



Make Your Own Decision Protocol

Here's a process for introducing new decision methods to your team. This process is suitable if your group is lacking a clear decision protocol, or if you have a protocol you want to modify. It will take 1-2 hours to do this in a team of 3-30 people.

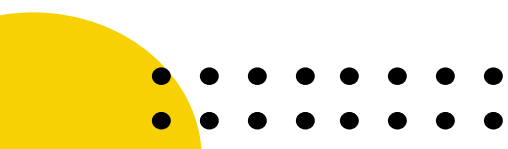
Step 1. Understanding decision methods & protocols

The objective for this session is to:

- Understand different **methods** for making decisions.
- Understand the different **types of decisions** we need to make in our work.
- Develop our own **protocol** that tells us which method to use for which type of decision.

Start by explaining the four decision **methods** to your team: Consent, Consensus, Advice, Mandate. Check that there is a shared understanding of how each of these methods work.

Then illustrate how other teams have combined these decision methods to create a **protocol** (for example you could present the case studies from Gini or Enspiral).



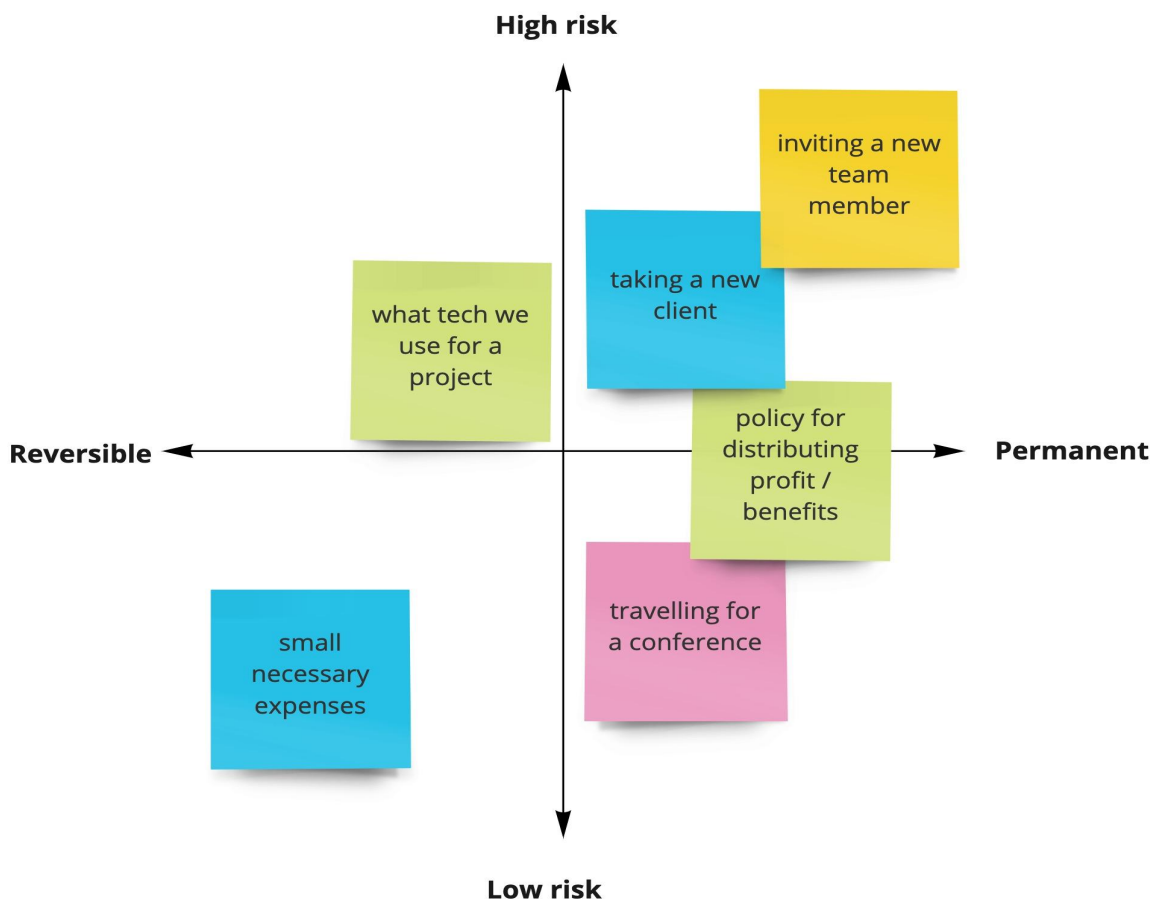
Step 2. Categorize decision types

On sticky notes: everyone writes a few types of decision they encounter in their work.

When everyone has written 1-3 notes, each participant shares them with the group by placing them where they think they fit on the Risk & Reversibility quadrant.

Think about the **consequences of this decision**: if there is a **high risk** that the decision could do harm, and it would be **difficult to reverse** the decision after it is made, then your sticky note should be in the top right quadrant.

Discuss: what decision methods suit each quadrant? Do you want to do all of these decisions by consensus? Could we try consent or advice for some of them? Are there some decisions you can safely make on your own?





Step 3. Make your own protocol

A protocol tells you what method to use for a specific type of decision. There are many different types of decisions in a team - you don't need to clarify them all at once. You can start with a limited experiment e.g. *"for the next 3 months we will make our technology decisions by advice, and our hiring decisions by consensus, then we will stop and review to see what we have learned."*

Go through each quadrant in turn: there are probably one or two decision types that people will easily agree on, and others which are more contentious. To get started, you just need to identify a few decision types that people are ready to experiment with.

For your first experiment, just try to put 3-5 rows in this protocol table. After 3 months you can come back, see what you've learned, and develop your protocol to the next stage.

Decision type	Method	Responsible
Training books, equipment purchases	Mandate	Anyone
What tech to use on a project	Advice	Project team
What measurement tools we use	Mandate	Metrics group
Policy for distributing profits	Consensus	Finance group
Taking on a new client	Consent	BizDev group

