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LEADERSHIP | ENGAGEMENT | PERFORMANCE

| DECISION-RIGHTS SELF CHECK

ARE UNCLEAR DECISION RIGHTS SLOWING YOUR ORGANISATION DOWN?

Decision-making problems are not always caused by poor judgement.

Sometimes the real issue is uncertainty about ***WHO can decide,***
WHO must be consulted,
WHAT needs approval and
WHEN an issue should be escalated.

Use this self-check to identify where unclear authority may be creating delays, unnecessary escalation or weakened accountability.

RATE EACH STATEMENT:
Yes — this is generally clear and working well
Partly — this is inconsistent or depends on the situation
No — this is unclear or regularly causes problem**s**

01

PEOPLE KNOW WHAT THEY ARE AUTHORISED TO DECIDE

□ **Yes**

□ **No**

□ **Partly**

Managers and employees understand which decisions they can make without further approval.

ASK?

Where do people hesitate because they are unsure whether they have the authority to act?

02

ACCOUNTABILITY AND AUTHORITY ARE ALIGNED

□ **Yes**

□ **No**

□ **Partly**

People who are accountable for results have sufficient authority to influence or control the decisions required to achieve them.

ASK?

Where are people being held responsible for outcomes they do not fully control?

03

ROUTINE DECISIONS STAY AT THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL

- □ **Yes**
- □ **No**
- □ **Partly**

Operational matters are generally resolved without unnecessary escalation to senior executives.

ASK?

Which routine decisions repeatedly find their way to senior management?

04

CONSULTATION DOES NOT DELAY OWNERSHIP

- □ **Yes**
- □ **No**
- □ **Partly**

It is clear who should be consulted, who should be informed and who has final decision-making authority.

ASK?

Where do too many people become involved without anyone clearly owning the decision?

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05

FORMAL DELEGATIONS MATCH ACTUAL BEHAVIOUR

- ☐ **Yes**
- ☐ **No**
- ☐ **Partly**

The organisation’s formal delegation framework reflects how decisions are genuinely made in practice.

ASK?

Where does actual decision-making differ from the approved structure?

06

DECISIONS ARE NOT ROUTINELY OVERTURNED

□ **Yes**

□ **No**

□ **Partly**

People can make decisions within their authority without expecting those decisions to be reversed unnecessarily by more senior leaders.

ASK?

Are leaders unintentionally discouraging initiative by frequently intervening?

07

ESCALATION CRITERIA ARE CLEAR

□ **Yes**

□ **No**

□ **Partly**

People understand which issues must be escalated because of risk, value, policy, reputation or strategic importance.

ASK?

Do employees know the difference between a decision they can make and one that genuinely requires escalation?

08

CROSS-FUNCTIONAL DECISIONS HAVE A CLEAR OWNER

□ **Yes**

□ **No**

□ **Partly**

When several departments are involved, one role is still clearly accountable for the final decision.

ASK?

Which decisions regularly stall because responsibility sits between functions?

09

DECISIONS CAN BE TRACED

□ **Yes**

□ **No**

□ **Partly**

Important decisions can be linked to a clearly accountable role and, where necessary, a documented rationale.

ASK?

If a major decision were challenged later, would it be clear who made it and why?

10

SENIOR LEADERS SPEND TIME ON THE RIGHT DECISIONS

- □ **Yes**
- □ **No**
- □ **Partly**

Executives are not regularly drawn into decisions that could and should be made lower in the organisation.

ASK?

How much senior leadership time is being spent resolving avoidable operational decisions?

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YOUR DECISION-RIGHTS PICTURE

REVIEW YOUR RESPONSES

If most answers are Yes, decision rights are likely to be reasonably clear.

If several answers are Partly, your organisation may be relying on informal judgement rather than consistent decision rules.

If several answers are No, unclear authority may already be affecting speed, accountability and leadership capacity.

The most important step is not simply to count the responses.

LOOK FOR PATTERNS

- Where are decisions slowing down?
- Where is authority unclear?
- Where is accountability not matched by sufficient control?
- Where do senior leaders repeatedly intervene?
- These are the areas most likely to benefit from clarification.

5 QUESTIONS FOR YOUR NEXT LEADERSHIP DISCUSSION

1. Which decisions repeatedly take longer than they should?
2. Which decisions are regularly escalated higher than necessary?
3. Where are people accountable without having sufficient authority?
4. Which decisions involve so many people that final ownership becomes unclear?
5. Where does actual decision-making differ from the formal delegation framework?

THE GOLDOURS PERSPECTIVE

Clear decision rights do not remove judgement.
They create the conditions for better judgement.

When people understand what they can decide, when they must consult and when escalation is necessary, organisations can reduce unnecessary friction, strengthen accountability and free senior leaders to focus on the decisions that genuinely require their attention.

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GoldOurs works with boards and executive teams to strengthen governance, reporting, accountability and decision-making.

This checklist is intended as an initial board discussion tool and not as a formal governance assessment.