

# Making Better Decisions: A Workbook



Break out of analysis paralysis, get unstuck, and  
move confidently toward your goals.

# How to use this workbook

 **RECOMMENDED:** start with this article on [Making Better Decisions](#) before starting this workbook

## Stage 1: Brainstorm

To begin your exploration, set aside a specific amount of time to brainstorm all possible options that can aid your goal. No idea is too insignificant or impossible - consider all options. You can invite a friend or colleague who understands your goal to brainstorm with you and generate even more ideas. The only limit is the time constraint you impose on your brainstorming session.

## Stage 2: Refinement

Review your generated ideas and select up to five that excite you and seem like viable options to explore further. Alternatively, you can combine multiple ideas to create a new hybrid option. This is the stage where you .

## Stage 3: Decision Factors

To pick the best option, pinpoint the critical factors affecting the outcome. Examples include cost, values, time, resources, risks, culture, and key stakeholders. Identify which factors have the biggest impact on the overall outcomes and success.

## Stage 4: Decision Matrix

Fill out your decision matrices by following these steps:

1. List your factors.
2. Determine the weight each factor should have in your decision-making framework.
3. Score each option on a scale of 1 to 5 for each factor.
4. Describe the impact of each score.
5. Add up the scores to rank each option.

## Stage 5: Next Steps

Now that you have identified your top options, it's time to determine your next steps. Ask yourself some key questions: What do you need to learn in order to move forward? Who can help you in this process? Who can you learn from? What obstacles should you anticipate and plan for? What will your next steps be?

# Options Brainstorm

Start by brainstorming a list of all your options — possible and impossible. There are no bad or wrong ideas. Anything goes. Continue until you run out of ideas!

Options Brainstorm:



# Options Refinement

Now choose the top 5 options from this list that you really want to explore further

Option 1

Option 2

Option 3

Option 4

Option 5



# Options Exploration

Review the list below of possible factors to consider or prioritize when making your decision. Choose your top 5-7 factors to create your decision making framework,

- Goals and objectives: What are you trying to achieve? What outcomes do you hope to see as a result of your decision?
- Priorities: What is most important to you in this situation? What factors are deal-breakers, and what can you compromise on?
- Available resources: What resources do you have at your disposal, including time, money, and personnel?
- Risks and benefits: What are the potential risks and benefits of each option, and how do they weigh against each other?
- Consequences: What are the short- and long-term consequences of each option, and how might they affect you or others?
- Alternatives: What other options are available, and how do they compare to the option(s) you are considering?
- Timing: Is there a deadline or other time constraint that affects your decision?
- Stakeholders: Who are the people or groups that will be affected by your decision, and how will they be impacted?
- Ethical considerations: Are there any ethical or moral considerations that you need to take into account?
- Personal values: What are your personal values, and how do they influence your decision-making process?
- Past experiences: Have you or others had similar experiences in the past, and what lessons can you learn from them?
- Expert advice: Have you consulted with experts or others who have experience in this area?
- Emotional considerations: What are your emotional reactions to the options you are considering, and how might they influence your decision?
- Cultural or social factors: Are there any cultural or social factors that could impact your decision, such as norms or expectations in your community or industry?

These are just a few examples of the many factors that can come into play when making a decision. The specific factors that are most important will depend on the context and the decision you are making.



# SAMPLE MATRIX (simplified)

Choose your top 5 factors and weight them based on their overall importance to you (1-5 with 5 being most important). Score each option on a scale of 1-5 for each factor. Multiply the score by the weight for a total factor score. Add up all totals to determine overall rank across all options.

Factors (weight)	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
Cost (3)	3 (3*3=9)	2	5	3	3
Flexibility (2)	4 (4*2=8)	2	1	3	5
Values Alignment (3)	3 (3*3=9)	5	3	2	2
Growth Opps (5)	1 (1*5=5)	2	2	2	3
Skills Alignment (4)	2 (2*4=8)	3	2	4	3
Total Score:	39	47	44	47	52



# SAMPLE MATRIX (detailed)

Choose your top 5 factors and weight them based on their overall importance to you (1-5 with 5 being most important). Describe the impact you expect. Score each option on a scale of 1-5 for each factor. Multiply the score by the weight for a total factor score. Add up all totals to determine overall rank across all options.

Option 1	Description of Impact	Score (1-5)	Score x Weight	Total Score:  57
Cost (3)	The cost of this option is moderate, not within preferred budget, but still feasible	3	9	
Flexibility (2)	This option is prescriptive and doesn't allow for much modification, but the program is high quality	2	4	
Values Alignment (3)	This option is aligned with most of my core values	4	12	
Growth Opps (5)	If I implement this option successfully, I have lots of room to grow into my long-term goals	4	20	
Skills Alignment (4)	I will need to learn and improve several skills to be successful with this option, but I have the basic skill-set needed to start	3	12	



# Simplified Matrix

Factors (weight)	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
Factor (#)					
Factor (#)					
Factor (#)					
Factor (#)					
Factor (#)					
Total Score:					





# Detailed Matrix (1)

Option 1	Description of Impact	Score (1-5)	Score x Weight	Total Score:
Factor (weight)				
Factor (weight)				
Factor (weight)				
Factor (weight)				
Factor (weight)				



# Detailed Matrix (2)

Option 2	Description of Impact	Score (1-5)	Score x Weight	Total Score:
Factor (weight)				
Factor (weight)				
Factor (weight)				
Factor (weight)				
Factor (weight)				



# Detailed Matrix (3)

Option 3	Description of Impact	Score (1-5)	Score x Weight	Total Score:
Factor (weight)				
Factor (weight)				
Factor (weight)				
Factor (weight)				
Factor (weight)				



# Detailed Matrix (4)

Option 4	Description of Impact	Score (1-5)	Score x Weight	Total Score:
Factor (weight)				
Factor (weight)				
Factor (weight)				
Factor (weight)				
Factor (weight)				



# Detailed Matrix (5)

Option 5	Description of Impact	Score (1-5)	Score x Weight	Total Score:
Factor (weight)				
Factor (weight)				
Factor (weight)				
Factor (weight)				
Factor (weight)				



# Next Steps

In order to move forward, what skills, knowledge, or resources do you need to gain? Who can help you? Who can you learn from? What obstacles do you need to plan around? What are your next steps?

Next Steps:

