

ALITEK

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ALITEK DECISION- MAKING TOOL

4

Impact / Ease grid

Description:

An effective method to prioritise a list of 6-15 items. The impact/ease grid gains agreement on the 20% of issues that are causing 80% of the problems, or the 20% of actions that will contribute 80% to the solution. The impact/ease grid effectively prioritises issues or actions against two criteria, usually “impact” (ie the effect the issue or action has), and ease (ie how easy it will be to fix or implement).

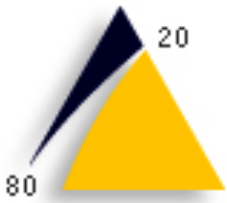
We have found over the years that this is the most effective decision-making tool in our toolkit. By involving their staff in decisions reached via this approach, managers can confidently delegate decision-making to lower levels, freeing themselves to address the more important strategic issues. You will be surprised how the decisions made by a small group of staff will reflect your own decision approach.

Method:

1. Generate a list of issues or actions using *brainstorming* or *Nominal Group Technique*.
2. Select and define the prioritising criteria. For example, “Impact” may be defined as “impact on achieving your 3 year objectives” and “Ease” may be defined as “cost, available skills, and level of management support”.
3. Divide the group in two.
4. The first group rates the list of issues or actions for “impact”. Each item on the list is given a rating out of 10, with 1 being the lowest impact, and 10 being the highest. As a starting point, choose the items with the highest and lowest impacts, and rate these as 10 and 1 respectively. These are then used as benchmarks to rate the rest of the list.

Tip: To avoid one person dominating the decisions, it’s best to have each person write down the rating they believe each item should have, and then share and come to agreement on a final score.

5. The second group rates the same list for “ease”, with a rating of 10 for the easiest, and a rating of 1 for the hardest. Again, a starting point is to agree on the easiest item and give this a 10, then agree on the most difficult item and rate this as a 1. Use these two as the benchmark to rate all others.
6. When all items are rated, the two groups combine their results.
7. Plot each item on a grid which has “ease” on the x-axis and “impact” on the y-axis. The items appearing in the top right hand corner are selected as the highest priority (or tactical items), as they have the highest impact and the greatest ease of implementation. Those items which appear in the top left corner (ie high impact but hard to do) are typically the strategic issues and should be given careful consideration. Look for opportunities to break them down into smaller components that are individually much easier to do



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Example:

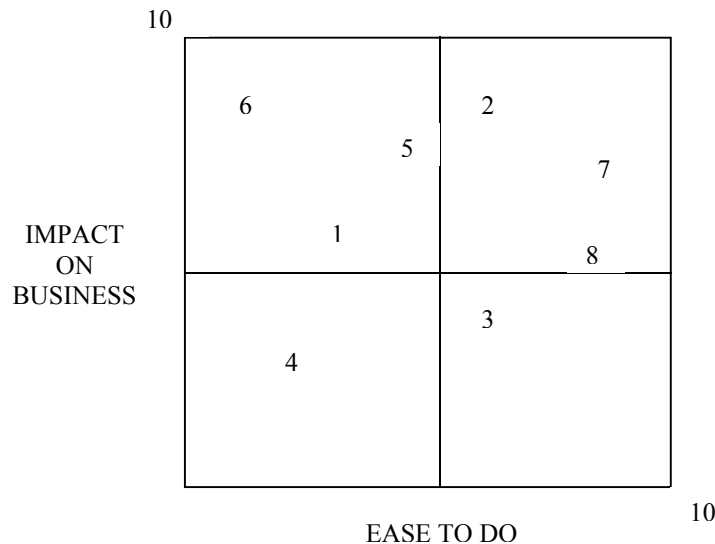
A typical list of actions to improve communication might look like this:

1. put up a notice board in the tea room for announcements
2. have a staff meeting every second Tuesday
3. publish a company newsletter
4. train each supervisor in communication skills
5. arrange for one person from each department to work in a different department for one day every 3 months
6. production will challenge the sales team to a game of volleyball in the carpark after work
7. train all staff to use e-mail
8. conduct a staff survey to get feedback on how the new changes are working.

First define the criteria:

1. **impact**—how much effect it will have on communication if we implement this suggestion in our organisation
2. **ease**—how easy it will be to do, in terms of time, money and other resources

After rating, each item is positioned on the grid, like this:



In this example items 2 and 7, followed by 5 and 8 would be the highest priority and therefore the first actions to implement.

Approximate time required:

20-30 minutes