

AUA Strategic Planning Session Preliminary Materials from our Facilitator, Arthur Martirosyan

Smart Decision-Making Process (PrOACT approach)

1. Work on the right decision PR**oblem**

The way you will frame your decision at the outset can make all the difference. To choose well you will need to state your decision problems carefully, acknowledging their complexity and avoiding unwarranted assumptions and option-limiting prejudices.

2. Specify your OB**jectives**

Your decision should get you where we want to go. What do you want to accomplish and which of your interests, values, concerns, fears, and aspirations are most relevant to achieving your goal? Thinking through your objectives will give direction to your decision-making.

3. Create imaginative AL**ternatives**

Alternatives represent the different courses of action you have to choose from. Your decision can be no better than your best alternative.

4. Understand the CO**nsequences**

Assessing frankly the consequences of each alternative will help you to identify those that best meet your objectives - all your objectives

5. Grapple with your TR**adeoffs**

Because objectives frequently conflict with one another, you will need to strike a balance. Some of this must sometimes be sacrificed in favor of some of that. To do so, you will need to set priorities by openly addressing the need for tradeoffs among competing objectives.

6. Clarify your uncertainties

What could happen in the future, and how likely it is that it will? Uncertainty makes choice making far more difficult. But effective decision-making demands that you confront uncertainty judging the likelihood of different outcomes and assessing their possible impacts.

7. Think hard about your risk tolerance

When decisions involve uncertainties the desired consequence may not be the one that actually results. A conscious awareness of your willingness to accept risk will make your decision-making process smoother and more effective. It will help you to choose an alternative with the right level of risk for you.

8. Consider linked decisions

What you decide today could influence your choices tomorrow and your goals for tomorrow should influence your choice today. The key to dealing effectively with linked decisions is to isolate and resolve near-term issues while gathering information needed to resolve those that will arise later. By sequencing your actions to fully exploit what you learn along the way, you will be doing your best, despite an uncertain world, to make smarter choices.

Some Typical Ground Rules for Such Exercises

1. **Orderly discussion for efficiency.** One person at a time. Make sure everyone gets a chance to speak.
2. **Candor.** Speakers should feel free to speak openly and think outside the box.
3. **Ideas are important,** not who says them. Avoid attribution of motives or other personal references.
4. **Succinctness and relevance.** Stay on topic, be economical, refer to other's ideas rather than repeat, comments should add value at each stage.
5. **Separate idea-generation from idea-prioritization and troubleshooting.** Moderator will set aside time for raising concerns, prioritization, and criticism. Avoid rhetorical questions
6. **Be constructive.** Each person reserves the right to disagree with any proposal and accepts responsibility for offering alternatives that accommodate her interests as well as the interests of others.
7. **Off the record.** To promote creative and innovative thinking, what's said in the discussion should stay in the room. No participant should speak on behalf of other participants or the group as a whole.