



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

Your business success depends on the decisions you make.

But it can be tough to make a decision.

Even tougher to make the right decision.

Tougher still to get your decision carried out successfully.

But when you get better at decision-making, you set your business on the road to greater success.

As a business leader your job is to avoid the pitfalls of bad decision-making.

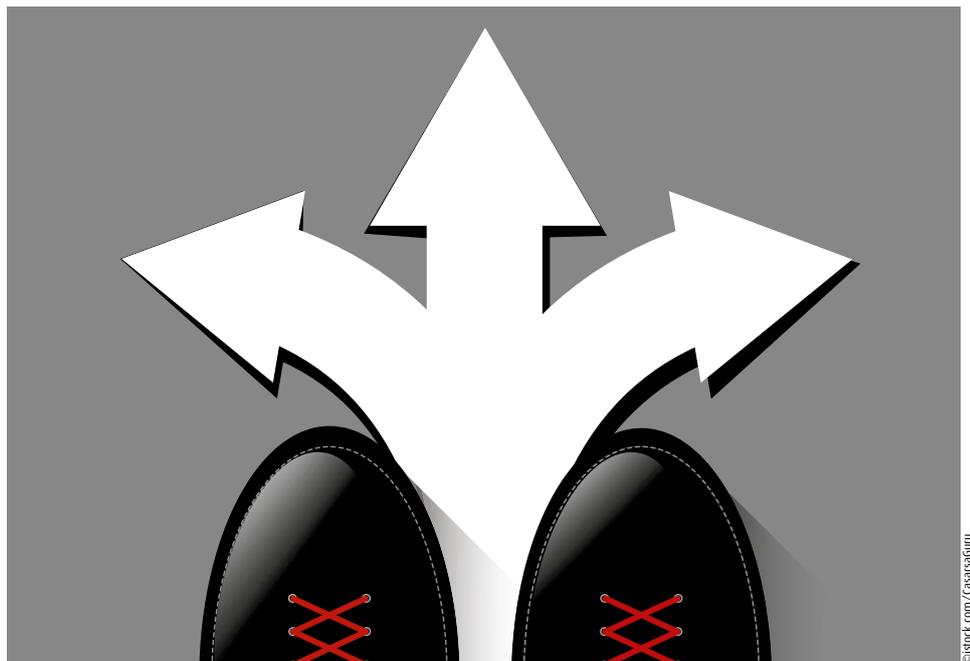
In a nutshell

When making important decisions avoid your decision-making auto-pilot and be sure to seriously sense-check your decisions.

Beware, bad decisions are just so easy to make...

...and if the big corporate businesses often get the big decisions wrong, aren't we also more likely to be guilty of bad decision-making?

A 2010 McKinsey Consulting study showed a profound lack of good decision-making on the big acquisition deals in the corporate world.



600% better than analysis...

The McKinsey study investigated 1048 business decisions over 5 years, and most of these decisions involved rigorous analysis before the decision.

McKinsey proved that a **good decision-making process** matters 600% more than good analysis.

"Superb analysis is useless unless the decision-making process gives it a fair hearing" - Lovallo and Sibony

Here's a proven solution for you...

Use a simple 4-step sense-check to escape your instinctive and yet naturally flawed decision-making.

Another KPMG study of corporate mergers showed that 83% of these large business decisions failed to boost shareholder value, when compared with other results in the same industry.

You have a great excuse for making bad decisions...

Have you ever been on, or even heard of, a training programme on great decision-making?

Unlikely.

And yet decision-making is a vital business skill - just like recruiting, selling or planning are business skills.

And as a business leader your decision-making skill ultimately determines how successful you are.

Success requires a better decision-making process...

Chances are you make decisions naturally without thinking about your decision-making process.

Chances are you've done alright so far, so it's a safe bet your next decision will also be alright!

Want better than 'ALRIGHT' results for your business?

If you want your business results to improve beyond 'alright' it's a good idea to **improve the quality of your decision-making process.**

So how do you protect yourself against bad decision-making?

So what stops you making great decisions?

Here are the 4 hazards you must avoid if you want to make great decisions:

1. Stop looking **so narrow**
2. Stop being **so biased**
3. Stop being **so emotional**
4. Stop being **so confident**

In a brilliant summary of the research and literature on decision-making, Chip and Dan Heath call these 4 hazards 'the four villains' of flawed decision-making.

These 4 natural, instinctive and automatic flaws get in your way. The Heath brothers provide a solution:

"We can't deactivate our biases, ...we can counteract them with the right (decision-making) discipline."

1. Stop looking so narrow – widen your options

A narrow decision-making question is: *"Should I hire Julie or not?"*

- You widen your options when you are able to choose between Julie, Adam and Elliot
- You widen your options further when you seriously consider outsourcing the work instead
- You also widen your options when you consider investing in technology to avoid hiring anybody
- You widen your options further when you apply the magic of 'AND' rather than the tyranny of 'OR' – hire someone part-time AND implement the better use of technology

Widen your spotlight...

One of the reasons corporate mergers fail is because the decision is 'do we merge or not?' It's a **'whether or not'** decision. The decision is too narrow. The odds that your decisions will be better improves as you widen the beam of your decision-making spotlight, widen the area you light up.

BEFORE YOU DECIDE ASK:

- **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?** Multi-track more than one decision option (1 or 2 more not dozens)



- at the same time.
- **Who else has solved your problem?** Copy their decision-making process.
- **Who else could be involved in the decision?** Involving more people widens options – yes this makes decision-making more complex but it also means the people involved are more likely to implement successfully with you.

2. Stop being so biased – reality-test your analysis

The Heath brothers put it so well: ***"At work and in life, we often pretend that we want truth when we're really seeking reassurance: "Do these jeans make me look fat?"***

Bias (without realising) leads you to giving unjustified weight to information supporting your view.

It's why Sun readers choose the Sun to confirm their Conservative views. Other readers choose the Mirror to support their Labour bias.

"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."

Without realising, bias habitually influences most decisions.

BEFORE YOU DECIDE ASK:

- **How can you dip your toe in?** Time to experiment. 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 the downloadable tools 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

At the moment you're making a decision, your emotions always influence your decision-making. These emotions can derail decisions.

For example, who would want to live with the decision of refusing the Beatles a recording contract? Decca's Dick Rowe was that man! He 'felt' that the time wasn't right for bands!

At least Rowe learned from his mistake and went on to sign the Rolling Stones!

Buying a car can be an emotional affair which is why it pays to avoid making a quick decision.

BEFORE YOU DECIDE ASK:

- **How would you feel about your decision in 10 minutes, in 10 days, in 10 years?** 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

The Heath boys show that even the best of us are overconfident:

"A study showed that when doctors reckoned themselves "completely certain" about a diagnosis, they were wrong 40% of the time."

We all think we're better than we are at predicting future outcomes.

BEFORE YOU DECIDE ASK:

- **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 nay-sayers what to expect. Then prepare and rehearse for the obstacles and a big upside too.
- **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 in the downloadable tools.
- **Is your decision-making process strong enough?**
"Success emerges from the quality of the decisions we make and the quantity of luck we receive. We can't control luck. But we can control the way we make choices."

TIME TO DISAGREE

"Involving too many people in a decision simply slows the decision down, this can risk losing a customer"

Speed of decisions is often important in business and yet...

"In a study of top leadership teams in Silicon Valley, an environment that tends to place a premium on speed, ...executives who weigh more options actually make faster decisions."

- Kathleen Eisenhardt - Academy of Management Journal

This might seem counter intuitive but clearly worth taking seriously.

There's an added bonus. Involving people in decision-making increases their willingness to support the decision and implement it well.

"Getting people to make a decision is hard in our business"

Simply putting the 4-part decision-making checklist to work can give reassurance and confidence.

So can a focus on testing and prototyping - this reduces the risk and fear of a big mistake by limiting the impact of the decision.

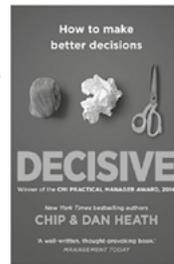
Working on a decision together can also help, by spreading the responsibility.

"Please tell me more"

If you want an invaluable guide to making smarter decisions you'd do well to get a copy of Chip and Dan Heath's book 'Decisive - How to make better decisions'.

As a business leader you're constantly making important decisions - you'll be better armed to make better decisions and get better results by reading 'Decisive'.

You'll also find more insights, exercises and resources by checking out the downloadable tools here...



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4 helping hands for you...

Leaving success to 'Lady Luck' is clearly a bad idea if you're serious about succeeding in your business.

So why would you leave your decision-making success to chance?

Human nature, without you realising it, allows '4 villains' to derail your decision-making.

So it pays to 'catch yourself on' and sense-check your decision-making with a proven decision-making checklist:

1. Stop looking so narrow - widen your options
2. Stop being so biased - reality test your analysis
3. Stop being so emotional - step away to get perspective
4. Stop being so confident - prepare to be wrong

ULTIMATE ARGUMENT:

"How do I know that this better decision-making process will deliver better results for my business?"

Flipping a coin is a decision-making process. Rock, paper, scissors is another.

However you wouldn't choose one of these processes for making a business decision, would you? No, because the process is flawed and results left to chance. Your natural decision-making process is also (naturally) flawed but can be bettered.

Improve your decision-making using this 4-part sense-check and your chance of success improves. Try it and see. Dip your toe in. Analyse a good decision you've made in the past and see which parts of the checklist show up.

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

START by widening your options before you make a decision.

Your reputation as a value added accountant really matters. This reputation is at risk unless you share high value business breakthroughs with your clients and contacts. Business Bitesize can help you do this. You can also become the only accountancy firm doing this in your area. Find out more here...
www.businessbitesizeforaccountants.com



Your next steps:

Your business success depends on your ability to make good decisions more often than you make bad decisions.

The bigger the decision the better you need to be at making decisions.

Start by widening your options

Hormone-crazed teenagers typically make 'whether or not' decisions:

"Should I go to the party or not?"

One study found that 'whether or not' decisions failed 52% of the time over the long term. The same study showed the failure rate reduce to 32% when two or more alternatives or options were introduced.

Insist more options show up, and insist this 4-part sense-check is used, and you'll be on your way to greater success.

More tools and information for you:

To download more insights and supporting resources use the URL link below.

Please go here <http://bit.ly/winndecisionsrpl> to see the tools and resources to help you boost the success of your accountancy firm by making winning decisions...

Your business results improve when you sense-check your decision-making...

Without realising it, your natural decision-making has 4 natural flaws that prevent you making the best decisions for your business.

So it pays to 'catch yourself on' and sense-check your decision-making with a proven, 4-part, decision-making checklist:

1. Stop looking so narrow – widen your options

'To do?' or 'not to do?' is a 'whether or not' decision. It's what you see hormonal teenagers do (it's also why corporate mergers often fail!).

Your job is to widen your options and consider alternatives. You then improve your chances of decision success and business success too.

2. Stop being so biased – reality test your analysis

"Does my bum look big in this?" is seeking just one biased answer! This natural and flawed bias even influences the analysis into a decision to confirm the bias you already have! Beware!

Your job is to reality-test your analysis and your decision, for example, by getting interview candidates to do some real work not just answer questions. Get others involved in the interview too.

3. Stop being so emotional – step away to get perspective

At a point-of-purchase, and every other moment of decision-making, emotions run high. And high emotions can derail good decision-making.

Your job is to step away from the emotions somehow and get a calmer, more logical and more long-term perspective. 'Phone-a-friend' helps. The 10/10/10 question helps too. And work out what matters most so that you make the best decision.

4. Stop being so confident – prepare to be wrong

If doctors can be wrong 40% of the time when they are 'completely certain' about their diagnosis, it shows how even the most qualified can derail good decisions through overconfidence.

Your job is to prepare for things going wrong. Anticipate problems and prepare for them (for both good and bad outcomes). Predict best case, worse case and most likely case outcomes. Set up trip-wire triggers to prompt decisions and actions that protect you from things going wrong.

YOUR SUPPORT TOOLS ARE HERE: Go to the link below and you'll find a selection of practical support tools to help you get a deeper understanding of great decision-making.

Find the support tools to help you here - www.businessbitesize.com/remarkable_practice



business breakthroughs
in minutes

Remarkable
Practice inspiring remarkable results
in your accountancy firm

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.

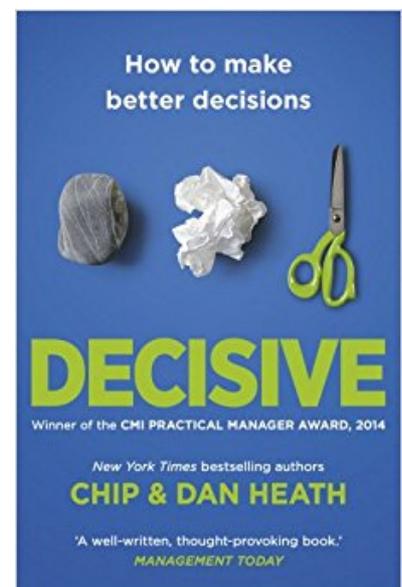
Good decisions require you to actively fight the confirmation bias. The question checklist provided in these Business Bitesize tools provides you with a process that helps you fight the natural and automatic.

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