Starling (2008) states, “decision making involves selecting one course of action from various alternatives.” Decision making is not a separate function of management. Decision making is entangled with other functions. Decision making permeates throughout all administrative entities. There are four steps to decision making: identifying the problem, gathering facts, making the decision, and implementing and evaluating the decision. These functions all require that decisions be made. There are strategic (long term impact), tactical, and operational decisions.

The first step towards good management is recognizing the goals and then considering the different strategies to accomplish them. Decision making permeates the entire management process. Leaders than organize programs and policies to attain goals set. Stillman (2013) acknowledges that, “Lindblom’s central thesis is that there are two distinct varieties of decision making. One he calls the rational-comprehensive or root method, and the second, the successive limited comparisons or branch method.”

Per Davies and Coates (2005), the rational method “derives from an approach to strategy (and economics) which presumes that a predictable future allows decision-makers to carefully weigh up the consequences of alternatives and to choose a course of action that maximizes the achievement of objectives.” This method is rational or comprehensive because all possible options are reasonably selected and weighed in comparative importance by the administrator.

The rational model forms experts that are politically neutral, objective, and impartial. Clemons, McBeth, Dunn, &Simon acknowledge that

“the rational model suggests the determination, clarification, weighting, and specification of goals/objectives/values. Next, all plausible, available alternative means should be listed and their likelihood of achieving the ends carefully scrutinized. All relevant consequences and reactions (including side-effects, spillovers, and externalities) would be forecast. Then methods are to be ranked, and the most appropriate method and implementing agent(s) chosen, to achieve the most desirable outcome.”

On the positive side, the rational model bases its decision making on methodically acquired data, thus decreasing the probabilities of inaccuracies, biases, assumptions, and subjectivity. The decision-making process follows logic and discipline in a consistent base. Such a sequential approach allows the decision maker to arrive at the optimal decision. On the negative side, the rational model involves substantial amount of data, which takes precious time (time is money). This makes the model incompatible for quick-decisions. The model is conservative and tends to err on the side of caution. The foundation of rationality is profit maximization and social affairs or sentiments have no place in what constitutes “rationality.”

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