



# Mission-Focused Decision Making

## TOOL & WORKSHEET

# MISSION-FOCUSED DECISION MAKING

## RESOURCE

*Does it feel like your organization could focus even more on mission-driven decisions that move you towards organizational goals and purpose?*

*If you answered yes, you are not alone. Good decision-making can be challenging; however, it also creates the foundation for team members – including board, staff and volunteers – to feel engaged with their role, develop their skills, and make their best contribution to organizational goals.*

## Mission First

Research indicates that over 70% of not-for-profit managers and 67% of non-managers may feel confused about the decisions they can make. This confusion takes a toll: Over 84% say it impacts their own personal effectiveness and 77% say it reduces organizational effectiveness.

But challenges with making great decisions don't end there. Organizational leaders also report feeling that:

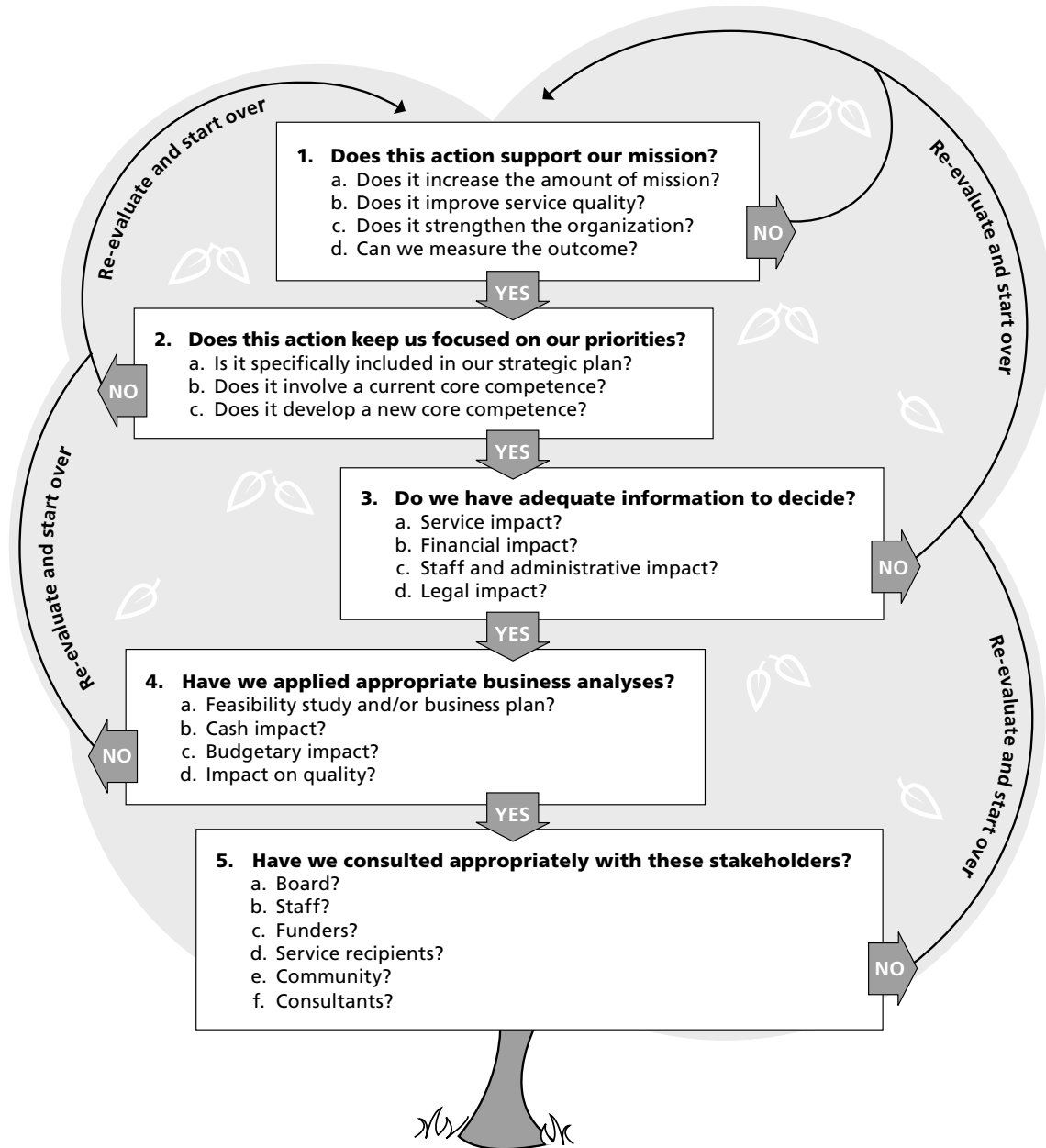
- They frequently make decisions that pull them away from the mission
- Decisions are only made at the top of the organizations
- Decisions are motivated by fear or scarcity
- There is a consistent lack of clarity around who should be making what decision
- Team members hesitate to move forward with making decisions

The answer to these challenges? Put the mission at the forefront of your decision-making, in order to empower great decision-making at every level of the organization.

Not-for-profit leadership researcher Peter Brinckerhoff advocates that the mission guide all decision-making. His decision tree tool can support you to:

- Systematize decision-making and depersonalize the process;
- Build the capacity and comfort of everyone on your team – board, staff and volunteers – to make decisions knowing they are aligned with your mission and key priorities; and,
- Create comfort with embracing the “power of no” in order to prioritize what matters most.

## Tool - Brinckerhoff Decision Making Tree



From *Nonprofit Stewardship: A Better Way to Lead Your Mission-Based Organization*. Copyright © 2004, Peter C. Brinckerhoff. All rights reserved. Available from Wilder Publishing, [www.wilder.org/pubs](http://www.wilder.org/pubs).

## Worksheet

**Refer to the above delegation and decision tree tool from Peter Brinckerhoff.**

Think back to one of the best decisions made in your organization recently: what made it successful? How did mission factor into the decision?

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Now think back to some of the less successful decisions: what made it challenging? What might have been different if you started with mission first?

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As we begin inviting others into mission-based decision-making, we may experience challenges or things we have to let go of in order to move forward. What trade-offs might you encounter?

Positive?

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Negative?

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What resources and strategies will you draw on to create comfort with your team to make mission-driven decisions?

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*Transforming  
Not-For-Profit  
Leadership*

 **vantage point**

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