Have you made decisions that required sacrifice for the sake of the other person? And have they done the same for you? Strong relationships are built on consistent, costly decisions.

## 9. Internalizing the other

Ask yourself whether you see collaborators as a means or as free individuals. Do you try to control them or understand them? Recognizing others' dignity transforms relationships.

## 10. Decision trajectory

At key moments, review your recent decisions — not just major ones, but recurring ones. Reflect on the kind of person you are becoming: whether you are expanding or limiting your future options, and whether your decisions strengthen or erode relationships. Then, project this pattern five years ahead. Do you recognize yourself if you continue on the same path?

## How does AI help decision-making?

In today's context, artificial intelligence can improve speed and accuracy by processing large amounts of information and helping achieve fast results. However, focusing only on expedience can lead to ignoring essential dimensions such as learning and the impact on people.

Delegating decisions uncritically to AI systems can reinforce a style focused only on observable outcomes, weakening judgment, sensitivity and relationship quality. Therefore, AI should be understood as a support tool — not a substitute — for human responsibility in evaluating decisions in terms of their effectiveness, efficiency and consistency, which ultimately determine their long-term sustainability.

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ALSO OF INTEREST:

[Right decisions do not always guarantee success](#)

[The flight path to wonderful decisions](#)

[How I use artificial intelligence to make better decisions in business](#)



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