

## 5.4: Putting It Together- Decision Making



Let's apply what you've learned in this module to the scenario that we considered at the beginning. As you will recall, you were assigned to lead a team to come up with a new data management system for the human resources department. You started by following the steps in the rational decision-making model.

1. **Identify the Problem:** The current data management system of spreadsheets is ineffective.
2. **Establish Decision Criteria:** Key criteria were established in the first meeting related to areas such as what systems need to be run, how many employees it must handle, compatibility issues, and financial considerations.
3. **Weigh Decision Criteria:** With some guidance, the team was able to settle on which criteria were truly the most important.
4. **Generate Alternatives:** Only two alternatives were presented by the team: stay with the current system or use a firm run by the boss's daughter.
5. **Evaluate Alternatives:** The process essentially stalled here because of the results of Step 4.
6. **Select the Best Alternative:** Not completed yet.

The process was going well until the group came to Step 4 and only generated two alternatives: staying with the current, inadequate system or employing a vendor that also happens to be the boss's daughter. You realize that these aren't enough viable alternatives to generate an ideal solution, but what are you going to do now?

As you will recall from this module, there are many benefits associated with group decision making, but there are times when facilitation is required to realize these benefits. There are options you might select to improve the quality and quantity of alternatives generated. In order to reach a robust decision, you decide to employ two techniques that you've learned.

### Brainstorming

You want the group to generate significantly more alternatives for consideration, so you decide to facilitate a brainstorming session. You follow the nominal group technique, which employs the following process:

1. Everyone independently comes up with alternatives to the current data management system.
2. You go around the group and each member presents one alternative.
3. Group members discuss each of the alternatives, but only after they have all been presented.
4. Finally, each person rank orders the alternatives. The ideas with the highest aggregate ranking move to your next step.

### Devil's Advocacy

As a second step, you take the ideas with the highest aggregate ranking from the brainstorming session and subject them to the devil's advocacy method. Rotating members of the group are selected to be the critic for the alternatives that made it through the brainstorming round. You choose this method to ensure that groupthink hasn't settled into the decision-making process.

The end result of this process is that numerous alternatives were suggested and evaluated. Ultimately, you were able to present a solution to your boss that was well thought-out and has the support of the rest of the team.

It bears repeating that this scenario represents the types of challenges you may face and decisions you may have to make in a management role. This module has equipped you with the processes and tools that can help you make the right call when faced with tough decisions.

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