

My Decision Making Process

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Background

- *Principals know that the “trickiest decision is that between the right and the wrong compromise (Drucker, 1967).”*
- *As the building principal of a 6-12 building, I often find myself spending a great deal of time and resources in attempt to arrive at a conclusion to specific issues that is fair and just for all involved.*

Purpose

- How effective am I at making decisions?
- Is there a correlation between the time I spend making a decision and the outcome of the decision?
- Are there specific individuals that I consult while working to make a decision that leads to more favorable outcomes?
- Can I more efficiently make decisions?



My Wondering

How can I most efficiently utilize time and resources to improve my decision making process?

My Actions

- Tracked 48 independent decisions over three months
- Tracked potential impact level of decision (high, medium, low)
- Tracked individuals consulted
- Tracked time to make decision (hour, days, week, more than a week)
- Tracked favorability of outcome of decision (Favorable, Not Favorable, Undetermined)
- Types of issues include student discipline, staff conflict, program implementation, purchasing, professional development, and others

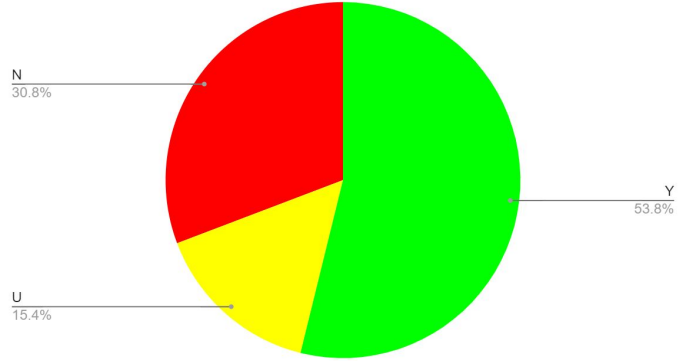
Data Collection

- Tracked decisions on a google sheet
- Disaggregated data
- Looked for obvious patterns and correlations

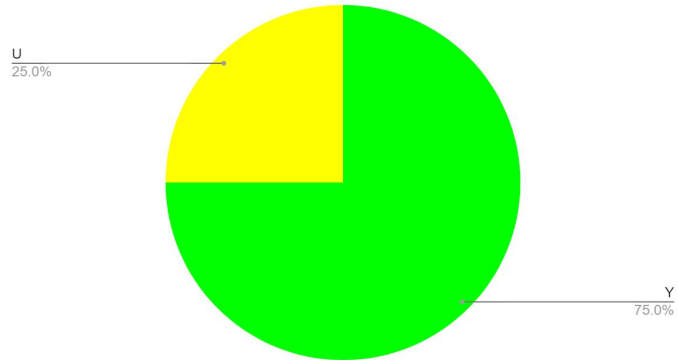
21		Parents	hour	Y
22		Parents, T	day	Y
23		Peers	hour	Y
24		Peers, T, C	weeks	N
25		Super	day	Y
26		Super	hour	Y
27		Super	weeks	N
28		Super, Asst	day	N
29		Super, Asst	day	N
30		Super, Asst	week	U
31		Super, Asst	week	Y
32		Super, Asst, Peers	day	Y
33		Super, C	week	U
34		Super, Peers	week	Y
35		Super, Peers, Asst	day	Y
36		Super, SRO, Asst, Peers	day	Y
37		T	day	U
38		T	week	Y
39		T, C	day	N
40		T, C	week	N
41		T, C	weeks	Y
42		T, Main	day	Y
43		T, Parents	day	Y
44		T, Parents, Super	weeks	U
45		T, SB	weeks	Y
46		T, Super	weeks	U
47		T, Super, Asst	week	Y
48		T, Super, Asst	weeks	Y
49				

Favorability vs Time

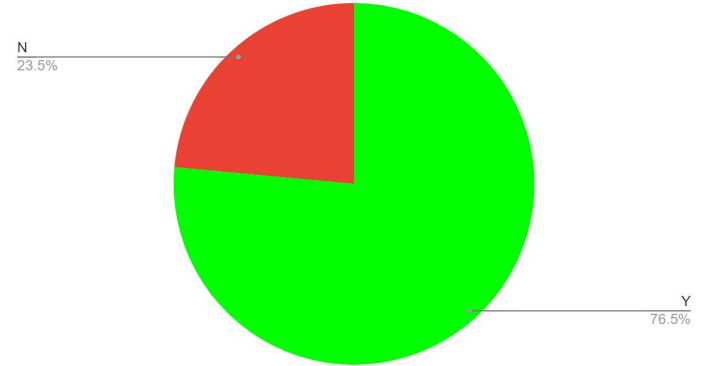
Hour



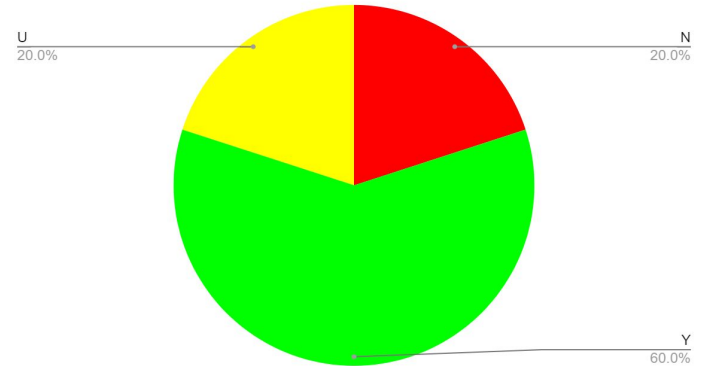
Week



Day

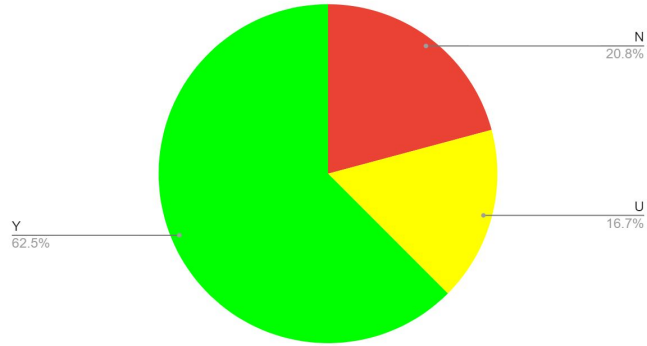


Weeks

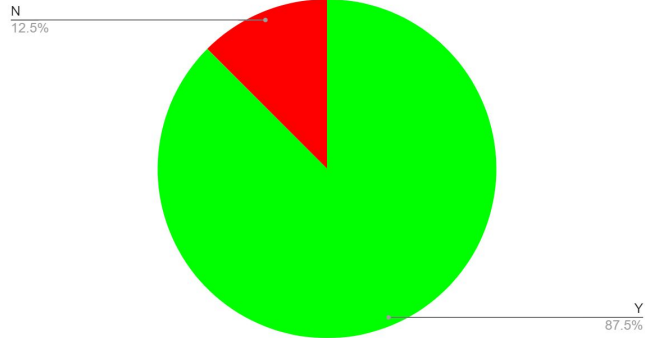


Favorability vs People Consulted

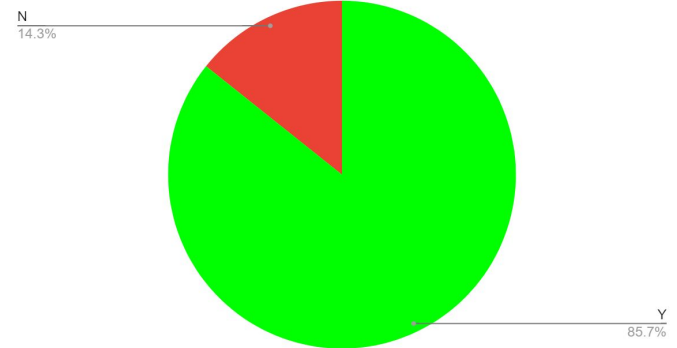
More Than One Stakeholder Consulted



Peers

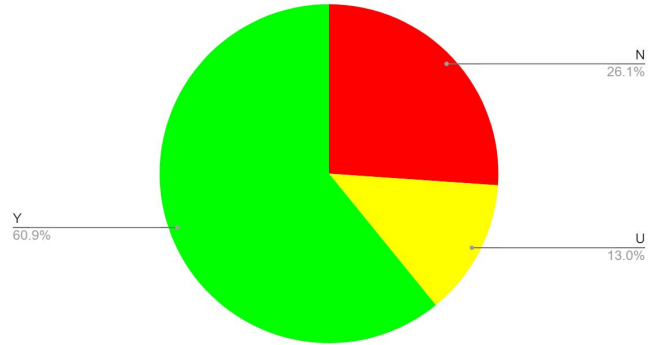


No One

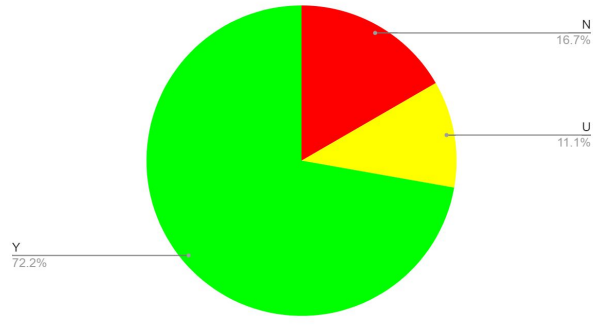


Favorability vs Impact Level

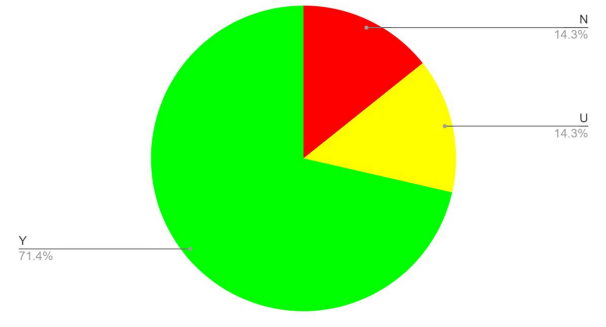
Medium Impact Decisions



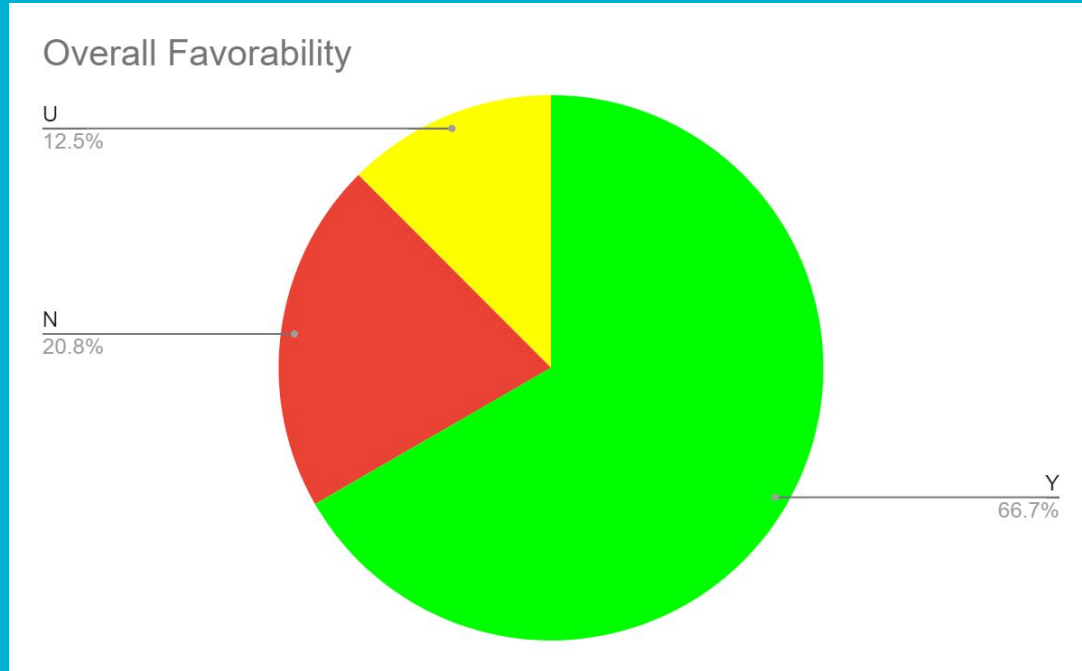
Low Impact Decisions



High Impact Decisions



Overall Favorability



My Discoveries

- Outcomes were more favorable when I made stand alone decisions or consulted peers (other administrators)
- Outcomes were more favorable when I spent more than an hour but less than a week making the decision
- Favorability decreases with increased number of stakeholders
- Favorability decreases with quick decisions (within an hour) or long decisions (more than a week)
- Outcomes were more favorable with high/low level impact decisions

Learning Statements

1. Decisions are best made by myself when I seek guidance from the correct individuals.
2. Decisions are best made by myself when I take the correct amount of time to consider all factors involved with the the decision.
3. My personal experiences and circumstances should always be taken into consideration when making decisions of all levels.

As a result of my findings, I will...

- ...trust my instincts after considering all factors
- ...make better judgements on who I consult
- ...not make “knee jerk” decisions
- ...not “drag my feet” when I know what needs to be done

Bibliography

Drucker, P.F. (1967). The Effective Decision. Harvard Business Review.



My Decision Making Process

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Background Leading to My Inquiry

Making critical, and even not so critical decisions, is at the cornerstone of being a successful building administrator. I often myself exhausting time and resources in an attempt to arrive at a conclusion when faced with an issue. In many situations, the circumstances are not "black or white" and there isn't a handbook on what the best course of action might be. I examined my decision making process through action research in order to see how I could best make efficient and effective decisions with favorable outcomes.

The Purpose of My Inquiry

Therefore, the purpose of my action inquiry was to examine my decision making process by tracking several factors that I typically consider when making a decision. Ultimately, I wanted to determine if any of those factors lead to more favorable outcomes.

My Wondering

With this purpose, I wondered how I can most efficiently utilize time and resources to improve my decision making process.

My Actions

I tracked a variety of decisions (48 total) that I made over a three month time period. I categorized each decision by the impact level of the decision (high, medium, low). I also tracked the individuals that I consulted with each decision, the time to make the decision, and the favorability of the outcome.

Data Collection

I simply kept the decisions and other data tracked by utilizing google sheets. I then examined trends and broke down the data where obvious correlations existed. One portion of my data collection that was subjective was the impact level. I considered high impact decisions those that effect greatly an individual and their future circumstances; medium impact decisions effect learning environments and relationships; low impact decisions basically effect individual preferences and are low risk.

My Data

All of the data that I collected was quantitative. The first slide examines the favorability of my decisions when compared to the amount of time I took to make the decision. Quick decisions (less than an hour) and long decisions (more than one week) had outcomes that were less favorable than when I took a couple of days to arrive at a conclusion.

The second slide examines the favorability of my decisions when compared to the various people that I consulted when making the decision. My decisions were more favorable when I consulted my peers (other administrators) or when I made decisions alone.

The third slide compares favorability of the decisions compared to the impact level of the decision. Decisions that had a medium level of impact were less favorable than low impact or high impact decisions.

Overall, my decisions had a favorable outcome two-thirds of the time.

My Discoveries

Learning Statement One: Decisions are best made by myself when I seek guidance from the correct individuals.

Learning Statement Two: Decisions are best made by myself when I take the correct amount of time to consider all factors involved with the decision.

Learning Statement Three: My personal experiences and circumstance should always be taken into consideration when making decisions of all levels.

Where I Am Heading Next

By completing the action research project, I am better aware of how and why I make certain decisions. As administrators, it is imperative that we stay true to our core values and avoid making decisions based on possible reactions. As a relatively young administrator, I understand that increased experience and exposure to various situations will help me make appropriate decisions. I have learned that I don't always need to confirm my "gut reaction" for each decision that I make. While I will sometimes make the incorrect choice, I know that my future decisions will be based largely on my core values and the values of my learning community.

Bibliography

Drucker, P.F. (1967). The Effective Decision. Harvard Business Review.