

Project Name

Decision / Issue Name

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1. Decision Required

In this section, describe the decision that must be made. This should be very clearly stated, but succinct. This is executive brief of what recipients of the document are being asked to describe.

2. Current Status

Here you provide the history of how you came to the issue at hand. While your decision-makers need to understand the background, this requires a careful balance of providing enough history without going into exhaustive and unnecessary details. A good litmus test for content to be included here is to simply ask yourself, “if this information relevant to the decision?” In other words, would know the piece of history or current status detail influence the decision maker one way or another? If the answer is yes, then it is relevant enough to be included. Beyond the history, of course, this section must include the who, what, when and where of the situation requiring a decision.

3. Options

Be sure to capture all relevant decisions, with an emphasis on the relevant part. This section is not to list every possible variation anyone could ever dream up. Instead, list genuine options that the decision makers could genuinely consider selecting. Depending upon the nature of your particular environment, you may want to include a section of “excluded options”. In this case, you would briefly list options that were quickly ruled out and short statement of explanation.

For each option, explain the option in detail first. Then, in bullet or similar quick-reference fashion, highlight the positives and negatives (I prefer the position of “Benefits” and “Risks”) of each option.

a. Option 1

Description of Option 1

Benefits:

- Benefit A
- Benefit B

Risks:

- Risk A
- Risk B

b. Option 2...

c. Option 3...

4. Recommendation

This is the recommendation of the team or individual submitting the decision document for consideration. It should include a reference back to the specific option being recommended (Option #1, 2 or 3...). In addition, the reasoning for this recommendation should be captured. For example, you should explain why the recommended option is better than the others. Logic such as lowest overall risk or cost are obvious reasons. Others may include a balance of risk and costs or time sensitivity.

5. Decision

Here, you document the decision the team aligned to. If you've done your legwork prior to submission, you may anticipate the chosen option. In this case, you may want to document the chosen option (anticipated) when presenting the document for signatures / approvals.

6. Next Steps

Based on the decision being made, what actions must happen next? This may not be required in all cases, but it is often helpful in ensuring the right actions happen in a timely manner. In addition, key decisions that require documentation like this often stem from a problem and include lessons learned or opportunities to avoid a recurrence. This section may also be useful for capturing this information.

7. Sign Off

If deemed necessary, here the decision-makers physically sign the document. Most of the time though, a simple email confirming approval and alignment is sufficient form the individuals.

_____	_____
Name 1, Title	Date
_____	_____
Name 2, Title	Date
_____	_____
Name 3, Title	Date

Appendix A: Revision History

If you anticipate multiple revisions throughout the discussions and reviews, prior to signatures, a revision history is helpful to keep everyone aligned.

Name	Description	Date