UNIT-3

Developing a Response Process

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Determine how to manage incidents

Unit 3

Developing a Response Process

Pre-Assignment Review

Please review the following examples of actual incidents, and be ready to discuss them in your upcoming course.

What really qualifies as a crisis? How is it that the things we do on an everyday, routine basis can suddenly go off the rails? Let's look at some examples.

Burst Water Pipe

Work was proceeding along smoothly at Regional Health Associates when the pipes burst one day in the basement. For most of the staff in the building, there was no real issue when the power was shut off and their computers and phones went down. They wondered about the origin of the power outage but didn't consider it a major issue. Then, someone realized that if the power was down in the building, all seven tele-health operators were also impacted. These operators are nurses who work in a contact center environment and respond when vulnerable people (such as seniors and people with disabilities who live independently or in assisted living) push the button they wear because of an emergency. With the power out, and the backup generator also located in the watery basement, clients are at risk.

Call Center

Dave works as a call center agent in a busy office. There are very strict rules about being at work during scheduled times, but as a widow with a seven year old child, Dave finds it hard to be a Dad and to be at work. He is treading water as it is because he has had to stay home when his daughter is ill, or tries to trade shifts when she has events going on at school. This morning, not long after he settled in to work, he gets a call from the school. The school administrator says that bus has been taken off the road following a surprise inspection and he will have to pick his daughter up at 3:00 p.m. His daycare refuses to pick children up from school, and he is scheduled to work until 5:00p.m.

Pepsi

In the early 1990's, the Pepsi corporation received reports of product sabotage, with claims that syringes were found in cans of diet Pepsi. The company asked for customer's patience while an investigation got underway, and through doing so, collected video evidence of two individuals tampering with products.

Test Your Knowledge

Are these incidents a crisis?

Who is affected (company, individual, clients, stakeholders, etc.)?

What could be done to lessen the effect of any of these scenarios?

Crisis Response Process

Step One: Ensure Safety

The first thing to concern ourselves with in the case of a crisis is **personal safety**. Once the employee(s) is/are safe, then we look to the safety of everyone else in the area. This is necessary in incidents such as a flood, building collapse, or gas explosion. If any of the company property has been compromised, then we should also set up an emergency command center.

Appropriate alarms, notifications to police or emergency services, and security measures are then next to happen. (All of these steps should be explained in the organization's emergency response plan, and will be tailored to the specifics of the business.)

Step Two: Perform Basic Crisis Management Steps

Human resources, security personnel, or management should then take the following steps. (The proper person to perform these steps should also be outlined in the organization's crisis management plan.)

1. Call police and/or emergency response support.
2. Secure work area where incident occurred.
3. Preserve the scene's integrity while ensuring the safety of workers.
4. Ensure that no area is left short-staffed and that employees remain in groups.

5. Assess the scene for safety hazards (such as broken glass, weapons, flooding, exposed electrical wiring, etc.).
6. Quickly debrief affected workers, including victims and witnesses. These conversations must be kept confidential.

Once the scene is secured and workers are safe, management needs to decide if the incident warrants triggering the crisis response process.

Step Three: Trigger the Crisis Response Process (If Appropriate)

If the process is triggered, then the crisis management team must gather the following information:

- Description of the crisis, threat, or threatening behavior
- Determine immediate action (call police) versus prompt action (team review)
- Determine if threat is general (directed towards company) or specific (directed to a building or person)
- Determine who was involved in the crisis, including observers and witnesses
- Determine if team or manager has any knowledge of warning signs and what those signs were
- Determine level of distress by persons involved in the crisis
- Determine if threat requires immediate security or police presence or removal of employees from environment
- Determine availability of external consultants and contact as needed

Test Your Knowledge

Add your own information items here.

_____

_____

_____

_____

We recommend setting up an emergency operations center in a safe location and recording all information on a white board or flip chart in an organized manner.

Remember: Stay Flexible!

Obviously the shape this process will take depends on the crisis. If an asteroid flies into your building, there's no time for the assessment team to sit down and decide what to do. In this case, the incident has taken place and it simply makes sense for the crisis response plan to be activated immediately.

However, let's say that one of your employees receives a letter stating that the bank will be bombed tomorrow. In this case, the risk assessment team would have time to have a meeting, perform basic fact-finding as described above, and implement the bomb threat plan or determine a course of action.

Consulting with the Experts

Is there value for your company in involving external consultants? Sometimes a company will not have the budget and you are going to have to do your best without external assistance. However, keep in mind that some issues are better resolved and managed this way. In the case of a crisis that impacts an entire community (like a flood or riot, for example), you'll need to know that your plan for an offsite emergency command center is not also the plan for the company next door to you.

One member of the threat assessment team should be appointed spokesperson or liaison to outside resources. They should have a summarized report prepared that outlines the facts in order to effectively share what's going on with the consultants.

In order for consultants to provide the best information, you should ensure that the facts are correct and precise, and that only facts are shared rather than clouding the issue with impressions, judgments, or opinions.

Test Your Knowledge

Is there value for your company in using an external consultant?

What could a consultant help you with?

If you cannot access a consultant, what issues do you need to prepare for?

Incident Management Techniques

Responding to Incidents
We suggest the following steps:

T	Take control of the situation.
A	Assess safety hazards.
K	Keep yourself safe. This includes stopping any machinery and removing yourself from dangerous elements (such as live power wires).
E	Ensure others are safe. Make sure that they stop what they are doing and remove themselves from a dangerous environment.

C	Call 911 (or your local emergency number) and summon help from within the organization.
H	Help any victims if you are trained and if it is safe to do so. Move victims as little as possible as it could aggravate their injuries.
A	Activate crisis management plans if appropriate.
R	Reassess the scene for new safety hazards, including bystanders.
G	Get control of the scene. Make sure evidence is not disturbed.
E	Extract yourself. Turn things over to the proper authorities (such as emergency response personnel or management).

Documenting Incidents

Incident Related Documentation

The documents that you will be legally required to have in the event of a crisis will differ depending on where your business is and what the crisis is. However, the following information should be gathered immediately after an accident.

- Type of incident
- Date, time, and location of incident
- Employee's personal information (name, address, telephone number)
- Employee's work related information (employee number, position, status)
- People on duty (and those who were outside in this case) at time of incident and where they were
- Emergency response personnel
- Name of hospital that employee(s) was/were taken to
- Witnesses' personal information (name, address, telephone number) and testimony

- Description of incident, including timeline of events, damage, type of accident, hazardous materials or energies involved

Other Documents

In addition to keeping a log of safety incidents, you should document all activities in your crisis management process. This includes:

- Training
- Safety manuals
- Policies
- Materials distributed to employees
- Minutes of crisis committee meetings

Make sure that you are familiar with the reporting and recordkeeping regulations in your area and that you abide by them.

Investigating Incidents

The purpose of a post-incident investigation is to determine why the incident occurred and how it can be prevented. There are many types of incident and accident investigation techniques, and most require someone with special training. This unit is designed to give you a brief overview of a simple investigation technique that you can use for minor crises. We encourage you to get certification from a specialized organization if you are going to be performing incident investigations.

Accident Investigation Kit

Your organization should have the following materials gathered together:

- Company's safety policy and investigation procedure
- Insurance information (contact information and policy numbers)
- Graph paper and blank paper to create diagrams
- Notebook
- Appropriate forms
- Pens and pencils
- Calculator
- Handheld GPS
- Camera (film and digital, both with date and time stamp)
- Extra batteries and film
- Measuring tape
- Tape recorder
- Flashlight
- Safety tape

Once you are prepared, here are the steps to take. *(This process was developed by Ronald Meyers and R. Alan Thomas as part of the Transform 180 safety program.)*

Step One: Gather Data

Make sure you identify the basic facts of the incident: who, what, when, where, and how. (The "why" will come later.) You will want to include a description of the crisis, a timeline, witness reports, photos and sketches, and physical evidence.

Step Two: Determine Probable Cause

In determining the cause, we must aim for prevention, not for blame. For example, "Employee error" is often listed as the cause for an accident. "Lack of proper training in forklift use" would be a better probable cause because it's something we can aim to resolve. There are many tools out on the market that can help you determine the root cause, including checklists and simulations.

Step Three: Identify Effective Solutions

Effective solutions have three characteristics: they must help prevent a recurrence of the incident, it must be something that you can control, and it must be in line with your organization's values.

In the example above, "Lack of proper training in forklift use" was identified as the probable cause. Retraining the affected employee is not an effective solution because it will likely not prevent a recurrence of the incident. Re-designing forklift training and re-certifying employees is a better solution; if all employees have better knowledge of how to operate the machine, the hazard is more likely to be resolved.

Step Four: Assign Responsible Parties and Reasonable Target Dates

Once you have identified the solutions, put them in action. Determine who will implement the solution, what will be done, when it needs to be completed by, how it will be evaluated, and who will monitor progress.

Step Five: Write Final Report

Your report should include all the data gathered, the probable cause, the solutions identified, and the action plan for the solutions.

Step Six: Communicate Results

The highlights of the report (what happened and what the organization plans to do about it) should be communicated to all employees. More detailed information may be appropriate for those affected by the crisis.

Step Seven: Track Solutions

The incident investigator is typically responsible for tracking solutions as they are implemented to ensure that they are implemented correctly and on time.

Step Eight: Evaluate Solutions

Monitor the workplace for recurrences of the crisis. Did the solution work at preventing occurrences of this incident? If not, you will need to re-evaluate the probable cause and effective solutions. In the fire incident we used in the case study, the threat has come from an outsider and so security needs to be seriously reviewed.

Working through the Issues

Model Overview

Not everyone who ends up with a role in managing a crisis wants the job. Taking action in a time of crisis can be intimidating as people have to manage many challenges in order to fulfill their responsibilities to the workplace.

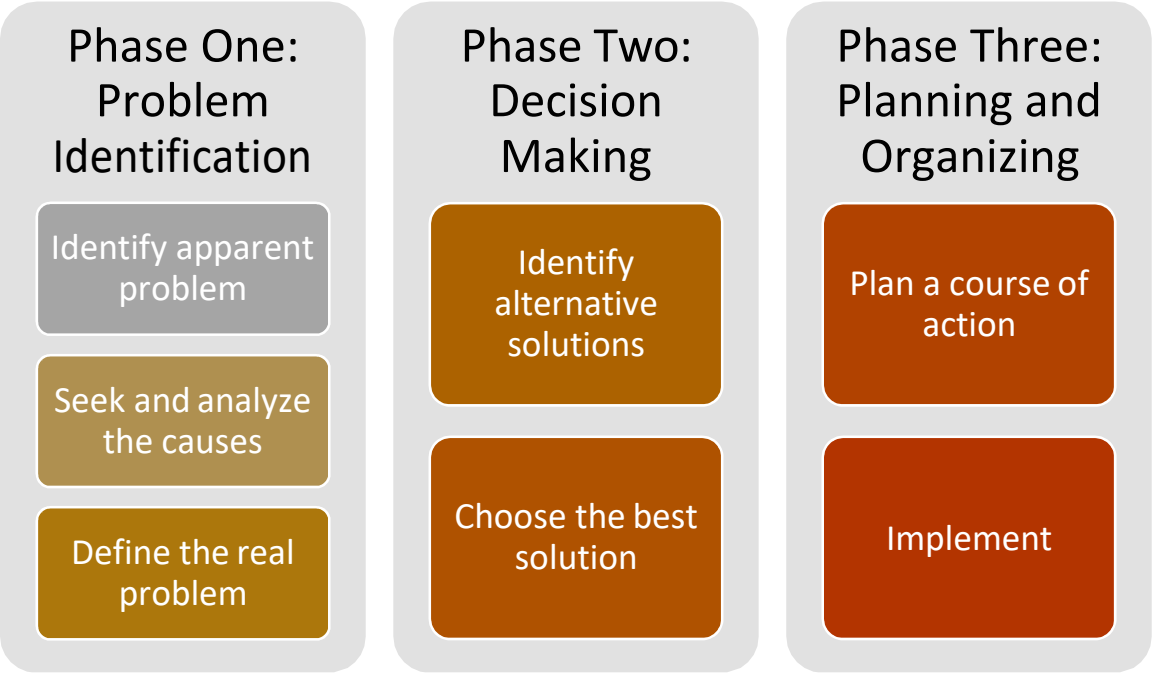
When a situation looms very large and there are competing priorities for our time, attention, and resources, it can be overwhelming for anybody. We recommend that members of the team understand how to approach issues with a problem solving process. Applying those steps will help problems to be kept in some kind of perspective and to break them into manageable pieces that are less likely to overwhelm people.

Whenever you read a book on problem solving, this model, in some form or other, is sure to be there. It may have six steps rather than seven, or it may have five steps. However, the model doesn't really change...just the authors' ways of breaking it down.

As you work your way from problem to solution, you are actually shifting your focus.

- When you define a problem, you ask yourself: What is my problem?
- As you try to analyze the root causes you ask: Why is it a problem?
- When you are generating options, you ask yourself: What are some ways I can solve my problem?

The Problem Solving Model

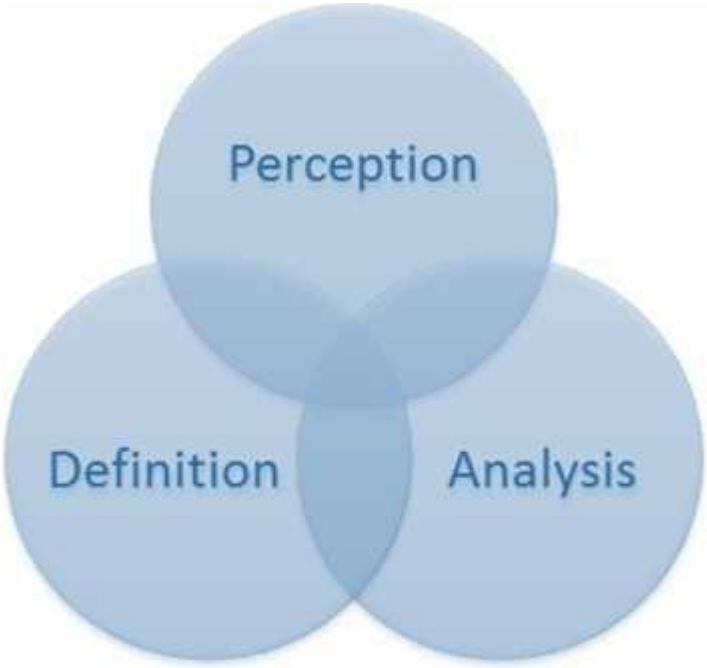


This model doesn't just work on paper: it applies across a range of problem solving activities. It is the very basis for informed and consistent problem-solving. If you are someone who loves tools, this is your basic tool.

We often don't spend enough time in defining a problem, and that in itself is a problem. Don't be in too big a rush to get the solution worked out: make sure you know what you need to know. Then, make a commitment to continually check back with the first stage to make sure the problem is the same.

Keeping an Open Mind

Part of the problem solving process is re-evaluating and evolving. This will ensure you reach the best solution possible. Consider how perception, definition, and analysis overlap:



Solving Problems the "Right" Way

Don't let people try to convince you there is one "right" or "best" way to solve problems, or to solve a particular problem. Problem-solving is all about applying educated trial and error. With so many different kinds of problems to deal with, there is no system that works in every situation. Many solutions are possible, and some are better than others.

Your skill as a problem-solver depends on your expertise with the tools and your knowledge of how to use them. You know you don't always solve problems step by step. Sometimes you have a solution before you know what problem it solves. You decide to move your bed against another wall and you find out the next morning that the sun doesn't wake you up so early.

However, for many situations, having formal steps to follow can help you create flexible, workable solutions. In crisis management, using problem solving in a formal way will help you to plan for issues before they get out of control, because you will already have a plan in place to deal with them.

Phase One

Let's take a look at the first phase of the three-phase model: Problem Identification. Here is a breakdown of each step in the problem identification process. In all three steps, your focus is on the problem itself. Only afterward will you start thinking about solutions.

Perception

You ask yourself: Is there a problem? Where is the problem? Whose problem is it? This is the sniffing, groping, grasping stage. It includes whatever you do to get a handle on the problem.

What are the symptoms? Funny noises in the engine, an unhappy look on your employee's face, or a change in the productivity rate? You've got to find out what the problem is.

The purpose of this phase is:

- To surface an issue.
- To make it okay to discuss it (legitimize).
- To air different points of view.
- To avoid perception wars.
- To get group agreement to work on the problem.

Steps in this phase include:

- Legitimize the problem; make it okay to discuss it.
- Asking, "How does the problem feel?" and, "What's the real problem?"
- Identifying the best, worst, and most probable situation.
- Identifying whose problem it is.

Definition

Here, we state the problem as a question. Our goal is to grasp the general idea of the problem and then draw the rope tighter to get a more specific idea of the problem.

Steps in this phase include identifying:

- What is the problem?
- What is not the problem?

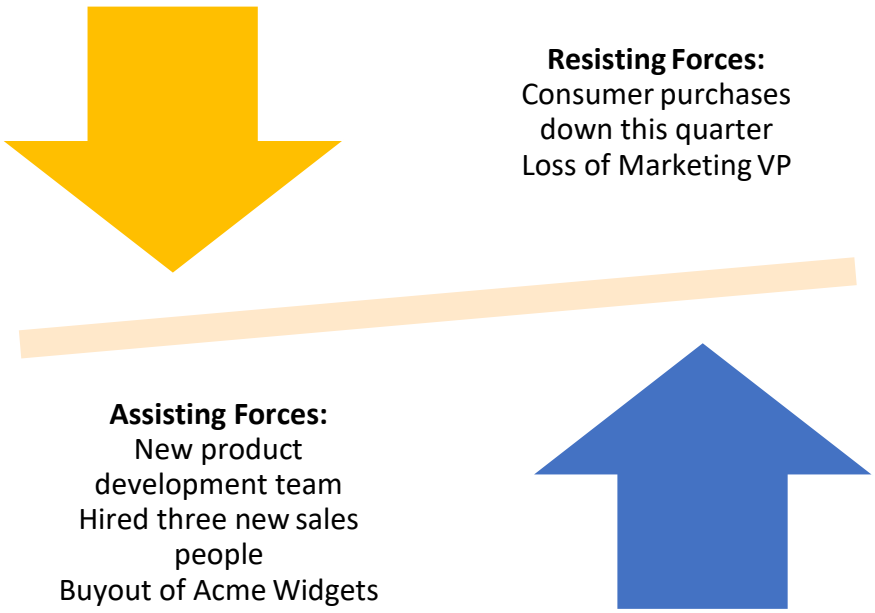
Analysis

Now that we have a general idea of the problem, we will use analytical tools to define it even further. Steps in this phase can include the following.

Ask basic questions, such as who, what, where, when, why, and how.

Break it down into smaller pieces. For example, if we know that the problem is that revenue is down, we can break it down into possible areas of cause: manufacturing, shipping, or sales.

Use force field analysis. This is a structured method of looking at two opposing forces acting on a situation. Simply draw a line on a piece of paper. On one half of the line, list the forces that are working to solve the problem. On the other half, list the forces that are stopping you from solving the problem. Let's say that revenue is down this quarter. Our force field might look like this:



Move from **generalizations to specific examples** as a way of testing what the problem is or is not. For example, you could say, "Our company has really been doing poorly all year." We could further identify how the company has been doing poorly; let's say that the production department in particular has been less efficient, costing the company money. Then, we can look at what aspect in particular is doing poorly.

Ask the expert. Find a person who has dealt with this sort of issue before.

Phase Two

Until the three steps of problem identification have been covered, don't proceed to phase two (decision making). (If people don't agree on the problem, they will never agree on a solution!)

Creative Thinking Methods

Here are some tools you can use to come up with ideas.

Brainstorming

Draw a circle in the middle of a page and write down your problem. Then, draw lines from that circle and write down some solutions. Don't worry if they're wacky, impossible, or silly; this is a time for creative thinking, not critical thinking. Capturing the range of ideas is what is important here.

Checkerboard

This is a more organized form of brainstorming and can be particularly helpful for people who don't like how chaotic a brainstorming session can become. With this method, you organize your thoughts into a table. We still want creative thinking rather than critical thinking, but this method may help you develop ideas.

Here is an example of a checkerboard.

Main Solution	**Possible Specific Solutions**		
Create safe passage between building and parking/bus stop	Have security escort night staff to their cars or bus stop	Rearrange shifts so that people come and go during daylight hours	Set up a buddy system with employees
People missing work in snowstorm	Set up 50% of staff with ability to work from home during storms	Arrange for temporary shelters so that staff can stay overnight	Provide incentives for employees to put winter tires on their vehicles and learn safe winter driving

Threat of strike is rumored	Set up contract negotiations well before contract expires	Approach union and ask to speak with them	Set up contingency plan to ensure business continuity in the event of a strike

Next, cut up solutions and move them around, or use your computer. This can help you organize your ideas and generate even more solutions!

Research and Report

Look at what others have done. Do some research and prepare a report. What lessons can you learn from this information?

Evaluation

Now that we have some solutions in mind, it's time to evaluate the solutions to see which ones are feasible.

- Sort solutions by category. This can be similar to the checkerboard above, just with some critical thinking applied.
- Identify the advantages and disadvantages to each solution.
- Identify what you like about each idea and what you don't like.
- Number your ideas in order, from the one that seems the most feasible to the one that seems the least feasible. This is useful for small problems.

Decision Making

Once you have evaluated the options, it's time to make a decision. Here are some ways you can do it:

- Get a consensus from the group on the best solution.
- Don't limit yourself to one option; you may find that you can combine solutions for super success. (This is called the both/and method.)
- To make voting easier, you may want to eliminate the solutions that the group as a whole absolutely won't consider.
- Try to focus on agreements during all voting.
- Use straw voting: Take a quick, non-binding yes/no vote on the current solution as proposed.
- Try negative voting: Rather than asking who is for a solution, ask who is against the proposed solution.
- Back off! The group may need some time to evaluate the options before making a decision.

Phase Three

Our last phase should be planning how to implement the solution and performing the actual implementation.

Planning

For the planning portion, start by breaking the task down into smaller portions. Then, for each mini-task, plan the following information:

- What needs to be done?
- Who will do it?
- What resources will we need?
- How much time will it take? (Set a deadline!)

Once all the smaller tasks are planned out, you will have an idea of how long the main solution will take to implement. You may also want to make sure that the above questions are answered for the main task.

Implementation

Implementation is a cycle of three activities:

- Figuring out what you are going to do
- Doing it
- Reacting to what happened or getting feedback

Sooner or later, you have to try out your solution!

Solution Planning Worksheet

It can help to lay out what you are planning to do. Here is an example of a solution planning worksheet.

Problem: Front of building is vulnerable to damage from cars in icy conditions.

Solution: Hire construction company to install appropriate barrier.

Task 1	**Operations department will prepare and issued tender process.**	
	What needs to be done?	Tender needs to be prepared and then published in the local paper as well as online.
	Who will do it?	Tom from Operations, Sam from Legal, and Mary from Communications
	What resources will they need?	- Requirements for safety barrier - Information about area where barrier is required - Copies of legislation surrounding tenders
	How much time will it take?	Two weeks (Target date: September 1)
Task 2	**Then, tender proposals will be received and reviewed.**	

	What needs to be done?	Tender proposals will be processed and reviewed.
	Who will do it?	Tom from Operations
	What resources will they need?	May need help from Legal (Sam)
	How much time will it take?	One month to receive all tenders plus two weeks to review (Target date: October 15)

Types of Decisions

Three Types of Decisions

We tend to make three kinds of decisions. The **autocratic decision** is one you make alone. You do not consult anyone, and you accept full responsibility for the consequences of your decision.

Your second choice is a **consultative decision**, when you talk over the problem with another person or persons, such as a more experienced superior or several of your colleagues or teammates. Two heads are frequently better than one when a serious decision must be made.

A third possibility is a **group decision**. When a problem involves the entire staff or a team, they should participate in the decision. Being involved also gives them some ownership, which will make them more committed and motivated to the decision and the results that come with it.

Advice from an Expert

Inevitably, we will make some decisions that are less than ideal, especially when we look back on something we've done in the past. This is why we have to commit to using the data that's available, rather than relying strictly on intuition or making a guess.

If you make a decision that haunts you, this advice from Claude George has been around since the 1970's and is still valid today:

- Don't ignore it or cover it up, because this won't go away.
- Accept that it is probably not the first or last poor decision you will make. The goal is for the

Task 3	**Tender decision will be made.**	
	What needs to be done?	A decision needs to be made on which tender, if any, to accept.
	Who will do it?	Amy from Executive and Tom from Operations
	What resources will they need?	- All tenders received - Recommendation from Operations - All related documentation
	How much time will it take?	One week (Target date: October 22)

large percentage of your decisions to be good ones. If so, then your overall average will be acceptable.

- Learn from your mistakes. Ask yourself where you went wrong. Get advice from those around you concerning what you should have considered that you didn't, what you should have done that you didn't, what errors of judgment you made, and so on.
- After this analysis, decide what you should do now; what action should you take? Then tell your boss about your new plan of action. Explain to him or her why you have moved from the old decision and why it is important for you to make the change. In talking with your boss, don't try to shift the blame.
- You are responsible for the decision and for the error. Prepare for and accept the consequences.

Eight Ingredients for Good Decision Making

1. Focus on the most important things. Of all the things you are judging, one factor is the most important and must be given greater weight than anything else.
2. Don’t decide until you are ready. Don’t act on impulse or succumb to decision panic.
3. Look for the positive results that can come from this decision. Make your decision as if you were afraid of missing a wonderful opportunity.
4. Consider the negative outcomes. If things go wrong, as they sometimes will, what’s the worst that can happen? How can you mitigate problems?
5. Look ahead. Try to see how your decision will play out over time.
6. Turn big decisions into a series of little decisions. When a big undertaking seems like it could be too much to tackle all at once, take small steps, get more information, reconsider, and then make the next decision.
7. Don’t feel you are locked into only one or two alternatives. There are always more options if you look for them. Go look for them.
8. Get what you need to feel safe. For some people, that means knowing the worst that can happen. For others, it means knowing they can back out at the last minute. For still others, it means knowing that everyone they care about agrees with the decision, or fully understands the situation they are in. Identify your safety needs related to the decision at hand.

Further Reading:

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