

Co-operantics

People skills for co-operatives

The decision-making process

How often do we launch in to taking a decision before clarifying what the problem is, why it's happening, what the alternative solutions might be and what a successful solution would look like?

It helps if we start by defining the issue:

- ★ What's the problem?
- ★ Who is involved?
- ★ When and where is it happening?
- ★ Can you write down a brief description?

Then collect information:

- ★ What might be the causes?
- ★ How can it be measured or assessed?
- ★ Are there standards or norms that can be used as guidance?

Now explore the options available:

- ★ Generate ideas using an "ideas rainstorm" (the more bizarre and off the wall the better, because these ideas will generate other more workable ones; remember not to evaluate the ideas until the rainstorm is over)
- ★ Screen the ideas to eliminate the unworkable ones

The next step is to evaluate the options:

- ★ Costs and benefits of each option
- ★ Risks associated with each option
- ★ Maybe identify an amalgamation of different options

Finally we can think about implementation, then monitoring and evaluation. Did our chosen option solve the problem? If not, or if only partially, we will have a quantity of information to help us develop a further option which will be more likely to provide a solution.