

Book Review

Reviewed by Sukesh Rao Pejavar, Assistant. Professor, Manel Srinivas Nayak Institute of Management, Bondel, Mangalore

A REVIEW ON *DECISION MAKING & PROBLEM SOLVING STRATEGIES*

Decision Making & Problem Solving Strategies by John Adair is a concise and practical guide that addresses one of the most essential skills of effective management: the ability to think clearly and act decisively. Adair, widely regarded as a pioneer in leadership studies and the world's first professor of leadership, argues that decision making, problem solving, and creative thinking are interrelated abilities that can be understood, practised, and improved. The book positions effective thinking not as an inborn talent but as a discipline that every manager and professional can develop through structured effort.

The central theme of the book is that sound decisions emerge from a systematic thought process rather than from impulse or habit. Adair presents his classic five-step framework for decision making, which involves defining the objective, collecting relevant information, generating feasible options, making the decision, and implementing and evaluating it. He further explains the three key functions of the mind, namely analysing, synthesising, and valuing, and introduces the powerful concept of the "depth mind", the subconscious faculty that continues to work on problems and often produces sudden insights and intuitive judgements.

A major strength of the book is its simplicity and applicability. Adair supports his frameworks with illustrative examples, checklists, and practical exercises that encourage readers to test their own thinking skills. The chapters on creative thinking and generating new ideas are particularly valuable, as they explain techniques such as brainstorming, suspending judgement, and using analogies to widen the span of options. The author emphasizes that useful thinking combines imagination with analysis, and that managers must learn to share decisions appropriately with their teams depending on the situation.

The book also addresses the practical side of implementation. Adair reminds readers that a decision is incomplete until it is carried out, and he stresses the importance of clear objectives, effective communication, and the willingness to evaluate outcomes honestly. His discussion of how leaders can involve others in decisions, and of the role of judgement and experience in weighing options, makes the book directly relevant to day-to-day managerial practice.

Despite its strengths, the book has certain limitations. Its brevity means that some topics, such as group decision making, behavioural biases, and quantitative decision tools, are treated only briefly. Readers seeking deep theoretical grounding or extensive case analysis may find the treatment somewhat introductory. Nevertheless, the book's purpose is to serve as a practical primer, and within that scope it succeeds admirably.

Overall, *Decision Making & Problem Solving Strategies* is a valuable and accessible guide for managers, entrepreneurs, and students who wish to sharpen their thinking skills. Its clear frameworks, practical orientation, and emphasis on creativity make it a useful addition to management literature. The book encourages readers to approach decisions and problems in a disciplined yet imaginative manner, making it highly relevant in today's fast-changing business environment.

Reference

Adair, J. (2010). *Decision Making and Problem Solving Strategies* (2nd ed.). Kogan Page.