



Learning Outcomes

Decision-Making

Core & Specialized Credentials

International Certification Alliance

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LICENSING INFORMATION

The work in this document was facilitated by the International Certification Alliance (ICA) and done through the contributions of various experts and practitioners. These learning objectives are intended to help the growing Tomorrow-Ready™ community worldwide.

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HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This document outlines the learning outcomes that accredited member organizations must address to offer ICA's Decision-Making certification. To achieve the certification, a learner must complete the core credential plus at least two specialized credentials.

Each learning outcome (LO) follows a particular pattern, described below.

O.O Learning Outcome Name

Additional Context, describing why this Learning Outcome is important or what it is intended to impart.

The learning outcome's purpose further describes what is expected to be imparted to the learner (e.g., a key point, framework, model, approach, technique, or skill).

CORE CREDENTIAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

Decision-Making Core

Decision-Making is an 8-hour Core Credential for professionals who need to make clearer, more accountable decisions in complex, uncertain, and fast-moving work environments..

1. Decision-Making Foundations

1.1 Decision-Making as a Discipline

Good decision-making starts with recognizing the influences on a decision, not denying they exist.

Build learners' understanding of decision-making as a discipline that uncovers and examines influences that impact the decision. Organizational influences can include purpose, constraints, timing, evidence, values, power, risk, uncertainty, consequences, etc. Explain how treating decisions as isolated choices can hide these influences.

1.2 Conditions That Shape Judgment

Judgment is influenced by cognitive bias, emotion, incentives, culture, hierarchy, time pressure, group norms, data quality, and prior experience. These conditions can strengthen or weaken decision quality.

Develop learners' awareness of the human and organizational conditions that influence decision quality.

2. Framing Decisions and Developing Options

2.1 Decision Context and Boundaries

Weak decisions often begin with weak framing. Teams may solve the wrong problem, confuse symptoms with causes, ignore constraints, or allow the decision scope to drift.

Develop learners' ability to clarify what is being decided, why it matters, who owns it, and what boundaries shape the decision.

2.2 Options and Decision Criteria

Teams can become attached to a preferred solution before credible alternatives or clear criteria exist. This hides trade-offs and can make the final choice appear more objective than it is.

Develop learners' ability to create viable options and compare them against criteria linked to objectives, constraints, stakeholder needs, and values.

3. Evidence, Uncertainty, and Trade-offs

3.1 Evidence, Assumptions, and Data Quality

Decision inputs such as analytics, forecasts, research, stakeholder input, and AI recommendations may be incomplete, biased, outdated, poorly defined, or misinterpreted.

Develop learners' ability to judge the usefulness and limitations of evidence before relying on it in a decision.

3.2 Uncertainty, Risk, and Trade-offs

Important decisions rarely offer certainty. Decision-makers need to compare benefits, costs, risks, reversibility, opportunity costs, ethical considerations, and the consequences of delay.

Develop learners' ability to weigh options under uncertainty — considering factors such as risk, reversibility, and opportunity cost — choose a course of action, and be clear about the trade-offs it accepts.

4. Participation, Accountability, and Learning

4.1 Decision Process Design

Decision quality depends on who participates, who decides, how disagreement is handled, and how accountability is maintained. The individuals with most relevant experience and information must participate regardless of their overall authority. Too little participation can miss insight, while too much can slow decisions.

Develop learners' ability to design decision processes that balance inclusion, expertise, speed, authority, and commitment. Cover the risks associated with broad participation (such as Groupthink, false consensus, deferring to the senior voice, and the silence of the people who'll implement it).

4.2 Decision Rationale and Accountability

Decisions can fail after they are made when people do not understand the rationale, criteria, ownership, implications, or expected next steps.

Develop learners' ability to make decisions understandable, traceable, and actionable for those affected.

4.3 Decision Outcomes and Learning

Organizations often move to the next decision without pausing to learn from the last one — which assumptions proved true or false, and what the process did well or could do better. Treating decisions as a source of learning, rather than blame, strengthens future judgment.

Develop learners' ability to treat completed decisions as a blameless source of learning that improves future judgment and decision-making.

4.4 Human Judgment in AI-Guided Decisions

AI can widen the options a decision-maker sees and surface patterns a person would miss, but it can also narrow a decision to a single recommendation that arrives pre-justified.

Develop learners' ability to define the genuine strengths and weaknesses of AI decision support systems and the role of human judgment in the process.

SPECIALIZED CREDENTIAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

Decision-Making Delegation

Decision-Making Delegation is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to develop their ability to determine who should make a decision, at what level of authority, and how to communicate that delegation clearly.

1.1 Delegation Foundations

Understanding the context and factors of a decision determines if the decision can or should be delegated.

Build learners' understanding of delegation as a deliberate choice about who decides, when, and how, and of what goes wrong when delegation is left implicit. Explore the elements of a decision, such as the stakes, reversibility, and complexity, that impact delegation.

2.1 Understand Delegation Readiness

A delegate needs the context to understand why the decision matters, the skill to reason it through, and the information to act on. Where one of those is missing, delegation is still possible with appropriate support.

Develop learners' ability to analyze a decision's elements alongside a delegate's readiness, so the delegation decision itself is evidence-based rather than assumed. Cover how delegation often breaks down because the decision's stakes, reversibility, or complexity were never weighed against the delegate's skill or experience. A high-stakes, low-reversibility decision handed to an under-prepared delegate, or a low-stakes decision over-controlled by the delegator both signal a fit problem, not a communication problem.

3.1 Engaging to Support Delegation

Delegating a decision does not mean disengaging from it. Stepping back risks the decision drifting from its intent, while staying too close takes the authority back.

Develop learners' ability to design ongoing engagement practices, such as reporting, validation, and escalation. These practices keep the delegator appropriately informed without eroding the delegate's authority. Cover the risk of not checking in and how decisions can drift from intent or the risk of over-monitoring and undermining the authority they granted.

4.1 Delegation Review Approach

Reviewing a delegated decision only by whether the outcome was favorable can hide unclear authority, scope creep, or a delegation level that didn't match the situation. Process review supports better delegation decisions in the future.

Develop learners' ability to assess the quality of a delegation process independently of the outcome of the decision it produced. Explain the risks of reviewing only the outcome of the decision. Cover how reviewing the process of the delegation (decision elements, delegate readiness, and delegation support) build the decision delegation skill.

Decision-Making Under Uncertainty

Decision-Making Under Uncertainty is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to develop their ability to make sound decisions when information is incomplete, conditions are changing, and outcomes cannot be predicted with confidence.

1.1 Decision-Making Under Uncertainty

In some decisions uncertainty is deep enough that no amount of analysis will resolve it — the only way forward is to choose a path, act, learn from what happens, and be ready to change course. This goes beyond the Core's treatment of uncertainty as one factor among many.

Build learners' understanding of decision-making under deep uncertainty as an ongoing cycle of committing, testing, learning, and adjusting.

2.1 Critical Assumptions and Weak Signals

When evidence is incomplete, teams need to know which assumptions matter most and which signals would show that conditions are changing.

Develop learners' ability to focus attention on assumptions and signals that could materially change a decision.

3.1 Adaptive Decision Approaches

Uncertain decisions may benefit from staged commitments, experiments, checkpoints, or triggers that preserve future choice. A single irreversible commitment may be too rigid for changing conditions.

Develop learners' ability to design decision approaches that enable action while preserving learning and adaptability.

4.1 Persist, Pivot, or Stop Decisions

Uncertainty continues after a decision is made. The hardest part is often not spotting that a change is needed, but having the willingness and commitment to act on it — persisting, pivoting, or stopping — despite sunk cost, ego, or pressure to stay the course.

Develop learners' ability and resolve to change a decision when the evidence calls for it, not only to recognize that it should change.

Data, AI, and Decision Accountability

Data, AI, and Decision Accountability is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to develop their ability to use data and AI-enabled recommendations responsibly in organizational decisions.

1.1 Role and Limits of Data and AI

Data and AI can improve speed, pattern recognition, consistency, and scale, but they do not replace human judgment, context, values, or accountability.

Build learners' understanding of how data and AI can support decisions while leaving responsibility with human decision-makers.

2.1 Evidence Quality, Bias and Accountability

Data- or AI-supported decisions can be weakened by incomplete data, historical bias, model limitations, proxy variables, automation bias, unclear ownership, or poor transparency.

Develop learners' ability to identify where decision inputs need additional scrutiny and where accountability risks remain.

3.1 Traceable Decision Rationale

When data or AI informs a decision, people need to know what evidence was used, what limitations were considered, who decided, and why the action was chosen.

Develop learners' ability to document decision rationale in a way that supports trust, auditability, learning, and responsible action.

4.1 Human Oversight in Practice

Human oversight is easy to establish but hard to keep effective. A reviewer handling two hundred recommendations a day is not exercising judgment on any of them; a reviewer shown the recommendation before forming their own view is anchored to it; a reviewer measured on throughput will approve. These are the consequences of how the loop was built.

Develop learners' ability to judge whether human judgement in an AI-augmented decision process is real, and to identify what would restore it. Cover the observable signals of a degraded loop and the levers that restore it.

AI and Human Judgment

AI and Human Judgment is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to develop their ability to make clear, confident decisions about when to rely on AI outputs, when to override them, and when not to use AI at all. As AI systems become faster and more capable, the pressure to defer to their outputs increases – even in situations where human judgment is more reliable, more accountable, or more appropriate. This course builds the practical decision-making discipline needed to work with AI as a capable assistant rather than an unquestioned authority, including the ability to recognize the specific evidence that should prompt an override and to calibrate that judgment over time using real outcomes.

1.1 Conditions that Drive AI Over-Reliance

Over-reliance on AI is often driven by time pressure, confident AI outputs, social expectations, and the convenience of accepting a ready-made answer rather than by lack of knowledge alone. Automation is where the error cost is highest since nothing is left to catch it.

Help learners understand AI over-reliance as a behavioral and organizational challenge that can be countered through deliberate practices. Cognitive conditions such as automation bias or cognitive ease. Behavior conditions such as skill atrophy or diffusion of responsibility.

2.1 Human-AI Decision Boundaries

AI adds different value across different decisions. Sound judgment requires clear boundaries for when AI can lead, when it needs verification, when human judgment should take precedence, and when the decision should not involve AI at all.

Build learners' ability to make explicit, defensible decisions about the appropriate role of AI and the evidence that should change that role. For example, an AI's role in a given decision could be to lead, to verify, or to defer to human judgment, depending on the decision's stakes and the evidence available.

3.1 Maintaining and Calibrating Independent Judgment

Independent judgment is difficult to sustain when overriding AI feels slower, riskier, or socially discouraged. Judgment also improves when past decisions are compared with actual outcomes.

Develop a repeatable practice that helps learners maintain independent judgment and calibrate it over time based on actual outcomes.

4.1 Organizational Conditions for Sound Human-AI Judgment

Individual judgment is difficult to sustain when organizational norms reward speed over accuracy or treat AI outputs as authoritative by default.

Help learners see human-AI judgment as an organizational design issue as well as an individual capability.

Customer–Centric Culture, Leadership & Decision–Making

Customer–Centric Culture, Leadership & Decision–Making is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for leaders, managers, and practitioners who shape how people make decisions and act on behalf of customers. Customer–centricity does not become culture because an organization declares a value; it becomes culture when leadership behavior, employee experience, incentives, decision rights, routines, information, and accountability consistently reinforce customer–centered action. This credential helps learners diagnose the conditions shaping behavior, enable people to act for customers, and design practical mechanisms that embed customer perspective into everyday work.

1.1 Culture as a Reinforcing System

Organizations may say customers come first while everyday signals tell employees otherwise. Leadership behavior, incentives, policies, decision rights, tools, information, and informal norms collectively teach people what really matters. Distinction: the Customer–Centricity Core introduces these organizational conditions; this specialization examines how they work together as a culture system that can be deliberately shaped.

Develop learners' understanding of customer–centric culture as the pattern of conditions that shapes how people think, decide, and act—not simply a stated value or individual mindset. Explore how formal and informal signals can reinforce or contradict the customer promise, and why employee experience and customer experience are connected.

2.1 Culture, Incentives and Decision Rights

What people actually do for customers is shaped by what gets rewarded, what creates friction or risk, whose voice carries authority, what information is available, and what happens when a customer needs conflict with short–term internal pressures.

Develop learners' ability to diagnose the behavioral signals and organizational mechanisms that support or undermine customer–centricity. Examine incentives and consequences, decision rights, performance measures, policies, customer evidence, cross–functional friction, and the gap between espoused values and everyday behavior.

3.1 Leadership, Empowerment and Employee Experience

Employees cannot consistently act for customers when leaders model conflicting priorities, customer information is inaccessible, or people lack the authority, capability, psychological safety, or support to respond. Customer-centric cultures therefore depend on both leadership behavior and an employee environment that enables good judgment.

Develop learners' ability to design leadership and employee-enablement practices that make customer-centric action easier in the flow of work. Explore leader role-modeling, access to customer insight, clear guardrails and decision authority, capability building, recognition, psychological safety to raise customer issues, and removing internal friction that prevents employees from acting on what they know.

4.1 Reinforcement, Accountability and Learning

Culture-change efforts fade when customer-centric behavior depends on a few champions or one-time campaigns. Sustainable culture is reinforced through recurring decisions, rituals, accountability, visible follow-through, and learning from new customer and employee evidence.

Develop learners' ability to embed and evolve customer-centric culture through practical reinforcement mechanisms. Explore governance and prioritization routines, customer stories and evidence in decision forums, accountability and recognition, feedback loops, progress signals, and periodic review of whether existing norms still serve customers as needs, technology, and operating conditions change.

Prioritization

Prioritization is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to develop their ability to make clear, defensible, value-based decisions about what to work on when capacity is limited and demand exceeds supply. Prioritization is one of the most frequently exercised and least formally developed skills in organizational life. Whether the context is a product backlog, a delivery queue, a portfolio of initiatives, or a team's weekly workload, the discipline of identifying what matters most and committing to a sequence is the same: understand what value means in this context, surface the trade-offs honestly, apply consistent criteria, and communicate the decision in a way that builds rather than erodes confidence.

1.1 Prioritization as a Value Judgment

Prioritization frameworks encode assumptions about what value means, whose needs matter, and which trade-offs are acceptable. They do not remove judgment from the decision.

Build learners' understanding of prioritization as a value-based discipline requiring explicit criteria and trade-offs. What counts as "value" at all (what gets attention), what factors are allowed to influence the decision (what is considered in the cost, etc), and whose needs get counted and by how much (who gets attention).

2.1 Value in Context

Executives, users, teams, and other stakeholders may define value differently. Prioritization becomes inconsistent when those differences are not addressed.

Develop learners' ability to surface competing definitions of value before prioritization. For example, an executive might define value primarily in terms of revenue or strategic positioning, a user might define it as whether the product actually solves their day-to-day problem, and a delivery team might define it as reducing the technical debt that's slowing every future decision down. None of these definitions is inherently more correct than the others. A shared basis for criteria might mean negotiating a small set of common dimensions, such as customer impact, revenue effect, and delivery risk, that each stakeholder's definition of value can be translated into and weighed against together.

3.1 Defensible Prioritization

A strong prioritization approach makes value criteria and trade-offs visible. The result should be explainable to stakeholders even when they disagree with the prioritization.

Develop learners' ability to design and apply context-appropriate prioritization methods that produce transparent trade-offs. For example, a weighted scoring model that explicitly rates each item against criteria like customer impact, revenue, and effort makes the reasoning visible, so a stakeholder can see exactly why item A ranked above item B and can challenge a specific score rather than the decision as an opaque whole.

4.1 Prioritization Discipline Over Time

Prioritization discipline can erode as demand grows and stakeholder pressure increases.

Develop learners' ability to assess the conditions that sustain or weaken prioritization discipline. Structural and cultural conditions determine whether hard choices continue to be made consistently by leveraging a variety of prioritization practices. Introduce conditions that impact prioritization over time such as organizational growth, stakeholder pressure increases, the gap between demand and capacity widens, and the temptation to satisfy every request.

Delegation and Developing Others

Delegation and Developing Others is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for managers who want to use delegation as a deliberate tool for employee growth rather than a way to offload tasks. Participants examine how to decide what to delegate and to whom, how to hand off work with enough context and support, and how to follow up in a way that builds capability rather than dependency.

1.1 Deciding What to Delegate

Delegation is not a binary choice between doing the work and handing it off completely. Different levels of authority can match different levels of risk, development value, and employee capability.

Build learners' understanding of delegation as a range of authority levels rather than an all-or-nothing choice. Introduce levels of delegation such as asking the employee to gather information and recommend an option before the manager decides, or having the employee decide but checks in before acting.

2.1 Development Needs and Delegated Work

Delegation develops skill when a task stretches an employee without overwhelming them. Work that is too easy or too difficult can waste the developmental opportunity.

Develop learners' ability to match delegated work to an employee's current capability and development needs. Help learners understand that appropriately stretching work is work where the person has some foundation but needs to grow. For example, an employee who's confident running routine analyses but has never presented findings to leadership might be given a task that includes that presentation piece specifically.

3.1 Delegation Handoffs

Delegated work is more likely to succeed when employees understand why it matters, what authority they have, and where support is available. Weak handoffs often create rework or repeated dependence.

Develop learners' ability to hand off work with clear context, authority, and support. For example, a strong handoff might include the reason the task matters to a larger goal and a named person to check with if they get stuck.

4.1 Follow-Up on Delegated Work

Follow-up can strengthen ownership or create dependency. Too much oversight can undercut autonomy, while too little can allow problems to grow unnoticed.

Develop learners' ability to follow up on delegated work while preserving employee ownership. For example, a follow-up approach might ask "what have you decided so far and why?" rather than "have you done this yet?", which invites the employee to demonstrate their own reasoning and ownership rather than simply reporting compliance.

Problem Framing and Root Cause Analysis

Problem Framing and Root Cause Analysis is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to develop their ability to define problems clearly, distinguish symptoms from causes, and focus analysis on the right question. The course focuses on framing discipline, assumptions, causal inquiry, and problem statements that support action. Learners will explore the value of framing, assumptions and boundaries, causal inquiry, and problem–statement quality.

1.1 The Value of Framing

Teams often analyze the first version of a problem they hear. This can lead them to solve symptoms, preferences, or inherited assumptions rather than the underlying issue.

Build learners' understanding of problem framing as a critical first step in analysis.

2.1 Assumptions and Boundaries

Problem definitions are shaped by what is included, excluded, assumed, and valued. Making these choices visible helps prevent the frame from being mistaken for objective reality.

Develop learners' ability to make the boundaries of a problem definition visible and testable. Cover what has been included, what has been left out, and whose view of the problem the frame reflects.

3.1 Causal Inquiry

Root-cause work becomes superficial when familiar explanations or visible symptoms are accepted as causes too quickly. A disciplined inquiry separates symptoms from underlying causes and explores contributing factors, interactions, and the evidence needed to test them.

Develop learners' ability to conduct a structured root-cause analysis that distinguishes symptoms from underlying causes.

4.1 Problem Statement Quality

A useful problem statement is specific, evidence-informed, actionable, and neutral enough to allow more than one possible solution.

Develop learners' ability to assess and strengthen problem statements before solution design begins.

Evidence Quality

Evidence Evaluation and Information Quality is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to develop their ability to assess whether evidence is credible, relevant, sufficient, and fit for purpose. The course focuses on source quality, data limitations, evidence gaps, triangulation, and responsible use of information. Learners will explore what makes evidence strong, source and data limitations, evidence synthesis, and fitness for a conclusion.

1.1 Evidence Quality in Analysis

Available information is not automatically good enough for the question being asked. Evidence quality directly affects the confidence that can reasonably be placed in analysis and recommendations.

Build learners' understanding of the dimensions that make evidence more or less useful for reasoning and analysis.

2.1 Source and Data Limitations

Evidence may be biased, incomplete, outdated, unrepresentative, or misinterpreted. These limitations need to be understood before conclusions are formed.

Develop learners' ability to assess the strengths and weaknesses of sources and data.

3.1 Evidence Synthesis

Useful analysis often requires multiple sources rather than one piece of evidence. Responsible synthesis makes agreement, contradiction, and unresolved gaps visible and guards against confirmation bias, where people read evidence to confirm what they already believe.

Develop learners' ability to combine evidence transparently without hiding conflict, uncertainty, or letting bias shape the reading.

4.1 Evidence Fitness for a Conclusion

A conclusion can sound persuasive while still being stronger than the available evidence supports. Claims, evidence, and confidence need to stay aligned.

Develop learners' ability to challenge overstatement of conclusions and assess whether evidence is sufficient for a conclusion.

Reasoning Quality

Reasoning Quality is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to develop their ability to identify reasoning traps, challenge assumptions, and improve the quality of their reasoning and judgment.

1.1 Importance of Reasoning Quality

Reasoning errors often come from overconfidence, motivated reasoning, group pressure, or hidden assumptions rather than lack of intelligence. Reasoning quality can be improved through deliberate practice.

Build learners' understanding of how reasoning quality affects analysis, judgment, trust, and outcomes.

2.1 Bias and Assumptions in Reasoning

Bias is difficult to see from inside one's own reasoning. Common cognitive biases shape conclusions quietly. Surfacing assumptions and alternative explanations helps reveal where logic may be incomplete or distorted.

Develop learners' ability to identify cognitive biases and untested assumptions that weaken reasoning. Cover common biases such as confirmation bias, anchoring, availability, and overconfidence.

3.1 Reasoning Review Practices

Reasoning improves when teams create habits for constructive challenge, feedback, and reflection before decisions are finalized.

Develop learners' ability to design review practices that strengthen reasoning without making challenges adversarial.

4.1 Improvement in Reasoning Quality

Better reasoning should show up through clearer assumptions, stronger evidence, better questions, and more transparent conclusions rather than increased confidence alone.

Develop learners' ability to recognize what stronger reasoning looks like and how to track its improvement.

Risk Appetite and Tolerance Design

Risk Appetite and Tolerance Design is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to develop their ability to define risk appetite in terms specific enough to actually guide decisions, rather than producing a statement that sits in a policy document unused. Most organizations have a risk appetite statement. Few can explain what it means for the decision in front of them right now. This course focuses on closing that gap: translating appetite from a general statement of risk tolerance into thresholds, examples, and decision rules that people can actually apply.

1.1 Usable Risk Appetite Statements

Risk appetite statements often remain too broad to guide real decisions. Usable statements provide enough specificity to shape choices when trade-offs and exposure must be judged.

Build learners' understanding of what makes risk appetite decision–usable rather than merely descriptive. Cover who sets and owns the risk appetite statements.

2.1 Stated and Actual Risk Appetite

An organization's real tolerance is often revealed more clearly by past decisions than by policy language. Comparing stated appetite with actual choices can expose meaningful gaps.

Develop learners' ability to compare stated risk appetite with actual decision patterns. Teach that stated risk appetite ("We're innovative and willing to take calculated risks") often doesn't match actual decision–making patterns ("We rejected that initiative because it was too risky").

3.1 Designing Usable Risk Appetite Statements

A practical risk appetite statement translates general posture into thresholds and decision rules. These rules reduce ambiguity about what teams may accept and what requires escalation.

Build learners' ability to translate abstract risk appetite into concrete, decision-usable statements that actually guide behavior. Teach them that vague appetite statements ("We're willing to take reasonable risks") don't help decision-makers. They need thresholds—specific boundaries about what the organization will refuse and what it will accept. Introduce types of risk, such as financial, reputational, technology, or operational, and cover how the type of risk impacts the risk appetite in different organizations.

4.1 Practical Use of Risk Appetite

A risk appetite statement provides little governance value if people do not refer to it when making decisions. Evaluation therefore needs observable evidence of actual use or non-use.

Build learners' ability to recognize whether risk appetite statements are actually being used to guide decisions or just sitting in policy documents. Teach them what evidence looks like. Cover evidence of use such as decision documents reference the appetite statement, people explain decisions in terms of thresholds, conversations about risk align with stated appetite, or decisions that would violate appetite don't happen. Cover evidence of non-use such as decisions contradict stated appetite, people are unaware the statement exists, risk conversations ignore appetite, or decisions get justified after the fact rather than checked against it.

Facilitating Decision-Making

Facilitating Decision-Making is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to develop their ability to support groups in reaching decisions that are clear, well-reasoned, and genuinely owned by those who will carry them out. Decision-making is one of the most common and most mismanaged activities in organizational life: groups confuse discussion with commitment, conflate consensus with consent, and produce outcomes that are agreed in the room and undermined outside it.

1.1 Dynamics of Group Decision-Making

Group decisions are shaped by social pressure, status, unclear authority, and confusion between discussion, agreement, and commitment. A group can agree in the room without genuine ownership of what happens next.

Build learners' understanding of the cognitive, social, and structural dynamics of group decision-making, including the difference between agreement and commitment.

2.1 Designing for Group Dynamics in Decision-Making

Different decisions require different processes. Good facilitation begins by clarifying what is being decided, its scope, constraints, success criteria, and who holds decision authority before choosing an appropriate decision approach. Without deliberately designing for group dynamics, decisions can be skewed, misaligned, or stalled.

Build learners' ability to design against predictable failure modes before they show up in the room, rather than reacting to them after a decision has already gone sideways. For example, if a group is prone to deadlock between two entrenched positions, a facilitator might build in a structured process like weighted voting or a decider role to break the tie rather than letting debate circle indefinitely; if a group is prone to groupthink, where people quietly agree just to avoid conflict, a facilitator might require anonymous written input before any discussion starts so a dissenting view can surface without social pressure to conform.

3.1 Decision Quality and Ownership

A smooth decision process can still produce a weak decision or low ownership. Facilitators need to evaluate both decision quality and participant commitment.

Build learners' judgment about decision quality, ownership, and neutrality needed to support a well-facilitated decision. Cover facilitation design factors that impact decision quality such as skipping straight to decision-making, failure to surface key dissent, only hearing the loudest participants, leaving people feeling overridden, or the facilitator taking ownership of the decision.

4.1 Facilitating Group Decision-Making

Designing a decision process on paper is different from actually running it with real people in the room. A facilitator can plan a perfectly reasonable approach, and still fumble it live if the group tries to skip a step to save time.

Build learners' ability to turn decision-design into practiced action. Cover how to recognize when the decision-design is falling apart, what is causing the challenge, and techniques on how to adapt in the moment that strengthen the outcome of the decision-making.

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