Hi, I'm Dennis.
I enjoy making decisions.

[Image of a man smiling]
Early on, I would sometimes ask others for advice, but I would make the final decision. Isn’t that what leaders are supposed to do?
I soon realized that the more decisions I made, the less engaged others became, and the less ownership they had in the results.

The problem was me.
Bosses are often less informed than people closer to the action.

In most organizations, bosses make all the important decisions. In fact, most people would tell you that’s what leadership is. But are bosses always the best equipped to make all decisions?
The people closest to the decision know the most, and feel the most ownership.

Often, leaders aren’t the closest to a situation—and they’re not the people most affected by a decision. The people closest to the situation are the best informed about the personalities and factors involved. And they have the most at stake.
People are often treated like machines, not human beings.

Leaders don’t often make use of the perspectives and expertise of the people who are closest to a situation. Instead, many organizations seek to control behavior through top-down leadership that enforces procedures and rules. But people aren’t machines.
People don’t get to make meaningful decisions at work, so they are not fully engaged.
But I believe people are capable of making decisions. My belief is grounded in the assumptions I make about people...
People Are Unique
People Are

Creative Thinkers
People Are Capable of Learning
People Are

Up for a Challenge
Distributing the decisions more broadly and inviting more people to be part of the process will lead to more engaged people and better decisions.
It hasn’t been easy to trust and empower my people to make meaningful decisions. As a boss, it’s hard to let go.
And people aren’t perfect. We’re all fallible—including leaders. That’s why I developed **The Decision Maker Process.**
In a decision-maker organization, the leader leads by choosing a decision-maker.

The decision-maker must ask for advice.

The advice process brings multiple perspectives together to guide a successful outcome.

But the decision-maker makes the final call—and takes responsibility for it.
Choosing the Decision-Maker

The leader leads by choosing a decision-maker.

Proximity. Who’s close to the issue? Are they well acquainted with the context, the day-to-day details, and the big picture?
The leader leads by choosing a decision-maker.

**Perspective.** Proximity matters, but so does perspective. Sometimes an outside perspective can be just as valuable.
Choosing the Decision-Maker

The leader leads by choosing a decision-maker.

**Experience.** Has this person had experience making similar decisions? What were the consequences of those decisions?
The leader leads by choosing a decision-maker.

**Wisdom.** What kinds of decisions has this person made in other areas? Were they good ones? Do you have confidence in this person?
In a decision-maker culture, the decision-maker makes the final call but must ask for advice. Deciding who to get advice from can influence a successful outcome.
Get advice from people who have:

**Experience.** Has this person had experience with this problem? There’s no teacher like experience.
Get advice from people who have:

**Position.** People in different positions see different things. The decision-maker asks a leader, a peer, someone below them in the hierarchy—and even, if circumstances warrant, experts from outside the company.
Get advice from people who have:

**Responsibility.** Decisions have consequences—and decision-makers should be held accountable for theirs. At the same time, nobody is right all the time. The most important part of any decision is that the decision-maker fully engages with the advice process, not just that he or she gets it “right.”
The Advice Process

Get advice from people who have:

Ownership. When people are asked for advice, they start to feel ownership. Ideally, everyone who offers advice works for the success of the project as if it were their own. The advice process isn’t just about getting the right answer. It’s about building a strong team and creating a process of communication that will improve all decisions in a company.
Benefits of the Advice Process

1. Everyone becomes more engaged.
   People feel more ownership when their advice is sought.

2. On-the-job education.
   No training can match real-time experience.

   When decisions involve more people who are fully engaged, an organization has a higher chance of a good outcome than it does with a conventional top-down approach.
Accountability

After the decision is made, the decision-maker follows through by communicating and measuring the results of the decision.
I've shared my story of the decision maker process in these books...
Now, it’s your turn.
Connect

Share successes and lessons

www.decisionmakerbook.com
info@decisionmakerbook.com
facebook.com/decisionmakerbook
Twitter @DecisionBook