



## The Decision Maker

Unlock the Potential of Everyone in Your Organization, One Decision at a Time

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

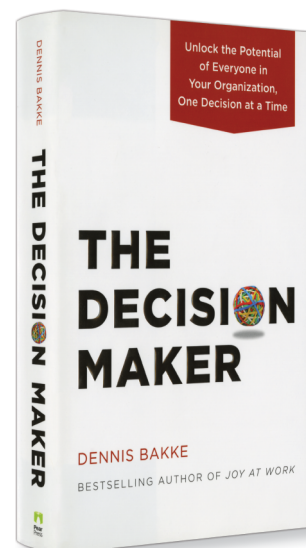
Who makes the important decisions in your organization? Strategy, product development, budgeting, compensation — such key decisions are typically made by company leaders. That's what bosses are for, right? But maybe the boss isn't the best person to make the call.

*The Decision Maker*, a leadership fable loosely based on bestselling author Dennis Bakke's experience, shows us how giving decisions to the people closest to the action can transform any organization. As a student at Harvard Business School, Bakke made hundreds of decisions using the case-study method and realized two things: decision-making is the best way to develop people, and that shouldn't stop at business school. So Bakke spread decision-making throughout his organizations and has given thousands of people the freedom and responsibility to make decisions that matter. He used it to build AES into a Fortune 200 global power company with 27,000 people in 27 countries and to create Imagine Schools, one of the largest non-profit charter school networks in the U.S.

When leaders put real control into the hands of their people, they tap incalculable potential. *The Decision Maker*, destined to be a business classic, holds the key to unlocking the potential of every person in your organization. The idea is simple. The results are powerful.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why bosses aren't always the best people to make every decision.
- Key assumptions underlying a decision-making organization.
- How to create a decision-making culture in your organization.



by Dennis Bakke

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: THE DECISION MAKER

by Dennis Bakke

**The author:** Dennis Bakke is the co-founder of Imagine Schools. He is the author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Joy at Work: A Revolutionary Approach to Fun on the Job*. Bakke previously co-founded and served as the president and CEO of AES, a Fortune 200 global power company.

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## Introduction

Nothing tells you more about an organization than the way it makes decisions. Do leaders trust team members? Do the people closest to the action get to make the call? Do team members have real responsibility and real control? All of these questions can be answered by one other one: who gets to make the decisions?

Nothing affects an organization more than the decisions the people in it make.

Decision-making is at the heart of all business education. Nearly a hundred years after the case-study method was invented at Harvard, it's still the foundation of the world's best business programs. Why? Because the case-study method puts top business students in the role of decision-maker. Decision-making is simply the best way in the world to develop people. And real life decisions are more important — and more fun — than any case study.

But outside of business school, few business leaders tap into the value created by putting important decisions in the hands of their people. Instead, “team players” are taught to do what they're told. This robs people of the chance to contribute in a meaningful way. Or, organizations will use a participatory style of decision-making in which recommendations are given to the boss, who then makes the final decision. These approaches fail to fully realize the value of the people in the organization.

In a decision-maker company,

- the leader chooses someone to make a key decision;
- the decision-maker seeks advice (including from the leader) to gather information;
- the final decision is made not by the leader, but by the chosen decision-maker.

The idea is simple: treat people like people, not machines. When leaders put control into the hands of their people, at all levels, they unlock incalculable potential.

*The Decision Maker* is a fable that shows how the ideas that transformed AES and Imagine Schools can transform any organization. The events are fiction, but the passion, purpose, moral questions and common sense are rooted in decades of the author's experience. These ideas can affect the bottom line, but it's not just about the numbers. It's about people: what makes them tick and what they can achieve when they're given real responsibility and real freedom.

All of us can make good decisions. This story is not just for people who currently lead organizations. It's for managers at any level who want to unlock the full potential of the people around them. No matter where you stand in your organization, change can start with you. ●

## Bosses Are Less Informed Than People Closer to the Action

Tom Anderson could see the smoke rising from the manufacturing floor long before he reached the site of the explosion. When he arrived, the machine wasn't just broken. It seemed to have been obliterated.

His partner, Jim Travers, was there already. “This one's a total loss.”

Columns of numbers began to run through Tom's head. He and Jim had taken over the medical device company only two weeks ago. They'd sunk everything they had into it. Their business plan was aggressive but lean. Tom knew it couldn't withstand a shutdown for long.



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“Are you kidding? Where was he?” Tom said, referring to Anton, the worker supervising the machine.

“Doing what he was told,” Jim said. “He caught the indicators right away. He knew something was wrong. So he went to get his shift supervisor.”

“He didn’t know how to shut it down on his own?” Tom asked.

“Oh no,” Jim said. “He probably knew better than anyone in the plant. He does it at the end of every shift. But he wasn’t authorized. Only the manager could shut it down mid-shift.”

Tom glanced around at the clusters of workers in the aisles. One man glanced back at him and then quickly averted his eyes, as if he was worried any contact with the boss might lead to trouble. Tom recognized the look.

As Tom followed Jim away from the broken machine, it wasn’t the machine that stayed stuck in his mind. It was the faces of their people. They knew how to get a machine into good working order, but people weren’t machines. They were a lot more complicated, and they didn’t come with a simple handbook.

What about them? he wondered.

### The Big Game

“Paid breaks,” Tom said, listing the advantages of life at MedTec to his wife over the squeak of sneakers and slap of the basketball on the court where his son Jason played below.

Out on the court, the game had been hard fought. Now the score was tied. In the last scramble for a shot, one of the players on the opposing team fouled as the clock ran out. Jason was handed the ball and stepped to the free-throw line.

Everyone watched Jason anxiously — the coaches, the refs, his team members. When Tom looked at Jason’s face, though, it was concentrated and confident. Jason was totally focused, in a world of his own. He looked, Tom realized, like the happiest guy in the place.

The ball arched through the air and dropped through the net with a barely audible swish. A roar of victory thundered through the court.

As they headed to the parking lot, Tom still couldn’t get the look he’d seen on Jason’s face out of his head. It should have been a hard spot to be in: serious pressure, with serious consequences. So why had Jason looked so happy?

The answer struck him as he opened the car door. Jason had been happy because he had the ball. For that one moment, he was the only person in the gymnasium who had control over what was about to happen.

“It’s fun to have the ball at the crucial moment,” Tom said to his wife. “And that doesn’t happen for our people at MedTec. That’s why Anton couldn’t shut off the machine before it blew. Because we didn’t let him have the ball. We need to let our people make decisions about the things that really affect them. They’re the ones on the line. They’re the ones who understand the research and the manufacturing. They know best, not us. We need to free their hands so they’re able to make the shots that count, when they matter most.”

Tom thought about it more. “We’re the coaches, but we’ve been trying to play the game, too. You don’t see the coaches dribbling up and down the basketball court. That’s not what they’re supposed to do. They choose the players to send in. And then they stand back and let the players play the game. You can’t tell a player what to do every single play. It’d ruin the game.”

### That’s Your Decision

“This isn’t exactly a new pinball machine for the employee lounge,” Jim said, looking up at Tom from behind his desk. His expression was clearly skeptical.

“Exactly,” Tom said. “It’s a whole new way of doing things.”

“Right,” Jim said, with the tone of forbearance he used when he was waiting for Tom to come back to earth again from one of his visionary flights. “But there’s a reason not everyone in a company makes the big decisions. Not everyone has been trained and has the experience.”

“They don’t have it because we never give it to them,” Tom countered.

“Look,” Jim said. “Say this was the best idea in the world. We’re still easing into our leadership roles here. We’ve got a fiduciary responsibility to our investors, and they signed on for MedTec as it stands, not for some grand experiment in changing the face of the way we do business. I don’t think this is the time for a big change. Especially not one that could have a negative effect on profit.”

“But these problems are costing us *now*,” Tom insisted. “We’re not going to hit the first-quarter numbers we could have because Anton wasn’t allowed to make the decision to turn off his machine. This is good business sense.”

Tom continued, “Money isn’t the best motivator. People want all kinds of things money can’t buy. They want time with their family. They want to enjoy what they do. They want to feel like they’re part of something meaningful. They don’t just want to get paid. They want to live a good life. And when we tap into that, we release all kinds of

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productivity and efficiency — because our people care about what they're doing, and they're working for something they really want."

"It's just like a basketball game. A coach can't play all the positions at one time. He can't even tell each player how to play the game. He coaches the players and chooses who to send in. But he can't play the game for them."

Jim sighed and lifted his hands from the desk in a "you got me" gesture. "I'll tell you what. You go ahead and try this new idea. That's your job. I'll watch the bottom line. That's mine. And if what you do in your job starts to affect mine, we'll need to have another conversation."

"But you're willing to try," Tom prompted. "That's your decision."

"That's my decision," Jim said.

### Basic Assumptions

About two hundred people gathered in the MedTec lounge for an all-company meeting. Tom and Jim had met with a handful of managers and team leaders to discuss Tom's ideas before rolling them out to the company.

"What are the basic assumptions of the modern workplace?" Tom asked the group. "We've got a lot of rules, because we assume people can't think on their own. We've got managers and consequences to keep us in line, because we assume people are going to break the rules we give them. We aren't supposed to color outside the lines. We're always supposed to ask for permission. We take grown people, and we treat them like kids. Not even good kids. Like kids we're pretty sure can't be trusted."

"What that means," he went on, "is that the bosses end up with all the decisions. It can be a lot of fun to be the guy who's got the ball on the line for a game-winning free throw. Not because there's no pressure or consequences. But because the decision is yours."

"We don't want you to be cogs in a big machine. We want you to have a say in what happens around here. Especially in your own areas and about your own jobs. Because you're the expert there. We aren't. Your boss isn't. We want to put you in a position to use your abilities. We want to put you in the game."

The applause as Tom stepped away from the podium wasn't exactly a standing ovation, but it was a shade less tepid than he'd heard in other business settings. His management team, on the other hand, looked even less enthusiastic now than when he started talking. ●

## The People Closest to the Decision Know the Most and Feel the Most Ownership

"Ben," Tom said. "Great to see you. Please have a seat." Ben, a stocky, silver-haired man, was the area manager who oversaw the manufacturing shop, as well as Anton and the ill-fated machine.

"I thought it'd be good to talk," Ben said, "about some of these new ideas you're rolling out."

"I've got to tell you, sometimes there's an ugly ditch between what you'd like to see happen and what does. I'm not really sure the people we've got here in manufacturing are cut out for this kind of thinking," Ben said. "People who take these line jobs lead a bit more of a punch-the-clock life. These guys on the floor, they just want to get the job done and go home. These aren't the college-educated guys you've got over in research. These are line workers."

"I understand that," Tom said. "But it doesn't matter whether you have a degree or not. Nobody knows more about how to do your job than you do. And they've got years of experience actually doing the work."

"But what if they make a bad decision?" Ben objected.

"Have you ever made a bad decision?" Tom asked.

Ben studied Tom's face. "Everybody has," he said, his tone slightly defensive.

"I have too," Tom said. "Probably more bad ones than you have. Just because you've got 'manager' somewhere in your title doesn't mean you're immune from making bad decisions. And not being a manager doesn't mean you can't make good ones. Let's give someone else a chance to make decisions, too."

### Watch the Numbers

"They look good," Tom said.

Jim sat in one of the chairs across from Tom's desk, gazing down at a copy of the monthly report.

Tom explained sales were up a significant amount because the sales people no longer needed an approval from a manager, which could take hours for review, giving customers time to cool down, renegotiate or change their minds.

"We've also got a slight dip in personal expenses on the sales team too," Tom said. "They took the limits off the expense accounts and told each salesperson how much had been allotted to them in this year's budget for expenses. And that if anything was left over, they could spend it at their own discretion to build the business."

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“Interesting,” Jim said.

“Hey,” Tom said. “What’s wrong? These numbers look good. Better than we expected.”

“I know they’re good,” Jim said. “It just doesn’t feel good. I used to know that you were on top of things. You had it all under control. You spent your time looking at the big picture. And now you’re spending all your time giving these decisions to someone else. I guess I’m just not convinced they’re going to be making the same caliber of decisions you would. I know the numbers look good this month. But I wonder what they’re going to look like down the road, long term.”

“I can’t tell you what’s going to happen down the road,” said Tom. “Nobody can. But I’m sure we’re going in the right direction. And the numbers are good this month. I don’t know what else we could ask.”

“I trust you,” Jim said. “But I trust the numbers most of all. And if they start to turn south, I don’t know if I can let this go on.”

“That’s fair,” Tom said.

### Advice

Off to the side of Tom’s desk was the whiteboard where he’d been working out decision-making ideas over the past few months. In the upper left hand corner, he’d made a permanent list of his assumptions about their people:

- Unique
- Creative
- Trustworthy
- Capable of Learning
- Responsible
- Like a Challenge
- Desire to Contribute

“I think I’ve got another one for you,” Jim said. At the bottom of the list he scrawled: *Fallible*.

Later, Tom added *fallible* to the bottom of the list he’d just scrawled on the whiteboard in the company lounge. When he turned back, the entire staff, assembled again, stared back at him, some with interest, some with familiar blank stares.

“We believe all these things are true,” Tom said, pointing to the words he’d listed above it: Unique, Creative...Desire to Contribute. His finger stopped again at *fallible*.

“But we also have to face the fact that we all make mistakes. Me just as much as you. The most experienced person in the world can’t make good decisions if they don’t have the information they need. So we’re going to add another piece.”

*Advice*, he wrote on the board. “It’s pretty simple. When you’ve got a decision to make, you get advice about it.

From here on out, we want you to consider this part of your job. Not every decision has to be perfect. But absolutely every decision-maker needs to seek advice. To us, that’s even more important than getting it right every single time. But I think we’ll get it right a lot more often with this process than we would without it.”

### The Big Picture

Helen Harris, one of the savviest private-equity investors in their field, had financed a large part of MedTec when Tom and Jim took it over. Now, she swept into the room, her skepticism unmistakable. Learning about the company’s plan to bring transparency to MedTec’s finances, she demanded an immediate sit-down with Tom and Jim.

“And how has that gone so far?” Helen asked, with a slightly sardonic air. “Letting the teams set their own budgets?”

“Well,” said Angela, the company’s director of human resources, “in the short term, it’s cut costs. I’d expected to see some efficiencies, but not this many.”

“I would have expected that we would already be seeking efficiency in our budgeting,” Helen said, with a meaningful glance at Jim.

Jim shifted in his chair. “Of course,” he said. “But the reality is that the budget is created by hundreds of decisions at every level of the company. Until now, only owners and executives got to see the big picture. And benefit from any profit. Nobody else was able to see how their spending affects the rest of the company. And they didn’t have much incentive to curb it, because we hadn’t had a system of profit sharing or bonuses.”

Angela said, “Coupled with the transparency, it’s been powerful. It’s not that we’d negotiated bad deals with our suppliers. But when we gave our people responsibility for their own budgets, we saw them go back and negotiate even better deals. Now they’re using only what they really need. In some categories, spending has dropped drastically.”

After reviewing more financial information, Helen said, “I can tell you one thing. I’ve been in business for 32 years, and I’ve never seen this degree of upheaval in a company before. You’ve taken on a lot all at once. New owners. New leadership style. I agree that you’ve got a handful of nice stories. I’m just not convinced you’ve got a healthy business.”

“Well, I can tell you what we’re seeing,” Tom broke in. “When we started giving decisions to our people, they started making better ones, and faster ones, everywhere in the company. Costs have dropped. Sales are up. We’re seeing fewer accidents, and less waste. And we’re seeing

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higher productivity on the manufacture of our original products, even as we're ramping up the new ones."

Jim took a deep breath. "I know it sounds crazy," he said to Helen. "Because it sounded just as crazy to me. But I'm actually glad you came in today. This is still a good business. You can see it right there in the numbers you've got on the page. But there's something going on here that you can't see from the numbers, no matter how good they are. There's something special about this company. We're doing something that matters here. It's a place people want to be."

"I make it a practice to trust my leadership," Helen said. "And I do trust you two. That's why I invested in Med-Tec. Because of you — not the company or the product. But I'm going to keep an even closer eye on things than I have been."

At the door, she turned and looked back. "And if I have to get involved," she said, "I don't think you'll like it." ●

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### People Are Often Treated Like Machines, Not Human Beings

"Hey," Tom said. "What's going on?"

Vanessa Dominguez, Tom's administrative assistant, crossed to the chairs opposite his desk and sat down. "I'm working on the section about manufacturing standards for the new product," she said, and stopped.

"Yes?" he said. "Is something wrong?"

"It's the advice process," Vanessa said. "As far as I can tell, there wasn't one."

That wasn't great, Tom reflected. But it wasn't a disaster by any stretch of the imagination. "Who was the decision-maker?" he asked.

"Ben Malkmus," Vanessa answered.

"Okay," Tom said, and frowned. It might not be a big deal but he wasn't looking forward to confronting Ben about the problem. They hadn't ever had a manager of Ben's stature totally ignore the advice process.

Tom forced a smile. "I'm glad you brought this to me," he said.

"So what do we do?" she asked.

Tom met her inquiring gaze. "I don't know," he said. "Yet."

### Their Own Ideas

Tom found Ben on the manufacturing floor, deep in conversation with one of the line workers.

"Tom," he said. "Good to see you. What brings you down to manufacturing? You looking for a tour of the new tooling we're putting in place? We're running two weeks ahead as we speak."

"That's great," Tom said. "So tell me, what was it like to use the advice process to roll out the new product? What kind of input did you get?"

Ben's eyes suddenly became wary. "Ah, you know. Everyone has their own ideas."

Tom nodded. "Like what?" he pressed.

Ben's mouth pressed even tighter, and the color began to rise in his face. He glared down the line.

"You want the truth? I'm an expert in manufacturing. I've been working in it all my life. Nobody knows this shop better than I do. I didn't need anyone's advice. No offense to you and Jim, but you haven't even been here a year. What were you going to tell me that I don't already know?" Ben asked.

"So what you're telling me," Tom said, "is that you set the manufacturing standards for the new product without consulting anyone else?"

"I could have gone out and asked some questions, sure. But what would the point of that be?" Ben asked.

Tom's blood was boiling, but he managed to keep his voice even when he finally did speak. "The advice process isn't optional in this company. It's not just about the bottom line. It's not even just about the right decision. It's about the right way to do business."

"If your decision is as good as you think, the advice process will only bear you out. You're ahead of schedule, right? So it'll give you something to do with all the extra time. We'll work through it together, you and me. And once we've run the advice process, we'll need to talk about the fact that you ignored it."

"And then what?" Ben demanded, his voice rising in alarm.

"And then we'll make any decisions we need to about that, too," Tom said, and walked away.

### Is That Your Decision?

"Wait," Jim said, "isn't this supposed to be one of the decisions we get to make?"

Angela glanced at Tom. He and Jim had just sat down in her office to get her advice on the situation with Ben.

"I'm afraid it's not quite that simple," Angela said. "One of the decisions we made is that decisions about hiring and firing should get made by individuals on teams," she said. "They're in the best position to know who they need and to identify hires who are a good fit with the team culture. Individuals on teams have held those decisions for the better part of a year. And it's working: turnover, especially for new hires, is way down."

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“Here’s an idea,” Tom said. “It leaves the decision in the hands of the team. And it takes into account the fact that Ben’s the team leader. Make Ben the decision-maker.”

Angela and Jim started at him.

“Have him go through the advice process,” Tom went on. “Be the one who gets the feedback from his team on what he did and what kind of leader he’s been.”

“You really think that would work?” Jim asked.

“I think it could work,” Tom said. “If we walk through it with him.”

A few days later, Ben settled heavily into the chair behind his desk as Tom took the seat across from him. Much of Ben’s confidence and bluster were gone, but he looked strangely calm.

Over the past few days, Ben and Tom had worked their way across the whole manufacturing floor, asking questions about Ben’s leadership: what it was like, how it had affected the people and the company.

Nobody came right out and said that they thought he should step down, but when they described what they’d look for in a boss, their description didn’t line up with the portrait of Ben their stories drew.

“I have to tell you,” Ben said. “If I were you, I would have fired me by now.”

He stared down at the stack of papers on his desk. Then he looked up at Tom. “I don’t think I should be leading this facility,” he said.

“Is that your decision?” Tom asked.

“Look,” Ben said. “I’m a manufacturing guy. Always have been. I love it. But running this facility isn’t about working with machines. It’s about leading people. And I’ve been trying to work my people like they’re just another kind of machine.

“The thing is,” Ben said, “you need my expertise in manufacturing. But I shouldn’t be leading the floor. So here’s what I’d suggest. If you’re willing to keep me, I’d like to step back. Become the machine and logistics guru, and set up someone else to really lead our people. Someone who can do it better than I have.”

He met Tom’s gaze. “That’s if you’re willing to give me another chance,” he said.

“That’s your call,” Tom said. “It’s your decision.”

### **This Place Is Special**

All of MedTec’s people, along with their family and friends, sprawled across the sunny lawns that surrounded the MedTec building, where a tent and barbecue pit had been set up for a company picnic.

As Tom was speaking with Vanessa, Anton came up beside them, hand in hand with a pretty woman in a blue dress. “Sorry to interrupt,” he said.

“But his wife insisted he introduce her to the boss,” the woman said, sticking out her hand. “I’m Ava. So nice to meet you.”

“I’ve heard nothing but good things about your husband,” Tom’s wife Sophia told Ava. “He’s the hero of a lot of stories Tom tells.”

“Well, that’s why I came over,” Ava said. “I love my husband, and I always used to say, I’m lucky there are a lot of things to love about him, because try as I might, I could never get him to change. But let me tell you, now it’s like living with a different man.”

Anton gave her a wry smile. “Was I really that bad?”

“He’s a smart man. Full of ideas,” Ava went on. “Every night he’d come home and tell me about them. And I’d say ‘Why don’t you go in and tell your boss some of those ideas?’ And he’d just say, ‘No, no. they won’t listen.’ Until you and Jim started listening to him.”

“I just wish we’d done it a lot sooner,” Tom said.

Helen Harris stood a few steps away, waiting patiently.

“Helen,” Tom said, shaking her hand. “Thanks so much for coming. And — for everything.”

Helen nodded. “I wouldn’t miss it,” she said. “And I actually came over here to thank *you*. I know we’ve had our differences this year.”

“But the numbers look good, don’t they?” Tom said.

“You got your first dividend check?”

“I did,” Helen said. “But I was always sure you and Jim would at least be able to come up with that. What I didn’t expect was that you’d do it by creating a business I’m proud to be a part of. I might not have shown it, but I always liked your ideas, even if I wasn’t sure they were going to work. I’ve never been so glad to be wrong.”

“I think we’ll be throwing off some really impressive numbers when the new product comes out,” Tom said.

“Yes,” said Helen. “But that’s not what’s most impressive to me. I’ve never seen people this engaged or happy at a company before. And I’m glad you fought me for it.”

Sitting down to lunch, Jim looked around the gathered crowd. “I’ve never been a part of anything like this,” he said. “A company where people get treated like people. Not just the execs and the creative types. The guys on the line, and all the way up.”

He met Tom’s eyes.

“It’s not just about the money for me,” he said. “It never has been. I watch our bottom line because I believe in

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what we're creating here, and I don't want to see it end. But doing something that matters. Creating a company where people know they're a part of something important. Treating them like people, not machines. Giving them a chance to contribute and learn. Seeing how they want to come in every day. Knowing that they're actually happy here — at work. That matters to me.”

“That's the reason we went into business,” said Tom.

“That's the bottom line,” said Jim. ●

## The Decision-Maker Process

*The Decision Maker* tells the story of a fictional company, but the principles were forged and tested in the real world.

Here is a summary of the basic assumptions of a decision-maker culture, what to look for in a decision-maker, and how the advice process works.

- In a decision-maker organization, the leader leads by choosing a decision-maker.
- The decision-maker must ask for advice.
- The advice process brings multiple perspectives together to guide a successful outcome.
- But the decision-maker makes the final call — and takes responsibility for it.

### Choosing the Decision-Maker

The leader leads by choosing a decision-maker.

**Proximity.** Who's close to the issue? Are they well acquainted with the context, the day-to-day details and the big picture?

**Perspective.** Proximity matters, but so does perspective. Sometimes an outside perspective can be just as valuable.

**Experience.** Has this person had experience in making similar decisions? What were the consequences of those decisions?

**Wisdom.** What kinds of decisions has this person made in other areas? Were they good ones? Do you have confidence in this person?

### The Advice Process

In a decision-maker culture, the decision-maker makes the final call but must ask for advice. Deciding who to get advice from can influence a successful outcome.

Get advice from people who have

**Experience.** Has this person had experience with this problem? There's no teacher like experience.

**Position.** People in different positions see different things. The decision-maker asks a leader, a peer, someone

below them in the hierarchy — and even, if circumstances warrant, experts from outside the company.

**Responsibility.** Decisions have consequences — and decision-makers should be held accountable for theirs. At the same time, nobody is right all the time. The most important part of any decision is that the decision-maker fully engages with the advice process, not just that he or she gets it “right.”

**Ownership.** When people are asked for advice, they start to feel ownership. Ideally, everyone who offers advice works for the success of the project as if it were their own. The advice process isn't just about getting the right answer. It's about building a strong team and creating a process of communication that will improve all decisions in a company.

### Benefits of the Advice Process

**Everyone Becomes More Engaged.** People feel more ownership when their advice is sought.

**On-the-job Education.** No training can match real-time experience.

**Better Decisions.** When decisions involve more people who are fully engaged, an organization has a higher chance of a good outcome than it does with a conventional top-down approach.

### Accountability

After the decision is made, the decision-maker follows through by communicating and measuring the results of the decision.

The principals are simple. Some might even say common sense. But building your business on these assumptions, using simple but powerful techniques, can transform a business — and people's lives. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Decision Maker* you'll also like:

1. **The Fearless Front Line** by Ray Attiyah. This is a call to action for leaders to set a standard of fearlessness, where their frontline workers take pride in and take ownership of their critical roles.
2. **Accountability** by Greg Bustin. Bustin has developed a set of leadership tools that will increase accountability and drive success for any type of organization.
3. **Engaged!** by Gregg Lederman. Lederman demonstrates how to communicate expectations for living the brand, measure to establish visibility and accountability, and ultimately create customers for life.