Confronted With Alternatives

Here is a Check List to Help Assure Consistency in Selecting Alternatives

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Which is the right step to take?

That is a question one probably has to answer every day of business life. Problem solution where two or more alternatives exist is seldom easy.

Here’s a check list to make it simpler the next time.

The simple solution to a problem is frequently the best because it contains the least possibility for error. A speedy solution follows, and it will often lend itself to change as the response is applied.

Any step using previously proven elements also has great advantage. Avoiding experiments holds trial and error elements to a minimum. Unknown factors place extra hazard upon even the smallest response.

The choice possessing the last element of personal preference also is frequently the best. We tend to prefer what it easiest to do—habit—or for which we have a personal attachment. Reacting this way can overlook something of greater value.

Cost is often a necessary indicator. Any step involving unusually high cost usually reduces end results. This single factor can nullify all of the other advantages no matter how much effort is put into a procedure.

The alternative that uses established methods to advantage is not only easier to implement but has a higher probability for success sometimes. New approaches admittedly have to be undertaken but applying them where they are not needed can be unnecessary.

This is true because the greatest advantages are earned by using one’s own talents and experience as well as those of other company personnel.

Will one alternative receive greater acceptance by those one seeks to reach? The decision possessing this asset will probably receive readiest approval.

How many totally unknown elements are involved in each alternative? All of these possess a degree of hazard that’s best to be avoided. We can never totally reject the unknown elements and progress in what is being done but too imponderables in any choice increase the danger.

Past history involved with the selection of any alternative needs close examination: Such a search can contribute much of value,

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bringing the possibility of a new, different response.

Often the best selection is the one providing the best balanced return. It is always easy to make the choice that provides an attractive return in a single area. But this could perhaps be least productive in the long run. Considering the returns in other areas can produce heretofore unrealized gain.

Which alternative uses to fullest advantage existing and well established procedures? This is something of definite value since, as mentioned, it reduces hazard, and keeps costs low, without exploring too many untried areas.

Competitive conditions and factors need close examination, especially if a contractor is looking at diversifying. Competition is fine, but let’s face it, its scarcity will also have much to do with how smoothly things will go during the initial stages.

Can the choice lead to related gains in the future? If such a potential exists one alternative is likely to develop much greater return.

If time is of the essence, then the alternative put into use with minimum preparation or development is generally the best for a given situation. Immediate gains can be sacrificed when too great a period is needed to put into effective use one of the other alternatives.

Failure of any step needs consideration at such a time. The alternative possessing least possibility of negative results can often be best. That is particularly important where the degree of hazard is great in the step about to be taken.

Which step will be the easiest to carry out if it must be handled by subordinates or by someone outside the company? Such a situation is a possibility best not overlooked when dealing with even the smallest decision.

Then, too, does one alternative require a specific time and place for its launching or application? If another alternative could be put into effect without these qualifications then it could be the best selection. The fewer the restrictions the better chance exists for easier application and quicker results.

Finally, with which alternative can one live most easily? The procedure answering this question has a great deal going for it in the future. Unless the values present with others are much greater this one factor could be the safest upon which to make a choice at any time.