

The Better Decisions Toolkit

An original, practical workbook from Readrr.ai

Give a big decision a little more thought.

A reusable workbook for comparing options, exposing assumptions and deciding what would change your mind.

What you will leave with

A completed decision brief, an options comparison and a journal you can reuse when the next choice appears.

A manageable commitment

Seven short exercises; use them on one real decision

Seven guided exercises. A completed example. Two reusable templates. Fillable spaces for your own work.

Keep a blank master copy. Save a new copy for each project or month.

Start here

Use one real task or decision throughout. Work in order the first time, then reuse the templates.

For people weighing a project, a hire, a purchase or another decision with meaningful trade-offs.

1. Name the decision you actually face - page 4
2. Create a real alternative - page 5
3. Choose the criteria before the favorite - page 6
4. Separate facts from assumptions - page 7
5. Imagine the choice going wrong - page 8
6. Compare and test sensitivity - page 9
7. Record the choice and review it - page 10

How to use the fields

Open the downloaded file in a PDF reader that supports forms. Type into a box, save a copy, close it and reopen it to confirm your answers were saved. If your reader does not support forms, print the worksheet or keep answers in a separate private document.

A useful standard

Write a first version, test it against reality and revise. A short specific answer beats a polished answer that avoids the hard question.

A structured process cannot remove uncertainty or replace qualified advice for medical, legal, financial or other specialist decisions.

Should Lena commit to a new office?

Worked example | fictional people and illustrative numbers, not a customer result or testimonial.

The decision

Lena runs a small design team. A twelve-month office lease looks appealing, but the real task is to improve collaboration without creating an unaffordable fixed cost.

Options beyond yes or no

Lease an office, book a shared room twice a month, or keep remote work with a structured weekly collaboration session. The current setup is also an option to compare.

Criteria and constraints

Illustrative hard constraint: total workspace cost below \$600 per month. Criteria: collaboration quality, commute burden, flexibility and total cost. Weights reflect Lena's priorities, not objective truth.

Missing evidence

The team has not tried regular in-person sessions. Lease cancellation costs and travel time matter. A beautiful space is not direct evidence that collaboration improves.

The reversible test

Try two shared-room sessions for one month with a \$200 cap. Record attendance, travel time and whether the agreed project decisions are completed. Agree on the review before starting.

The decision record

Lena postpones the lease while testing a smaller option. She records why, the strongest reason against it and the review date. A good result would not prove that every part of the original reasoning was correct.

Name the decision you actually face

Exercise 1 of 7 | Work at your own pace

A decision brief separates the objective from the first solution that came to mind. Write the choice, deadline and what happens if you do nothing. Make the commitment size visible before choosing a method.

1. Complete: "By [date], I need to choose [decision] so that [objective]."
2. List the practical constraints, who is affected and who has decision authority.
3. State the cost of delay and whether the choice can be reversed.

A concrete example

The task is to improve collaboration within a budget, not necessarily to rent an office.

Decision, objective and deadline

Constraints and people affected

Cost of delay; reversibility

Ready to move on: The objective can be met by more than one possible option.

Create a real alternative

Exercise 2 of 7 | Work at your own pace

A comparison is weak if one option is detailed and the others are caricatures. Include the status quo and a smaller or temporary option. Give each a fair description before evaluating.

1. Write at least three feasible options, including doing nothing for a defined period.
2. For each, list commitments, dependencies, likely benefits and important downsides.
3. Ask whether a staged trial or combination could test the main uncertainty at lower cost.

A concrete example

Compare a lease with occasional shared rooms and a remote collaboration routine. "Rent or remain chaotic" hides feasible alternatives.

Options, including a time-bounded status quo

Commitments and downsides of each

A smaller or staged alternative

Ready to move on: At least two options could reasonably be chosen.

Choose the criteria before the favorite

Exercise 3 of 7 | Work at your own pace

Criteria make trade-offs discussable. Separate hard constraints from preferences and record why each matters. Weights and scores are judgment aids, not measurements of truth.

1. Choose three to five criteria linked to the objective. Identify any non-negotiable constraints.
2. Assign weights totaling 100 if that helps; explain each weight in plain language.
3. Define what a low and high score mean before rating the options. Eliminate options that fail a hard constraint.

A concrete example

Cost, flexibility and collaboration matter. A 5 for flexibility means a one-month commitment; a 1 means a year with costly cancellation.

Criteria and hard constraints

Weights and why they fit this decision

What a low and high score mean

Ready to move on: The scoring rules exist before you score your preferred option.

Separate facts from assumptions

Exercise 4 of 7 | Work at your own pace

A neat scorecard can conceal weak inputs. Mark the source, date and uncertainty behind each important claim. Look deliberately for information that would favor another option.

1. Label key inputs as observed, reported, estimated or unknown.
2. Identify the one uncertain input most likely to change the decision.
3. Ask for contrary evidence from a person who understands the problem. Write what would change your mind.

A concrete example

Quoted rent is reported cost; assumed collaboration gains are an estimate. Cancellation terms are unknown until the agreement is checked.

Key inputs, sources and uncertainty

The assumption most likely to change the choice

Contrary evidence and mind-change condition

Ready to move on: Your conclusion does not silently treat assumptions as facts.

Imagine the choice going wrong

Exercise 5 of 7 | Work at your own pace

A pre-mortem makes predictable failure modes visible before commitment. Focus on realistic causes and useful prevention. Distinguish a manageable downside from a loss you cannot afford.

1. Imagine it is six months later and the chosen option disappointed you. List three plausible causes.
2. For each, name an early warning sign and a mitigation you can actually take.
3. Check the worst plausible downside, exit conditions and whether a smaller commitment reduces the risk.

A concrete example

The office is underused, commute time rises and the lease cannot be ended. A one-month shared-room test makes the first two risks observable without the lease.

Three plausible failure causes

Early warning signs and practical prevention

Downside I can accept; exit condition

Ready to move on: You have actions for the most relevant risks, not just a list of fears.

Compare and test sensitivity

Exercise 6 of 7 | Work at your own pace

If small changes to uncertain scores reverse the ranking, the decision is fragile. That may point to a useful experiment rather than more spreadsheet precision. Record the trade-off you are willing to accept.

1. Rate each feasible option against the defined criteria; use a 1-5 scale if useful.
2. For weighted scores, multiply weight by score and divide the sum by 100. Treat the result as a discussion aid.
3. Change the most uncertain score or important weight within a plausible range. If the winner changes, identify evidence worth gathering.

A concrete example

If the lease only wins when collaboration is scored a 5 rather than a 3, test collaboration first. A decimal score cannot make the assumption more reliable.

Comparison and the trade-off I accept

Plausible changes that would reverse the ranking

Useful experiment or information to gather

Ready to move on: You know whether your preference depends on a weak assumption.

Record the choice and review it

Exercise 7 of 7 | Work at your own pace

A decision journal preserves the reasoning available at the time. Review the process and the outcome separately: a good decision can have a bad outcome, and luck can rescue a weak process.

1. Write the choice, evidence, uncertainty, expected outcome range and strongest argument against it.
2. Name the first action, owner, review date and trigger for an earlier review.
3. At review, compare expectations with results. Ask what you could reasonably have known and what you will change next time.

A concrete example

Lena books two shared-room sessions, assigns an owner and reviews after a month. If attendance is low, she investigates the reason before deciding the whole idea failed.

My choice, reasoning and strongest counterargument

First action, owner and review trigger

Review: outcome, process quality and lesson

Ready to move on: The record is useful even if the outcome surprises you.

Your decision brief

Reuse this page before a meaningful commitment. For a reversible small choice, keep it short.

Frame

Decision / objective / deadline / owner / stakeholders / hard constraints

Your notes: Frame

Options

Option A / Option B / status quo / smaller test; commitments and downside for each

Your notes: Options

Evidence

Known facts with sources / assumptions / missing information / contrary evidence

Your notes: Evidence

Commitment

Choice / rationale / strongest counterargument / first action / owner / review date / exit trigger

Your notes: Commitment

Your options comparison and journal

Scores structure discussion. They do not turn uncertain judgments into objective facts.

Comparison

Criterion / weight / definition of 1 and 5 / A score / B score / status quo score / source confidence

Your notes: Comparison

Sensitivity

Change one uncertain score or weight. Does the preferred option change? What information would help?

Your notes: Sensitivity

Pre-mortem

Failure cause / warning sign / mitigation / owner / exit condition

Your notes: Pre-mortem

Review log

Date / expected range / actual outcome / what was knowable / process lesson / next change

Your notes: Review log

Finish with a useful next step

Return to the output you wanted at the beginning. What can you actually use now?

[] Did I fairly compare the status quo and a smaller option?

[] Can I name the assumption that could reverse my choice?

[] Have I recorded a review trigger before committing?

The useful thing I produced; where it is saved

One uncertainty or limitation I should keep in view

My next action, date and evidence I will review

Reuse pages 11-12 whenever you need a fresh worksheet. Keep your completed copies private. For download or file issues, contact support@readrr.ai with the workbook name.

Reading, use and context

The exercises, examples and templates in this workbook are original Readrr.ai editorial material.

This is a practical companion, not a reproduction of the books listed below. The reading suggestions offer broader context; they do not endorse this product or establish that these particular exercises produce a guaranteed result.

Optional further reading

Annie Duke, *Thinking in Bets* - further reading on decisions under uncertainty.

Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* - further reading on judgment.

Philip E. Tetlock and Dan Gardner, *Superforecasting* - further reading on updating beliefs.

Use the right tool for the decision

A structured process cannot remove uncertainty or replace qualified advice for medical, legal, financial or other specialist decisions.

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