



STRATEGICFIT

Facilitative Leadership

2018



A Decision Analysis (DA) Facilitator drives the group towards Decision Quality



- Has no stake in the outcome of the process
- Focuses on keeping the process on track – keep to timetable, make sure everyone gets a turn, everyone is happy...
- More passive role
- Drives for Decision Quality
- Uses the process as a guide but deviates as necessary to maintain decision quality
- Guides the project so the team understands the decision problem and effectively pursues its resolution
- Ensures that real stakeholder participation and dialogue occur throughout the process
- Needs to be assertive
- Has own point of view on the best outcome of the process
- Pushes for a certain decision
- Disregards process
- More aggressive role



As process leader, your role is to:

- Suggest meeting processes that are likely to produce a high-quality work product
- Share responsibility (along with team members) for the quality of the output
- Suggest new approaches when the meeting process isn't working
- Guide the team in deciding when to work more on quality and when to move on
- Provide perspective on the quality of what the team has accomplished
- Suggest homework where necessary to enhance the work product



The balance between advocacy and inquiry

- Both as a DA facilitator and as a team participant, we need to get the right balance between advocacy and inquiry
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- Influence the discussion to achieve what you believe is best
 - ‘Push back’ on opinions and behaviours that do not support what you want to achieve
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- Ask questions
 - Clarify
 - Understand others' points of view



Advocacy vs Inquiry: Both modes have their advantages and disadvantages

	Advocacy	Inquiry
Pro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide rationale for your suggestion ('sell it') • Cut through unproductive discussion • More effective where there's a clear hierarchy and time is at a premium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make suggestion as a strawman to provoke discussion, without necessarily believing it's a good idea • Be open to others' ideas • Make sure you understand other people's points of view before reacting to them • Helpful if working with a group of peers
Con	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judge others' ideas prematurely • Close down discussion on topics that do not support your own point of view • Reach a poor decision because you have not considered all the angles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fail to reach a conclusion (or take a long time to get there) • Reach a 'fake' conclusion, because the important issues have not been properly prioritised



Appendix: Poor behaviours and how to address them



Here are some examples of people who are not doing a good job of meeting their responsibilities on the Work Group or Decision Review Board

- I am highly critical of the Work Group during meetings but offer no constructive feedback
- I automatically accept the proposed compositions of the different teams without thinking about who else could play a crucial role
- I allow the frame to be inappropriately limited to fit neatly within current organizational boundaries and/or to avoid infringing on political sensitivities.
- I have no openness to accepting that another alternative may be superior to my going-in preferred favourite
- I keep quiet during Work Group meetings but criticise the work when it is presented in the Decision Review Board meetings
- I allow the team to progress with an alternative that would never be chosen due to organisational priorities or implementation infeasibility
- I push for an immediate decision to get the study over with as quickly as possible
- I never turn up to meetings



Take a cautious approach to dealing with people who seem not to be fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.

- Most of the behaviours we discussed on the previous slide could have valid reasons behind them . . .
 - . . . Or they could be the result of a number of dysfunctional motives/reasons.
- Seek first to understand then to be understood – put yourself in the person’s shoes:
 - Why might they be acting in this way?
 - Gather fact-based evidence rather than “gut-feels”.
- Think about a process of escalation – don’t press the nuclear button right away;
 - What gentle measure can I take to confirm my attributions for this character’s behaviour? (e.g., offline chat)
- Put the goals of the project first: avoid taking things personally!



Three characters representing typical dysfunctional behaviours.

Mr. Disengaged



Saboteur!



Ms. One-track Mind



Character Type 1 – Mr. Disengaged

Impact on project

- This person can reduce decision quality though their lack of activity rather than doing something deliberately.

Symptoms

- Does not turn up to meetings or turns up late and leaves early;
- Agrees too easily to Work Group proposals;
- Does not push back at all on suggestions even when they are contrary to what the Decision Review Board and Work Group have proposed
- Avoids conflict;
- Does not do pre-read;
- Needs to be reminded regularly of previous agreements made in Decision Review Board and/or Work Group meetings
- Repeatedly fails to complete action items;

Potential reasons

- Could be extremely busy with competing priorities;
- May not share the feeling of urgency and importance;
- Does not feel qualified/confident enough to get more involved.



Character Type 2 – Ms. One-track Mind

Impact on project

- This person can reduce decision quality by biasing the effort towards their preferred alternative.

Symptoms

- Upset if we propose revisiting prior work;
- Seeks a narrow scope that does not re-open too many questions;
- Lack of willingness to have the team evaluate a broad set of alternatives
- Pushes for alternatives that are poor competition for their preferred one;
- Pushes for value metrics that favour their preferred alternative
- Systematically discredits input assessments and analysis that support competing alternatives – does not apply the same scrutiny to assessments and analysis that support their preference

Potential reasons

- Have already have spent a lot of time thinking about the problem and believe they know the answer;
- Feel their perspective is being ignored;
- Have had previous bad experience of divergent processes that have yielded alternatives that are not doable and therefore wasted effort.



Character Type 3 – Saboteur!

Impact on project

- This person can potentially derail the whole effort, so that it is stopped or delayed by a significant amount, or discredited.

Symptoms

- Withholds key information and access to experts;
- Derails meetings (rejects the agenda, side-track, side-conversations, lack of respect for others);
- Briefs against team members without their knowledge;
- Criticises the project effort after it is complete but does not offer feedback in a timely manner where it can be actioned;
- Avoids being seen as part of the team;
- Seeks to shine in front of senior people by being highly critical.

Potential reasons

- Doesn't like external interference;
- Low level of trust in others to make quality decisions;
- Own personal agenda;
- Self-advancement in the eyes of senior management.



The chosen intervention should match the underlying reason for the poor behaviour.

Mr.
Disengaged

- Seek a one-on-one meeting to understand whether we can get his input more efficiently – overcome a busy schedule
- Seek clarity from leadership on the priority of this project vs. other activities
- Provide the person with an active role in the project to ensure they have something at stake
- Make sure to ask this person’s opinion in key meetings so that they can’t “get away” with not thinking about the issues

Ms. One-track Mind

- Make sure their view point is clearly heard, documented and represented.
- When they are satisfied that this is the case, engage with them to develop alternatives that they can feel responsible for.
- Encourage them to put themselves in the shoes of “champions” of other alternatives
- Point out that even if their alternative is chosen it will have more organisational commitment if other paths have been fully explored

Saboteur!

- Be sure to ask for feedback publicly in key meetings and document what they say so that it is harder for them to raise “surprise” criticism later
- Seek alternative channels for information
- If the person is genuinely trying to derail the project then a high-level senior intervention is required

