

“Nothing is so well learned as that which is discovered.” - Socrates

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Right Decisions: Made and Implemented

Making good decisions is only part of the job. Putting those decisions into action is a critical need that calls for some useful and powerful technology. Discovery Learning’s new implementation module complements Right Decisions Made Right™.

Interviews and article by Randell Jones

Life requires decisions. Good decisions and bad decisions are made every day by many people including leaders in business, government, education, and organizations-at-large. When mistakes are made, they are made for a host of reasons. To address this issue, Discovery Learning created *Decision Style Profile*® in 2000 to help leaders better understand their decision-making processes.

However, simply making the right decision is not the only important issue facing leaders today. The decision-making landscape has changed. Today correct decisions must be made faster than ever before, and in large organizations decision-making can lack the speed necessary for the organization to act with agility. To help organizations respond to the pressures for better decision-making, Discovery Learning created the *Right Decisions Made Right*™ training module.

Right Decisions Made Right

“Where I find *Right Decisions Made Right*™ to be really helpful,” said Allison Ehrler-Meyer of Beacon Advantage Solutions, LLC, “is in helping organizations put a process around their decision-making. People tend to think about decisions being made in the moment, but they forget about how they got there, how they got to that moment.” She added that decision-makers, though acting in earnest, may forget to consider one thing or another or they may labor too long on a particular issue that is not critical.

Ehrler-Meyer consults with Fortune 500 companies providing executive coaching, change management, and leadership and team development services. Operating from Atlanta and Jacksonville, she has used *Right Decisions Made Right*™ with her clients for three years and has seven-years’ experience using *Decision Style Profile*®.

“The underlying problem,” Ehrler-Meyer continued, “is that people throughout an organization are getting to their decision-making differently. With *Right Decisions Made Right*™, organizations put in place decision-making procedures that assure them that a certain process is being followed throughout the organization. That is particularly important when decisions are being made in a decentralized organization close to the point of impact. If you don’t want a

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slow, top-down, command-and-control system, then it’s wise to teach everyone in the organization how to consistently evaluate their situations and to come to reasoned conclusions. That way, the right decisions are made by the right people at the right time in the right places within the organization.”

In half-day sessions, *Right Decisions Made Right*™ shares with teams of people throughout an organization the decision-making skills developed through the *Decision Style Profile*® model. *Right Decisions Made*

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*Right*TM reviews the five decision styles and the five factors that affect good decision-making: problem clarity, information, level of commitment, goal agreement, and time. It employs case studies and interactive elements from which participants draw insights and learning about decision-making. “The effect of the training is reproducible from group to group and from facilitator to facilitator,” said Mike Warrick of Discovery Learning. “That makes it particularly useful in large organizations seeking to achieve some consistency and reliability in their decision-making.”

“One client told me that *Right Decisions Made Right*TM completely transformed his company,” Ehrler-Meyer continued. “They had been pushing decisions farther up-line where the lesser-important ones would languish on the desk of a manager or executive who was predictably swamped with decisions to make. After we went through the *Right Decisions Made Right*TM process, the participants could see clearly how to realign the decision-making responsibilities. Management was delighted as well because decisions were made more quickly at appropriate levels throughout the organization where employees took ownership of the decisions they made.”

Making It Happen

Making good decisions, though critically important to an organization’s success, is only part of the solution to any problem. Implementing decisions is the other critical component of the problem-solving challenge. As experienced executives will share,

implementation is often the more challenging part of making a difference.

“Making a decision and putting it into action are two different challenges and involve different knowledge and skills,” said Warrick.

“ . . . the people who have to put [a decision] into operation, still have to think through some critical issues.”

- Trish Kellett,

Targeted Solutions International, LLC

“Think of the difference between creating a menu and cooking a meal. The two challenges are related in many respects but they require different skills, resources, and tasks to succeed. That’s why we created *Right Decisions in Action*TM, a companion training module to *Right Decisions Made Right*TM.” Warrick added that just as *Right Decisions Made Right*TM brings process to the decision-making challenge, *Right Decisions in Action*TM puts a process around the challenge of implementing decisions. It assures a logical and thoroughly-considered implementation process.

Right Decisions in Action

*Right Decisions in Action*TM is a training module which provides a system for implementing decisions more effectively and efficiently. People learn to use the system by working through an Implementation Toolkit using two case studies. At the end of the session, participants are prepared to take new skills into

the workplace and to apply them to their own situations.

The half-day training module *Right Decisions in Action*TM is intended to follow *Right Decisions Made Right*TM. The module begins with a review of some implementation successes and failures and enumerates some of the reasons that implementations often fail, including underestimating the resistance of both individuals and the organizational culture. The list also includes underestimating the resistance of customers and end-users, inadequate support provided through the organizational structure, inadequate leadership, and inadequate resources. Next, a two-step approach for planning implementation is presented: assessing the difficulty of implementation and creating a detailed implementation plan.

Assessing the Difficulty

Assessing the difficulty of implementing a decision involves evaluating seven factors critical for success: Scope of Impact, Constituents Affected, Degree of Change, Degree of Choice, Compatibility with Organizational Elements, Organizational Capabilities, and Implementation Resources Required. After evaluating these factors, implementers are prepared to develop the Implementation Plan.

The Implementation Plan

Creating a written, step-by-step plan for putting a decision into action involves a structured and methodical process and relies heavily upon the Implementation Toolkit. The process explores sub-plans that interact to create successful implementation.

The sub-plans include communication, marketing, manufacturing (or creating), and the allocation of resources (both people and money) all within the constraints of time factors. In exploring sub-plans, participants consider roles, deliverables, timelines, and measures of success. Two critical aspects of a successful implementation plan are also addressed: process and people.

Creating a written Implementation Plan is facilitated by the Implementation Toolkit, a unique aspect of *Right Decisions in Action*[™]. The Toolkit is the technology that assists those planning the implementation to consider and to address all the pertinent issues. The Toolkit includes tools associated with each of the seven factors addressed in determining the difficulty of the decision. Each tool has a collection of questions; they address specific critical issues and assure the implementers that important, possible pitfalls have been considered.

Because accountability is crucial to success, one of the tools in the Toolkit is a matrix of responsibility. It creates an actionable plan by enumerating action elements that recognize who is responsible, how completion will be measured, time frames, etc. The matrix ensures that someone is accountable for every step in the implementation process.

Implementation Toolkit

The Implementation Toolkit was created by Trish Kellett and Terry Hollon of Targeted Solutions International, LLC. Trish has 30 years of combined consulting and line management experience including

profit/loss responsibility for a division of AT&T. Terry has served as vice president with two international consulting firms and as an educational leader and college



teacher. Today they consult with a broad range of organizations from Fortune 500 companies to small businesses, all needing professional help with challenges such as professional development, talent development, and customer satisfaction.

“The principles of this implementation model apply regardless of the size of the organization,” said Trish Kellett. “If it is a large organization implementing a decision made by others, certainly

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This is technology transfer.”*

- Terry Hollon,

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the methodical process adds great value to making sure that critical issues and potential barriers have been addressed. But, even for a small business, the roadmap provides a checklist that people can consider mentally before committing to implementation. Even if a decision is made by one person, the people who have to put it into operation still have to think through some critical issues.”

“This is not training,” said Terry Hollon, “this is technology transfer. Of course, not all issues will be relevant to all situations; but, the key thing is that managers and leaders who repeatedly follow this system will soon train their minds to quickly check off the critical issues.”

Warrick added, “The model process put forth in *Right Decisions in Action*[™] is valuable to anyone making and implementing decisions that will affect a group of people; but, for a large corporation, its value is incalculable when dealing with large, expensive decisions that affect many groups of people and substantial financial resources.”

The Other Half

The *Decision Style Profile*[®] model has helped thousands of managers and leaders to better understand and navigate the process of reaching good decisions. *Right Decisions Made Right*[™] has provided a half-day training module for acquainting those in organizations with better decision-making skills. Now, *Right Decisions in Action*[™] provides the other half of the equation: a structured approach to implementing decisions. It assures that all the critical issues are considered and creates an actionable plan with time frames, accountabilities, and measurements that will help make those decisions reality.

Right Decision in Action[™] is currently available from Discovery Learning, Inc. on a pilot basis. It will be released for general use in May 2008. ●

What's happening at DLI?

Two magazines recently published articles by Chris Musselwhite. *Inc.com*, the online version of *Inc.*, published *When Doing Nothing Is the Right Thing*. It explores the value of taking time to reflect on one's experiences and to mine the lesson's learned so they can be applied to future opportunities. *American Executive* published in print and online *Best Practices: Meaningful Motivation*. This article addresses one of the more difficult challenges every manager faces: motivating others. You can access both articles online through our website at www.discoverylearning.com. We hope you find both articles to be useful.

New Associate

We are pleased to welcome to Discovery Learning our new Director of Leadership Development, Darren Overfield. Darren holds an MBA from NC State and a M.Ed. in clinical psychology from the University of Virginia. He comes to us from GE where he was a Six

Sigma Black Belt providing global training, consulting and project management.

Our Discovery Learning 360 Series™ is up and running to rave reviews. Each of these 360s now includes a follow-up, goal-setting tool that enables participants to choose up to five survey items or four survey items and one custom item to focus on during the course of 12 weeks. At the end of 12 weeks, the raters can assess the participant again on the items selected. The trainer can choose whether or not to use this feature; the price is the same. In addition, the Discovery Leadership Profile is now available in **Spanish** and **French**.



If you are interested in taking one of the four 360s from the Discovery Learning 360 Series™ for a test drive, please call our office 336-272-9530 or email us at info@discoverylearning.com to set up a demonstration.

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Discovery Learning, Inc.
431 Spring Garden Street
Greensboro, North Carolina 27401
USA

