

## Why risk making a bad decision when making great decisions is just so simple?

Start by asking yourself:

**What do you do to prevent your big business decisions failing?**

### CONTENTS:

1. The one 'Winning Decisions' question you must ask yourself to help make your business decisions more successful
2. Your 'Winning Decisions' checklist
3. Watch Dave Lee Roth – lead singer with rock group Van Halen – explain why brown M&Ms helped him make an important decision ...
4. Questions to challenge your decision-making expertise
5. The decision-making book that can transform your skill at making great decisions...

**STOP** making big decisions the way you've always made them

**START** by widening your options before you make a decision

### 1. The one 'Winning Decisions' question you must ask yourself to make all your big business decisions more successful is...

**What do you do to prevent your big business decisions failing?**

Where is the value in this question?

The value in this question prompts you to reconsider and rethink your big decisions process to ensure you get the best possible results for your business.

If you merrily make big decisions on autopilot without following the 'best-practice' decision-making process, you run the risk of making bad or weaker decisions. Bad or weaker decisions undermine your future success.

Your decision-making (everyones decision-making) tends to follow a pattern, a pattern you are unaware of and a pattern that might result in weaker decisions.

To see how thorough you are at making great decisions why not compare your approach to big decisions with the decision-making checklist you'll find later in this set of Business Bitesize tools?

**IMPORTANT:** The question is about getting you off your 'normal' decision-making approach. OR at the very least giving you a 'sense-check' that your decisions are made in the best possible way.

Check out the decision-making checklist below to see how winning decisions are made...

## 2. Your *'Winning Decisions Checklist'* to give you certainty that you are making the best possible decisions...

### 1. Stop looking so narrow – WIDEN YOUR OPTIONS – it doesn't have to be an 'either/or' decision

*(Tick each box when you can honestly say you have answered the questions)*

- What would you do if the obvious option was unavailable?** Force yourself to look for options.
- How else could you spend the time or money?** Mentally track more than one decision option (1 or 2 or 3 more not dozens) at the same time.
- Who else has solved your problem successfully?** Copy their decision-making process to sense-check your decision.
- Who else could be involved in the decision?** Involving more people widens options – yes this makes decision-making more complex and looks like it slows decision-making down, but it also means the people involved are more likely to implement successfully with you.

### 2. Stop being so biased – REALITY-TEST YOUR ANALYSIS – are you honestly seeking truth or simply needing reassurance?

*(Tick each box when you can honestly say you have answered the questions)*

- How can you dip your toe in?** Time to experiment. Work out how to test or prototype your decision - Get job candidates to do some real work for a few hours - Do volunteer work in a dental practice before committing to a dentistry degree.
- How do you get the varied views of others?** Read the 3\* and 4\* reviews on Amazon not the (bias confirming) 5\* reviews. Ask experts the right questions, not the bias confirming questions (see section 4 below for the questions to ask, not ask). Or ask yourself what you'd advise your best friend to do.

### 3. Stop being so emotional – STEP AWAY TO GET PERSPECTIVE – is this decision based on fact or feeling?

*(Tick each box when you can honestly say you have answered the questions)*

- How would you feel about your decision in 10 minutes, in 10 days and in 10 years time?** This 3-stage 10/10/10 question makes you think about the long term not just the short term.
- What kind of person do you want to be or what kind of business do you want to build?** Sometimes it's impossible to reduce the emotions involved in a decision. This question helps you work out what matters most to you when considering your options.

### 4. Stop being so confident – PREPARE TO BE WRONG

*(Tick each box when you can honestly say you have answered the questions)*

- What's the best case, worst case and most likely outcome?** By considering all three outcomes you tap into three different pools of knowledge and insight. Dig deeper into all three and you get a broader view of your decision and so lessen the impact of your over-confidence.
- How can you use a buffer?** Make sure you create room for error. Like elevator cables that are made 11 times stronger than they need to be.
- What problems can you anticipate?** Ask your valuable nay-sayers what to expect. Then prepare and rehearse for the obstacles. Also prepare for a big upside too as this can also be risky and challenging.
- How can you use a trip-wire to wake you up from auto-pilot?** Set up trip-wires to prompt decisions and actions that will protect you from things going wrong. Check out the David Lee Roth (rock superstar of Van Halen) story about using M&M sweets as a trip-wire (see below).



Watch Dave Lee Roth – lead singer with rock group Van Halen – explain why brown M&Ms helped him make an important decision

One way to wake you up, or wake other people up, from automatic, narrow, biased emotional over-confident decision-making is to set up a wake-up call. Wake-up call, trigger or trip wire can help.

Here's the Van Halen trip-wire story.

What was reported at the time as a wild demand from ego-maniac pop stars turns out to be a great decision-making tripwire. A tripwire that ensured the safety of the band and the crew.

<https://vimeo.com/36615187>



It's not uncommon for high-profile musicians to make all sorts of wild demands about their backstage set-ups at concerts: Kanye West reportedly requires a barber's chair. Mariah Carey insists on two vases of white roses.

Rock band Van Halen had one of the most oddly specific requests of all: a bowl of M&M candies, with all the brown ones removed. For years, it was seen as complete folly — the band was making a ridiculous demand of concert organizers simply because they could get away with it.

The band's concert rider indeed had a clause – see below – saying there could be no brown M&Ms in the backstage area, or the promoter would forfeit the entire show at full price.

As lead singer David Lee Roth [explained in a 2012 interview](#), the bowl of M&Ms was an indicator of whether the concert promoter had actually read the band's complicated contract.

"Van Halen was the first to take 850 par lamp lights — huge lights — around the country," Roth said. "At the time, it was the biggest production ever." In many cases, the venues were too outdated or inadequately prepared to set up the band's sophisticated stage.

"If I came backstage, having been one of the architects of this lighting and staging design, and I saw brown M&Ms on the catering table, then I guarantee the promoter had not read the contract rider, and we would have to do a serious line check" of the entire stage setup, Roth said.

The brown M&Ms demand is a great rock 'n' roll legend — but the truth is far more interesting. Brown M&Ms were the bands tripwire that woke everyone up to the safety concerns about the venue and triggered a decision to review all the technical facilities of the venue (at the venues expense).

[This section adapted from the article - <http://uk.businessinsider.com/van-halen-brown-m-ms-contract-2016-9?r=US&IR=T> ]

Part of a rider from Van Halen's 1982 world tour.[via thesmokinggun.com](http://thesmokinggun.com)

### Fruit

Fresh fruit platter, including apples, oranges, grapes, pears, melons, kiwi fruit and whole bananas

### Hot Drinks

Hot coffee (brewed, not instant)  
Hot water (for tea)  
Lipton tea bags  
Natural and herbal tea bags (e.g., Celestial Seasonings)  
One (1) lb. Tupelo honey  
Twelve (12) fresh lemons (with knife and cutting board)  
Cream and sugar

NOTE: Water and coffee must be kept hot continuously with electric hot plates, urns or other suitable devices.

### Munchies

Potato chips with assorted dips  
Nuts  
Pretzels  
→ M & M's (WARNING: ABSOLUTELY NO BROWN ONES)  
Twelve (12) Reese's peanut butter cups  
Twelve (12) assorted Dannon yogurt (on ice)

How can you set up a tripwire trigger that prompts a more conscious decision-making process in your business? Note how Van Halen provided a checklist for the venue to help them and a checklist failure (brown M&Ms) prompted a series of safety checks.

Examples of decision-making tripwires (if X happens then we'll do Y) could be:

- Southwest airlines were reported to use a pen as a tripwire when interviewing customer-facing employees. The interviewer allows a pen to roll off the table to see if the candidate reaches down automatically to help pick up the pen. If they don't they aren't hired as cabin crew because they are not naturally helpful
- One of our colleagues uses the 13 stone weight tripwire to stimulate a decision for a significant increase in exercise

- Zappos, the shoe company, use a financial incentive encouraging new employees to leave after their first two weeks of employment. It's a tripwire that tests the commitment of employees to the customer obsessed culture of Zappos. 2% of people accept the offer of several thousand dollars. Check out the Heath Brothers' book for this inspiring story into the power of tripwires

Tripwires help jolt us out of autopilot and prompt us to consider a better decision. The decision-making checklist provided earlier gives us the means to elevate the quality of our decision-making.

### 3. What questions help you challenge routine decision-making so that you make smarter decisions and get better results? And which ones undermine good decisions?

Good questions – like the ones in the checklist above – help move you from automatic, natural, unconscious decision-making. They also help you get others positively involved in considering options rather than defending their point of view.

Here are some powerful questions to help you make the shift to smarter thinking, smarter decision-making and smarter results too...

**What if your least favorite option were actually the best one?**

**What would have to be true for each option to be right?**

**What data might convince us of that?**

Chip and Dan Heath explain brilliantly the power and value of these questions:

“If you think an idea is the wrong way to approach a problem and someone asks you if you think it's the right way, you'll reply 'no' and defend that answer against all comers. But if someone asks you to figure out what would have to be true for that approach to work, your frame of thinking changes.... This subtle shift gives people a way to back away from their beliefs and allow exploration”

**If we got kicked out and the board brought in a new CEO, what do you think she would do?**

**What would you tell your best friend to do?**

In 1985 a jugular decision at Intel needed to be made – continue as a memory chip (for computers) producer or to move out of memory chips and commit wholeheartedly to microprocessors?

Intel had been mainly a memory chip producer up to the point of the decision which was brought on by price falls in memory chips and the advance of Japanese suppliers. By looking at what other external key figures would do in your situation can stimulate new insights and clarity by helping you ignore all the historical, emotional and bias-creating influences you and others are tied to. The above question helped Andy Grove and the other leaders at Intel commit to microprocessors and put them on the road to market leader for decades.

The Heath brothers, after all their research into decision making suggest:

“Confirmation bias is probably the single biggest problem in business, because even the most sophisticated people get it wrong. People go out and they’re collecting the data, and they don’t realize they’re cooking the books.”

So the questions to avoid are the ones that confirm your natural, automatic and mostly unthinking bias that sway your decision (and reduce the likelihood of success).

**What do you think of my outfit this evening?**

**Should we continue doing what we’ve been doing for the last 5 years?**

**Should I go to the party or not?**

These questions are narrow and arguably what we’d call leading questions, seeking confirmation of what you want to hear. They show up most when you’ve already invested time and effort into a particular course of action. These questions do not help good decision-making.

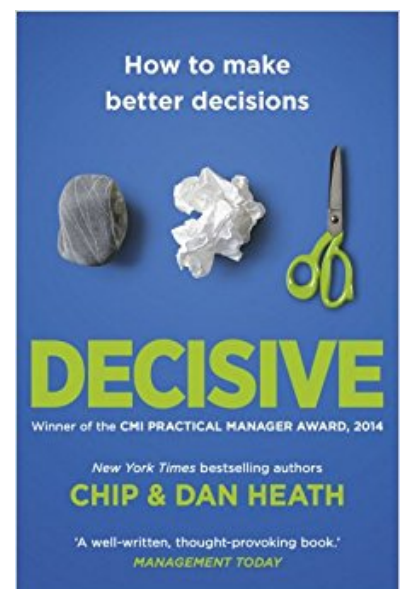
Good decisions require you to actively fight the confirmation bias. The question checklist provided in these Business Bitesize tools provides you with a process that helps you fight the natural and automatic.

#### 4. The decision-making book that can transform your skill at making great decisions...

The skill of decision-making is rarely taught and rarely learned. This means there’s a competitive advantage ready and waiting for you and your business.

You just need to be better at making decisions than your competitors.

The book ‘Decisive – How To Make Better Decisions’ by the Heath brothers is a brilliant insight into the science of decision-making. Packed with stories, examples and anecdotes so that truly see the way to winning decision-making.



[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Decisive-How-Make-Better-Decisions/dp/1847940862/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1505388562&sr=1-1&keywords=decisive+heath](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Decisive-How-Make-Better-Decisions/dp/1847940862/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1505388562&sr=1-1&keywords=decisive+heath)