Overview

**Decision Making**

The Decisions Making Café is a short blended learning experience oriented around the concepts and skills found in the Harvard ManageMentor Decision Making topic. The learning experience consists of three components:

*60 to 90 minutes 60 minutes Ongoing*

Objectives

At the conclusion of the blended experience, managers will be able to:

**Create the right context and identify objectives for decisions that need to be made.** Specifically, the experience will help managers:

* Define the roles and responsibilities of those involved in making a decision
* Select a decision-making approach\*
* Assess the environment in which the decision will be made
* Frame the decision\*
* Define the objectives of the decision

**Avoid common decision-making challenges.** Specifically, the experience will help managers:

* Manage cognitive biases\*
* Manage group dynamics\*

**Generate and evaluate alternatives for a decision**. Specifically, the experience will   
help managers:

* Generate alternatives for a decision
* Assess alternatives

**Bring the process to closure and make a final decision**. Specifically, the experience will help managers:

* Move toward closure\*
* End deliberations

**Communicate and implement the decision.** Specifically, the experience will help managers:

* Communicate the decision to stakeholders
* Put the final decision into action

\*Objectives with an asterisk are included in Part 2, the Café session.

Part 1: Self-paced, Individual Preparation

Prior to the live Café session, participants are expected to complete the following assignments:

* Review the following online lessons from the Harvard ManageMentor Decision Making topic:
  + Prepare to Make a Decision
  + Anticipate Decision-Making Challenges
  + Evaluate Alternatives
  + Make the Decision
  + Communicate and Implement the Decision
* Complete the online comprehension test from the Harvard Decision Making topic
* Identify a decision they need to make or that they have made in the past so they can apply the activities in the Café to their situations

Part 2: Live, Group-based Café Session

The Café session represents the core element of the learning experience. The purpose of this session is to provide an opportunity for managers to:

* Exchange ideas and questions with others
* Discuss the context of how concepts and skills apply in the workplace
* Practice and begin application of those concepts and skills
* Build momentum and support for applying the concepts and skills in the workplace

Working through the live Café session guide should take approximately 60 minutes. If the facilitator prefers a shorter session or wishes to spend more time on a specific concept or activity, he or she may want to cover only those concepts and activities that are most relevant to the group.

| SECTION | ACTIVITY | TIME |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Introduction** | Show icebreaker question while participants are arriving to the session (WHAT DO YOU FIND DIFFICULT ABOUT MAKING A DECISION?).   * Introduce facilitators. * Review tips for using technology during the session. * Set context: Decision making is an important part of being a leader. The way you make decisions can affect your team and reflect on how you are perceived as a leader. * Debrief icebreaker question. * Review session objectives. | 8 minutes |
| **Skill focus: Prepare to make a decision** | Facilitate practice activity: Choose the right approach. Participants:   * + Review a scenario and determine the best decision-making approach * Facilitate practice activity: Framing the decision. Participants:   + Practice improving ways of framing the decision introduced in the previously identified scenario * Reflection activity: Learners consider how they will frame an upcoming decision or how, in hindsight, they might have framed a decision that they made in the past. | 18 minutes |
| **Skill focus: Anticipate decision-making challenges** | Facilitate practice activity: Understanding common cognitive biases. Participants:   * + Read “responses” to a discussion in the context of the previously identified scenario and identify biased statements   + Discuss strategies for preventing bias   + Review summary list of cognitive biases * Facilitate practice activity: Understanding group dynamics. Participants:   + Discuss strategies for preventing aggressive advocacy in the context of the scenario   + Review tips for balancing advocacy with inquiry   Reflection activity: Learners anticipate challenges they may face for an upcoming decision or revisit challenges they’ve faced in the past and consider strategies for managing them. | 18 minutes |
| **Skill focus: Make the decision** | Facilitate practice activity: Moving toward closure. Participants:   * + Offer and discuss potential strategies/tactics for moving toward closure in the context of the scenario   + Review Harvard ManageMentor tips for moving toward closure   + Share additional methods they’ve used in the past for moving toward closure | 13 minutes |
| **Applying what you’ve learned** | Review session objectives and skill areas discussed.   * Review directions for completing the On-the-Job section of the online Harvard ManageMentor topic, including the action plan. * Close the session. | 3minutes |

Part 3: Self-paced, Individual Application

After the live Café session, participants are expected to complete the following assignments:

* Complete the online On-the-Job section in the Harvard ManageMentor Decision Making topic. The section provides learners with an opportunity to choose a skill to focus on and create an action plan for applying and developing the skill.
* Execute their action plan over a specified timeframe (e.g., 60 or 90 days).
* After the specified timeframe (e.g., 60 or 90 days), access the online On-the-Job section in the Harvard ManageMentor Decision Making topic to update the action plan and reflect on the experience.