



DACI

Group Decision-making Framework

Projects and larger initiatives involve lots of decisions. The DACI is a framework for making group decisions efficiently and effectively.

USE THIS PLAY TO...

Define the roles for making high-impact or high-risk group decisions.

If you're struggling with decision making, balanced team, or shared understanding on your Health Monitor, running this play might help.



PEOPLE

4 - 8



DIFFICULTY

Moderate



PREP TIME

1 hr



TIME

1 hr

RUNNING THE PLAY

DACI is all about bringing structure to group decision-making. So review this play thoroughly first to make sure you understand that structure.

WHAT DOES "DACI" STAND FOR?

D = Driver. The one person responsible for coralling stakeholders, collating all the necessary information and getting a decision made by the agreed date. This may or may not be the project's full-time owner, depending on the decision.

A = Approver. The one person who makes the decision.

C = Contributors. They have knowledge or expertise that may influence the decision - i.e., they have a voice, but no vote.

I = Informed. They are informed of the final decision.

The DACI only works if everyone in the group rallies behind decisions once they're made - even if they don't agree. Without a willingness to share concerns and trust they'll be considered, your team will find itself mired in a bog of circular debates and inaction. Team members may even pursue their preferred option on the sly, in the hopes the official decision is a failure. Make sure everyone is prepared to fully committed to whatever is decided so you can skip the bullshit politics.

DOES THIS NEED A DACI?

It's a question we often find ourselves asking.

As you consider whether a group decision needs the full-on DACI treatment, take the timeliness and impact into account. Decisions that affect the work of multiple people on the project (e.g. "Where should we hold our user conference next year?") probably need a DACI. Smaller, isolated decisions (e.g., "What will the conference's social media hashtag be?") do not.

STEP 1

Create a page to track your decision (5 min)

Most projects benefit from documenting what's being considered, relevant research, trade-offs, recommendations, etc. This makes it easier for the core team to provide feedback on options and helps stakeholders understand the final decision.

Open up a new page in Confluence (or your documentation tool-of-choice) and insert a 2x4 grid at the top - or create the page using the DACI Blueprint for Confluence. Label the rows in the left column as Driver, Approver, Contributors, Informed. You'll add more to this page in the coming days/weeks as you work through the decision.

STEP 2

Define roles for the group decision (10 min)

Who is the driver?

Agree on one person per decision. They don't necessarily drive the entire project - just that decision.

Who is the approver?

Again, one person per decision.

Who are the contributors?

This may be multiple people per decision, and may even include someone from outside the core team. Anyone with relevant knowledge or experience is fair game.

Who should be informed?

This is anyone directly affected by the decision. Note that this may include people outside the core team.

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STEP 3

Make your plan of attack (15 min)

Think about all the information you'll need to gather in order to make the decision.

Due date – the deadline for making the decision.

Background – the reason(s) this decision is required.

Current state – where you're at right now.

Supporting data – the research you've done to inform your decision.

Options considered – a table with a column for each option where you can summarise pros n' cons, risks, trade-offs, estimated cost or effort, etc.

Recommendations – opinions from your contributors.

FAQs – a place to answer frequently-asked (or anticipated) questions.

References – a list of links out to reference material, along with a brief description of why it's relevant.

Action items – a list of tasks or follow-ups related to the decision.

Outcome – a place to state which option you ultimately go with.

STEP 4

Get your team involved

Send the page around to your team, asking for feedback and input. If you'll need specific people to help fill in specific sections of the page, now is the time to let them know.

If at some point you feel like things have stalled out or you're going in circles, get the driver and contributors in a room together. If you're close to making the call, it might be helpful to include the approver, too. Let people express their concerns, recommendations, ideas for other options to consider, etc. An hour of hashing it out in person can save you days of comment (or – horrors! – email) threads, and get your decision back on track.

...then take a deep breath! The DACI play can be stressful, especially if decisions are contentious or politically-charged. You just did your team a great service by taking time to lay down a clear group decision-making framework to work with.