

Strategic Decision-making Suite.

Dynamic Decision

Making: How

to Beat the

Tortoise.

By Performance Frontiers



The Challenge We Face

There's a belief deeply embedded in human behaviour that tells us quick decisions are reckless, while slow decisions tap into a greater wisdom and therefore result in better outcomes. There's even a fable that reinforces it. Slow and steady gets the tortoise over the line before the speedy hare.

But how do those rules of engagement serve us in our current dynamic work environments? We are so often time poor and under pressure to make fast choices. If we couple this with a proven action bias¹, our predilection for haste can become a bit of a hamster wheel. Our adrenalin spikes and we're off and racing, sometimes without the information we need to exercise good judgement.²

Yet, if we allow ourselves the space to get in front of our decision-making process by undertaking some reflection, we have the opportunity to improve our ability to strategically prioritise on the run.

Tips to beat the tortoise

1 Know Purpose implicitly

At the core of any type of prioritisation is the need to align with our Core Purpose. We can use this as a guiding light or touchstone for decision making.

2 Be constantly curious

Asking curious questions is the best short cut to knowing what we need to know to make good calls. As the poet Rumi said, "sell your cleverness and buy bewilderment". By listening intently to what we hear, we assimilate more information and recognise patterns and connections others will miss.

3 Define 'good enough'

Perfectionism is a shortcut to decision making anxiety and paralysis. Instead, we can give ourselves permission to make good enough decisions at pace, and be clear about what "good enough" looks like. For example: you may seek available information and input from key stakeholders, allow time to debate a course for action, and act on what you can, while mitigating risk by taking an adaptive approach, adjusting route as you receive feedback. It's crucially important to know which decisions are reversible and amendable, and which are not.⁴

4 Work to the Second and Third Order

Elite sports people and chess players are often credited with seeing several moves ahead in their game. This apparent prescience is actually the practice of being able to see the "consequence of the consequence" of an action. Regular second and third order reflection can prime us for knowing where our choices might lead.

5 Recognise personal biases

The power of intuition or the "gut response" can be soured by our own personal biases. If we see and call ourselves on our biases ahead of time, we can exercise the detachment necessary to make smarter choices in the moment.

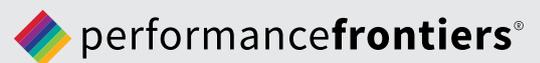
6 Know the weight of our priorities

If we are working with multiple priorities, one may interfere with or undercut another. For example, how do we give great customer service and maintain time efficiency? Understanding which takes precedence is crucial, so we should strive to give or gain clarity.

Every day, we make tens of thousands of small but quick decisions without even realising it. Our decision-making muscle is already well developed. With just a bit of extra pre-work, we can prepare ourselves to better handle the daily work sprint. And it's always helpful to remember, there is just as much learning to be had from occasionally getting things wrong. Ask the hare.

References

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