

Common Sense by Friday

Fostering Smart Decisions in a Menu-Driven Workplace

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What is Dumbing-Down Our Decision Making?

Shallow thinking phenomenon

- Menu-driven technology
- Media simplification
- Marketplace emphasis on convenience
- Evolving public policy

Decidiphobia

- Emphasis on rules rather than reason
- Too many choices
- A non-stop environment of distractions
- Inexperience with trial-n-error

What are the impacts on your organization?

Debunking the Myth of Multitasking

Working (short-term) memory won't let us.

We are limited in our _____ load.

The key to memory transference is

*The more we try to multitask, the less purposeful we become. When we aren't purposeful, we are less able to reason through a problem. We are more likely to rely on conventional ideas instead of thinking more creatively. In other words, we become reliant on the options and choices offered us by others. **Figure It Out!***

Managing the pressure to multitask

- What tasks can you eliminate from your daily/weekly routine?
- What tasks can you shorten?
- Where is there opportunity time you can leverage?
- When can you take time to get away?
- How can you best resist those who attempt to fill your every waking moment?

Embracing the Big Picture

How well do your people understand the context within which your organization operates?

The business model – How does the firm make money? What position does it seek within the industry? How are its products/services sold? What is its financial model?

The bureaucracy – How is the firm organized? What are the protocols for getting things done? Who has the influence? What are the paths for career advancement?

The marketplace – How is the industry organized? What is its economic health? What is the regulatory environment? What challenges does it face? Who are the customers and what are their priorities and expectations?

The Five Cs of Problem Solving

- Clarify the problem
- Collect your resources
- Consider your options
- Choose the best option
- Cogitate on the outcome

Perform a Self-Instill

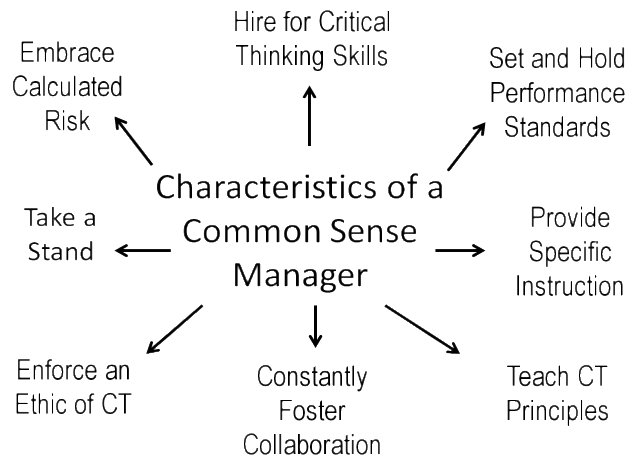
Smart decision makers:

- Take the long view
- Compartmentalize
- Think tactically
- Seek differing opinions
- Surround themselves with other smart decision makers
- Delay instant gratification
- Develop a comfort with ambiguity
- Take calculated risks

What challenges do you face in fostering a smarter decision making environment?

What is your one BIG takeaway from this session?

What one action can you take immediately to improve decision making within your organization?



Hire for critical thinking skills. Old fashioned “common sense” is becoming increasingly rare. Test, test, test before you commit.

Set and hold performance standards. Employees cannot read minds. Top talent will demand measurable expectations and expect to be held to them.

Provide specific instruction. While you want people to think for themselves, don’t waste time and resources assuming they will catch on. Begin with close supervision and back away as they demonstrate competence.

Teach critical thinking principles. Providing a concrete framework such as 5Cs will serve as a basis for resolving everyday problems.

Constantly foster collaboration. Two heads are always better than one. Encourage cross-generational thinking and problem solving.

Enforce an ethic of critical thinking. Set an expectation that everyone will think for themselves and hold to it. Resistance at first, but they’ll catch on.

Take a stand. Model tactical thinking, take decisive action. Then explain your reasoning and process the outcome with those you supervise.

Embrace calculated risk. Model this essential practice for all those around you.

Robert W. Wendover is author of *Figure It Out! Making Smart Decisions in a Dumbed-Down World*. For information on keynotes, seminars and training, please contact him at 1-800-227-5510 or robert.wendover@generationaldiversity.com.