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LEADERSHIP
ARCHITECT™

GLOBAL COMPETENCY
FRAMEWORK

VERSION 1

Sample
Competency
Development
Content

Decision Quality.
Making good and timely decisions that keep the organization moving forward.

Making good decisions can be challenging: Short time frames. Limited information. Impatient people waiting for answers in the face of difficult tradeoffs. Good decisions are based upon a mixture of analysis, wisdom, experience, and judgment. Trouble is, people are not all that good at making decisions. They tend to overestimate their ability to make good judgments and are overconfident in forecasting outcomes. Making quality decisions in organizations today means working in an environment where ambiguity and uncertainty are the norm. Where considering whom to engage, what information to gather, and when to apply helpful tools are all considerations to take into account. Sound decisions come from a balance between speed and quality. Being totally correct all the time isn't a realistic goal. Instead, it's about being correct enough on decisions to move ahead and allow adequate time for effective execution.

"An expert is someone who has succeeded in making decisions and judgments simpler by knowing what to pay attention to and what to ignore."
Edward De Bono, Maltese physician, author, and inventor.

Skilled.
Makes sound decisions, even in the absence of complete information. Relies on a mixture of analysis, wisdom, experience, and judgment when making decisions.

Less Skilled.
Approaches decisions haphazardly or delays decision making. Makes decisions based on incomplete data or inaccurate assumptions.

Talented.
Decisively makes high-quality decisions, even when based on incomplete information or in the face of uncertainty.

Overuse.
Applies an overly rigorous or methodological decision process to all issues, even where experience and intuition can work equally well.

Some Possible Causes of Lower Skill.
Causes help explain why a person may have trouble with Decision Quality. When seeking to increase skill, it's helpful to consider how these might play out in certain situations. And remember that all of these can be addressed if you are motivated to do so.

- Undervalues relevant data.
- Goes too fast or too slow.
- Avoids including others.
- Unaware of own biases.

Tips to develop Decision Quality.
- **Not sure where to begin? Define the issue and map out a process.** A consistent finding is that most groups don't take enough time up front to define the situation—they jump to a conclusion or a solution. Rigor pays off. Establish what's at play and at stake—the context, parameters, scope. Next, define the intended outcome

of the decision. How will you know if you made the right call? The clearer the criteria for determining success, the better. Gather all the relevant data. Analyze it, interpret it, test your assumptions. Generate alternatives and evaluate them based upon what you want to accomplish. Invite open dialogue and healthy debate if that will help you determine the best course of action. Monitor what was intended against what actually happens so you can learn from the decision and make corrections where needed.

- **Think you already have the answer? Beware of potential biases.** Even if you're certain that your decision is the right one, pause. What beliefs, opinions, personal interests, favoritism, or prejudices may be influencing you? Unconscious biases may also be at play, for example: Confirmation bias: where you only see what you already believe to be true. Frequency bias: where you're more likely to believe something you hear or see repeatedly over time. Recency bias: where what you've learned most recently carries more weight. Negative bias: where stored negative emotional memories of similar situations or people cloud your judgment. Attachment bias: holding on to a status quo you helped shape. To mitigate against biases, work to surface any red flags—a third party can help. The point is not to let biases affect you or your team's ability to be objective.

- **Just going through the motions? Apply more rigor.** Avoid imprecise thinking when analyzing data and evaluating options. Do you state things as facts when they are really opinions or assumptions? Do you attribute cause and effect to relationships when you don't know if one really causes the other? Are you relying on decisions you made in the past rather than seeing the current situation with fresh eyes? Don't just collect data, figure out what it means for the short- and long-term. Write down your assumptions. Challenge them. Don't simply inform stakeholders of your progress, engage them in the process. When weighing alternatives, make rational comparisons against specific criteria (e.g., revenue, speed, customer retention). Anticipate potential glitches as best you can. Identify the pros/cons and costs/benefits of all possible solutions, then work to make the best ones even stronger before making a final decision.

Job assignments.
- Join a task force making decisions on an important issue, where you will need to share information and consider the long- and short-term implications for the business.
- Make a strategic decision on where to invest future resources (new markets, new products/services, etc.). Evaluate alternatives using the best-suited analytical tools combined with the judgment of experienced stakeholders.

Take time to reflect…
Here are some questions to reflect on as you begin the journey towards developing Decision Quality:

If you tend to be impulsive…then consider that investing time up front can save time later on. Stopping to reflect and consider your options will help you choose your direction more wisely than if you rush.

Learn more about Decision Quality.
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About Korn Ferry

At Korn Ferry, we design, build, attract and ignite talent. Since our inception, clients have trusted us to help recruit world-class leadership. Today, we are a single source for leadership and talent consulting services to empower businesses and leaders to reach their goals. Our solutions range from executive recruitment and leadership development programs, to enterprise learning, succession planning and recruitment process outsourcing (RPO). Visit www.kornferry.com for more information on Korn Ferry, and www.kornferryinstitute.com for thought leadership, intellectual property and research.

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