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MAKE DECISIONS EASIER:

Why is it important?

Being able to make the right call at the right time, often while under pressure, is a key requirement for any manager or team leader.

We make dozens of decisions every day, but when it comes to important workplace choices, too many 'bad' decisions or regular displays of indecisiveness can lead to a loss of credibility with employees and could have a detrimental effect on your career prospects.

WHERE DO I START?

Confirm the decision is both yours to make and worthy of your attention. Avoid the trap of micro-managing every decision that falls under your control - if one of your staff can do it then let them make the call.

Establish whether anyone else needs to be consulted and how long you have to make the decision. Make sure the problem (and its impact) is clearly defined and that you are aware of any underlying objectives and / or the wider business context of the decision. Then detail each concern you want the decision to address and the end-result you wish to achieve.

"If you're clear about what you're doing and why, you will be able to communicate your thinking and get buy-in from all those under your charge, including those responsible for its smooth implementation

CONSIDER YOUR OPTIONS:

Once you have sized up the situation using all the information available, you need to work through the alternatives and assess their potential consequences. Weigh up each idea against your stated objectives and grade them accordingly. Consider the pros and cons, the level of risk involved and the worst that can happen.

There are techniques and models available that can provide a more structured approach to evaluating the options, such as paired comparison analysis or decision trees. Benjamin Franklin made decisions by listing down the negative aspects of a decision and then next the "no" list he would write a "yes" list. Whichever list had more points (positive or negative) that was the decision he chose.

CONSULT WIDELY:

Be prepared to cast your net far and wide when investigating possible solutions, as selecting from a restricted range of options may not deliver the best result. The same applies to falling back on safe or previously proven choices. Involve others who you know will have opposing views and different perspectives from you, as they may arrive at solutions you would never envisage. Always make known the rationale for any decision you make. Encourage your team to give feedback and highlight inherent weaknesses in your decision-making methods.

MONITOR OUTCOMES:

It is essential to track the effect of your decisions, especially if the action taken was based on unreliable data or an incomplete picture of the situation could throw up fresh problems further down the line.

LOOK FOR PATTERNS:

Aim to make better and more dependable choices by becoming an honest judge of the effectiveness of your decisions. Get into the habit of regularly appraising your performance, particularly where you were required to make some critical decisions.
