
Strategic Decision-Making for Executives

8 – 12 February 2027
Cape town





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Programme Summary

Consequential enterprise choices frequently miscarry not because corporate boards lack data, but because organisational deliberations fall prey to flawed problem framing, unrecognised heuristic traps, and premature consensus. Strategic Decision-Making for Executives addresses this operational vulnerability by introducing systematic decision science disciplines into boardroom deliberations. Participants dissect real-world enterprise dilemmas, calibrate probabilistic uncertainties, and establish structured decision trees to evaluate irreversible resource allocations. This five-day executive programme is delivered by Mars Training Centre UK.

The Business Case

Flawed executive determinations expose enterprises to capital destruction, regulatory scrutiny, and lost strategic advantage. Grounding organisational strategy in rigorous behavioural decision analysis enables enterprises to navigate volatility without falling victim to overconfidence or anchoring errors.

- Capital Protection: Reduces capital write-downs by enforcing formal uncertainty modelling prior to committing funding to major corporate initiatives.
- Cognitive Bias Mitigation: Systematically suppresses overconfidence, sunk-cost entrapment, and status-quo bias within executive committee deliberations.
- Process Defensibility: Establishes an auditable decision trail demonstrating procedural rationality to audit committees, independent trustees, and institutional stakeholders.
- Deliberation Velocity: Accelerates resolution on complex multi-variable issues by decoupling problem framing from option evaluation.

Principles and Evidence Base

- Society of Decision Professionals SDP Decision Quality Framework: Forms the foundational architecture across six dimensions: appropriate frame, creative alternatives, relevant information, clear values, sound reasoning, and commitment to action.
- Behavioural Decision Research: Incorporates heuristic assessment methodologies to identify and counter cognitive distortions in high-stakes determinations.
- Expected Utility and Decision Analysis: Utilises normative analytical conventions to structure decision trees, probabilistic trade-offs, and multi-attribute utility models.



Intended Participants

- Chief executive officers, managing directors, and divisional presidents evaluating multi-million capital allocation proposals.
- Heads of corporate development, mergers and acquisitions, and enterprise risk management seeking rigorous analytical appraisal tools.
- Functional vice presidents and corporate directors accountable for enterprise-level resource allocation and governance.
- Steering committee members seeking structured frameworks to adjudicate competing business cases.

The curriculum serves corporate officers across financial institutions, pharmaceuticals, heavy industry, utilities, and civil governance organisations.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to construct structured decision architectures using the decision quality framework.
2. Participants will be able to diagnose and counter heuristic traps and cognitive biases in executive governance reviews.
3. Participants will be able to structure decision trees with explicit subjective probability distributions and sensitivity bounds.
4. Participants will be able to institute structured dissenting protocols, including premortems and devil's advocacy, to prevent groupthink.
5. Participants will be able to distinguish reversible two-way doors from irreversible one-way commitments to calibrate speed and governance.
6. Participants will be able to formulate and present an auditable executive decision brief defending complex capital allocations.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Decision Framing and Problem Architecture

How do corporate committees prevent solving the wrong business problem under intense pressure?

- Foundations of Decision Science versus Intuitive Judgement
- SDP Decision Quality Framework: Six Requirements for Sound Judgement
- Problem Boundary Definition and Issue Framing Traps
- Stakeholder Value Hierarchies and Trade-Off Clarification
- Distinguishing Decision Quality from Eventual Outcome Quality

Day 2: Cognitive Biases and Heuristic Traps

How do psychological distortions skew executive evaluation of risk and organisational options?



- System 1 and System 2 Thinking in Executive Committees
- Overconfidence, Confirmation Bias, and Optimism Traps
- Sunk-Cost Fallacy and Escalation of Commitment
- Anchoring Effects and Availability Cascades in Forecasting
- Techniques for Cognitive Bias Mitigation and Debasing Interventions

Day 3: Structured Decision Trees and Probabilistic Modelling

How do executive teams evaluate multi-stage commitments and quantitative uncertainties?

- Constructing Structured Decision Trees and Payoff Matrices
- Assessing Subjective Probabilities and Calibrated Estimation
- Expected Monetary Value and Risk Tolerance Profiling
- Sensitivity Analysis and Value of Imperfect Information
- Scenario Stress-Testing and Downside Boundary Audits

Day 4: Group Deliberation Dynamics and Dissent Protocols

How can leadership teams foster constructive dissent while preventing artificial consensus?

- Anatomy of Boardroom Groupthink and Information Cascades
- Designing Red Teams and Institutionalised Devil's Advocacy
- The Gary Klein Premortem Technique and Prospective Hindsight
- Anonymous Polling and Delphi Aggregation Protocols
- Separating Advocacy from Evaluation in Executive Forums

Day 5: Reversible Commitments, Governance, and Capstone Evaluation

How are complex determinations executed, governed, and audited over multi-year horizons?

- Type 1 Irreversible Decisions versus Type 2 Reversible Experiments
- Real Options Reasoning and Staged Capital Allocation
- Drafting the Board Decision Brief and Auditable Rationale
- Post-Decision Tracking, Variance Audits, and Learning Loops
- Capstone Executive Decision Simulation and Panel Defence

Methodology

The course employs an applied case workshop model pairing analytical frameworks with high-pressure decision room simulations. Executives work in small syndicates to evaluate disputed investments, apply debasing protocols to hidden enterprise assumptions, and defend determinations under peer examination.



- Suggested activity: Conducting a structured debiasing audit on a live corporate acquisition business case.
- Suggested activity: Building and solving a quantitative decision tree model to assess a disputed operational expansion.
- Suggested activity: Facilitating an executive premortem protocol on a proposed capital expenditure before a simulated committee.

Capstone Output

Delegates produce a comprehensive Executive Decision Charter incorporating a validated decision frame, a solved decision tree with sensitivity thresholds, and an institutionalised debiasing protocol. This work product serves as an immediately transferable governance asset that participants can deploy across corporate committee meetings within their enterprise.

Frequently Asked Questions

How does this programme differ from operational strategy courses?

This masterclass focuses specifically on the behavioural, analytical, and governance disciplines required to select among competing alternatives under uncertainty, rather than on strategic roadmap development or cascading operational targets.

Are advanced quantitative or mathematical competencies required?

No advanced mathematical background is required. The curriculum concentrates on practical analytical logic, probability assessment, and decision tree modelling using accessible spreadsheets and intuitive diagnostic templates.

How does the course address corporate committee group dynamics?

Two full modules investigate how power imbalances, social conformity, and hierarchy distort debate, providing concrete protocols such as premortems and red teams to ensure objective evaluation.

Can participants evaluate active enterprise issues during the week?

Yes. Delegates are invited to bring anonymised corporate dilemmas to explore within practical syndicate exercises under strict Chatham House confidentiality rules.