

6

Making decisions

Starting point

- 1 Think of one or two good decisions you have made. How much were you guided by facts and figures? How much did you follow your intuition?
- 2 Does having more time to think produce better decisions? Or do you decide faster *and* more wisely when under pressure?



Working with words | Personality and decision-making

- 1 How much do you think our personalities affect our decision-making?
- 2 Read this text about personality and decision-making. Which personality type ...?
 - 1 thinks it's important to be on time
 - 2 enjoys an argument
 - 3 finds it hard to concentrate on one thing at once
 - 4 is more interested in the future than the past

ALL IN THE MIND

Are you an extrovert or an introvert?

Extroverts are often **outgoing** and enthusiastic. They are good with people and enjoy a public role. They prefer to do lots of things at once and can be easily distracted. They're talkers rather than listeners and can be **impulsive**.

Introverts are often **self-contained** and reserved. They can be very **focused** when working on tasks and prefer to focus on one thing at a time. They are good listeners, they think before they act and prefer to be behind the scenes.

Are you a sensor or an intuitive?

Sensors are often sensible and **pragmatic**. They are good on details and remembering facts and specifics. They are reliable and **methodical** and work at a steady pace. They trust their own experience and use established skills.

Intuitives are often energetic and **creative**. They like to focus on the big picture and on future possibilities. They like things that are new and different and prefer to learn new skills. They are **thoughtful** when making decisions and trust their instincts.

Are you a thinker or a feeler?

Thinkers usually take a **rational** approach to decision-making and prefer to remain **detached**. They are honest and direct, valuing fairness. They can be ambitious and critical. They take few things personally and like arguing and debating issues for fun.

Feelers are often **instinctive** in their decisions rather than relying on facts or reasons. **Tactful** and diplomatic, they avoid arguments and take many things personally. They appear warm and friendly, like to be appreciated and are good at complimenting others.

Are you a judger or a perceiver?

Judgers often make decisions easily and quickly. They appreciate plans, rules and schedules and are usually punctual. They are **determined**, keep to their deadlines and like to complete projects. They are serious and **conventional**, and like decisiveness in others.

Perceivers are often **indecisive**; they like to be **flexible** and to keep their options open. Being unconventional, they dislike rules and deadlines. They like to start projects and prefer to play now and work later.

3 Match the adjectives in **bold** in the text to the statements 1–16.

- 1 I am not influenced by other people or my emotions. detached
- 2 I do things in a careful and well-ordered way. _____
- 3 I find it hard to make up my mind about things. _____
- 4 I focus on what I want to do and don't let anyone stop me. _____
- 5 I do things based on my own feelings. _____
- 6 I am happy to change my plans when necessary to suit my friends. _____
- 7 I am confident and friendly. _____
- 8 I like to think about things carefully. _____
- 9 I can produce new things using my imagination. _____
- 10 I do what is normal and acceptable. _____
- 11 I make decisions objectively. _____
- 12 I don't do things that will upset or annoy people. _____
- 13 I depend on myself. _____
- 14 I pay careful attention to what I'm doing. _____
- 15 I do things as I think of them without considering the consequences. _____
- 16 I like to find practical solutions to problems. _____

4 Work with a partner. Choose five of the adjectives in **3** and explain what kind of people you like to work with and why. Then choose another five adjectives and explain what kind of people you don't like to work with and why.**5** Work with a partner.

- 1 Find things in the text that the personality types:
 - a are good at/with
 - b like/prefer to do
- 2 What are you good at/with? How do you like/prefer to approach decision-making?

6 Decide which personality type you are most like in each section in the text in **2**.

- 1 Write down the first letter of the type you choose in each section:
 - extrovert (E) or introvert (I)? _____
 - thinker (T) or feeler (F)? _____
 - sensor (S) or intuitive (N)? _____
 - judger (J) or perceiver (P)? _____
- 2 Turn to page 139 to find out what your choice reveals about you.
- 3 Share the information with a partner. Say if you agree or disagree with it and why.

7 ▶ **6.1** Listen to four people talking about decision-making. Which personality type best applies to each speaker?

Speaker 1: extrovert (E) or introvert (I)? _____

Speaker 2: sensor (S) or intuitive (N)? _____

Speaker 3: thinker (T) or feeler (F)? _____

Speaker 4: judger (J) or perceiver (P)? _____

8 Match the verbs in A to the noun phrases in B to make phrases from **7**.

A		B	
weigh up	consider	(my) own judgement	different perspectives
delay	have confidence in	my decision	all the options
rely on	get	two things	my instincts
trust	decide between	feelings	information

9 Work with a partner. Use the phrases in **8** to talk about the way you made one or two recent decisions in or out of work.» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 6** on page 116.**10** Work with a partner. What personality types would be most suitable for these jobs and why?

- sales manager
- website designer
- human resources manager
- office administrator
- accounts controller
- training consultant

Tip | good at/withUse *good at* to talk about a skill or activity.*Marc is **good at** languages / speaking Italian.*Use *good with* to talk about using something or dealing with someone.*Joel is **good with** computers / people.*

Business communication | Decision-making

Context

The Scandinavian company KYM has a budget deficit. Each region has been asked to cut costs. Three regional customer service managers (Jens from Denmark, Matt from Finland, Anna from Sweden) are meeting to discuss where savings can be made. The meeting is led by Sinead, a consultant brought in to oversee the measures.



- 1 Why is it sometimes difficult to reach decisions in a meeting? To make the meeting effective, what does the leader of the meeting need to do?
- 2 ▶ 6.2 Read the *Context*. Listen to the meeting and tick (✓) the points discussed.

1 Freeze recruitment	☐
2 Cut back on overtime	☐
3 Reduce office resources	☐
4 Change phone provider	☐
5 Reduce client expense accounts	☐
6 Cut back on business trips	☐
- 3 ▶ 6.2 Listen again and complete the phrases in 1–8.
 - 1 Yes, well, _____ our costs for personnel are very high.
 - 2 ... number of employees. _____ the overtime figures. They're _____, and they're costing us ...
 - 3 The _____, we need to look at why we have so much overtime.
 - 4 ... a lot of waste. _____ printing emails out on expensive copy paper.
 - 5 So _____ is monitoring the office supplies ...
 - 6 I'm _____.
 - 7 As far as _____, we'd make hardly any savings ...
 - 8 Matt _____. But _____ cut expense accounts ...
- 4 Sinead is leading the discussion. Turn to audio script 6.2 and underline the phrases she uses to:
 - 1 set the agenda for the discussion
 - 2 manage turn-taking
 - 3 invite people to express their opinions
 - 4 move on to a different topic
 - 5 manage the timing
 - 6 monitor action points

Tip | *getting at*

Use *getting at* to talk about what someone means.

What are you **getting at**?

So what you're **getting at** is ...

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 6** on page 116.

Key expressions

Presenting an argument

If we look at the facts, we'll see ...

Look at ... They're here in black and white ...

The fact is ... / The thing is ...

The advantage/drawback is ...

If we ..., it'll mean ...

A classic example is...

Giving an opinion

I (don't) think (we should) ...

If you ask me, we should ...

..., that's my view

In my opinion ...

As far as I'm concerned ...

I think it would be crazy to ...

Responding to opinions

Exactly/Absolutely.

You're / X is right.

What X says is right.

Yes, but ...

I'm not convinced.

Clarifying

Could you give us some detail, please?

What I mean is ...

So what you're getting at is ...

In other words ...

Leading the discussion

Today, I'd like to establish ...

I'd like to discuss the pros and cons first.

(Jens), could you start us off, please?

What's your position on this?

Hang on. Let's hear what

(Jens) has to say ...

I don't want to spend too long on this point.

Can we move on to ...?

Let's turn to the next item ...

Let's look into it ... and discuss it again at our next meeting.

Let's draw up some action points on ...

5 Work in small groups. You are going to continue the meeting from 2.

- 1 Look at this agenda item and decide on your opinion of each suggestion. Add two extra suggestions to the list.

Reduce staff benefits / activities

- reduce subsidies in staff cafeteria
- cancel annual staff away day
- restrict Christmas event to staff only
- introduce a PIN number for photocopying and limit number of copies per person
- _____
- _____

- 2 Choose eight phrases from *Key expressions* that you have never used or are not very familiar with. Write these on separate cards. (Don't include expressions from *Leading the discussion*.)
- 3 Continue the meeting from 2. As you participate, 'play' your phrase cards by placing them in front of you when you use the phrase correctly. Your colleagues will return the card to you if the phrase is not used correctly.
- 4 The winner is the first person to play all their cards correctly.

6 Work in groups of four. You are at a departmental meeting. You have €50,000 left in your annual budget. As a group, try to decide how to spend the money.

- 1 Before the meeting do the following:
 - Decide on what type of department you are.
 - Make a list of five suggestions for spending the money (the money can be divided between more than one idea).
- 2 Prepare for the meeting with a partner. Decide which suggestions on the list you agree/disagree with and think of arguments to support your opinions.
- 3 Hold the meeting, taking turns to lead the discussion.
- 4 Report back to the class on any decisions you made.

Practically speaking | Talking about social plans

- 1 During the break in a long meeting, there's often time for small talk. What kinds of topics might you discuss with your colleagues? Think of three questions you might ask.
- 2 ▶ 6.3 Listen to five short conversations during the break in a meeting. The first speaker asks about the other person's plans. In which conversation is the second speaker ...?
 - a certain about plans ____
 - b certain about plans but unhappy with them ____
 - c certain about having no plans ____
 - d fairly certain about plans ____
 - e uncertain about plans ____
- 3 ▶ 6.3 Listen again. For each conversation, make a note of the phrases used to:
 - 1 ask about plans
 - 2 respond to a question about plans
 - 3 react to someone's plans
- 4 Take a short break and talk to as many people as possible in the class. Ask and answer questions about your evening / weekend / holiday plans.

Language at work | Countability | Expressions of quantity

- 1 Read sentences 1–6 and match the nouns in **bold** to a–c.
- 1 We'll find there's a lot of **waste**.

2 It's a **problem** we've come up against again and again.

3 We'd make hardly any **savings**.

4 We need to look at why we have so much **overtime**.

5 We should look carefully at client travel **expenses**.

6 I don't want to spend too long on this **point**.
- a singular countable noun _____

b plural countable noun _____

c uncountable noun _____
- 2 Decide if these nouns are countable (C), uncountable (U), or both (B). If the noun can be both, is there a difference in meaning between the two options?
- news product colleague expenditure paper information suggestion

business travel experience time fact accommodation journey software

correspondence proposal money equipment insurance document advice
- 3 Complete the table in the *Language point* with nouns from 2. Make the nouns plural if necessary.

LANGUAGE POINT	
Expression of quantity	+ noun
a, an, the, one	product
too many, not many, a few, fewer, very few	facts
lots of, plenty of, more, most, some, not enough, hardly any, not any, no	news
too much, not much, a little, less, very little	

» For more information, go to **Grammar reference** on page 117.

- 4 Complete sentences 1–8 with the expressions of quantity from the list.
- too much any enough very little a some too many fewer

1 There's _____ money left in the budget, so we can't buy that new software.

2 There were _____ points of disagreement than expected in the meeting.

3 The project is late because we spent _____ time on the planning stage.

4 I need _____ information about hotels in the area.

5 They didn't take _____ of my suggestions on board at all.

6 We haven't got _____ chairs for the meeting – could you get two more?

7 Currently we're employing _____ people – we have to make some cuts.

8 Would you like _____ drink?

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 6** on page 117.

- 5 Work with a partner. Compare these situations, using as many of the quantifiers in 3 as you can.
- working for a multinational company versus working for a small family firm
 - communicating by video-conference versus communicating face to face
 - working with an experienced colleague versus working with a trainee

Example: With a small family firm, I have lots of contact with the owners ...
- 6 Work in small groups.
- 1 Discuss how you could improve the services and facilities in the building or local area where you work.

2 Present your ideas to the class and give reasons for the improvements.

Tip | *most (of the)*

Use *most* to refer to something in general.
Most people have jobs.
Use *most of the* to refer to a more specific group.
Most of the people I know have jobs.
(NOT: *the most people*.)

TALKING POINT

The decision gap

When it comes to travel, when do you make that final decision to book your flight? Six months before flying? A month in advance? A week? The day before?

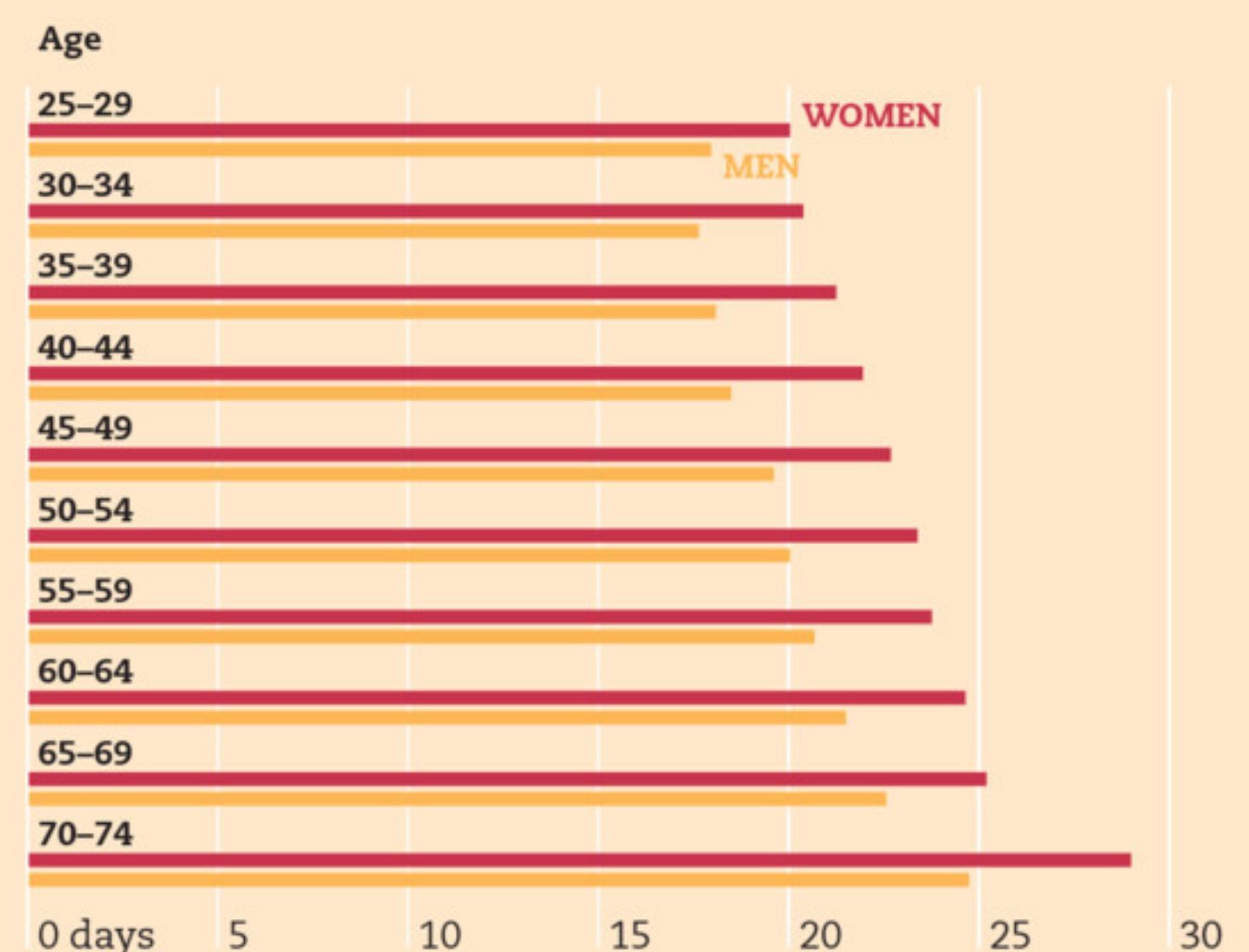
Research using data from 6.4 million business flight bookings shows the following:

- Women book nearly two days earlier than men.
- The older the traveller, the earlier he or she books it (though in every age group, women always book before men).
- The more frequently someone travels, the shorter the booking time before they fly.
- The difference in decision-making virtually disappears between the genders when it comes to more than 20 flights per year.

The differences in gender decision-making when it comes to travel aren't easily explained, but it certainly has financial implications. On average,

women save about \$17 per trip, or 2% of the ticket price by booking earlier; so maybe for international businesses with high travel costs, letting an older woman decide on the travel arrangements could bring substantial savings.

Advance booking (in days) by age of traveller



Discussion

- 1 When do you normally make your final decision to book a flight? How does your answer compare with the information on the chart?
- 2 Are you surprised by the results in the chart with regard to gender and age? Why/Why not?
- 3 How much do you trust the information from research like this? Give reasons for your answer.

Task

Work in small groups of three or four.

- 1 You have been asked by your company to do more research into how different people make decisions. Make a list of five or six everyday workplace tasks that involve people making decisions (e.g. when to recruit more staff, when to place an order, when to book your annual leave, etc.).
- 2 Design a questionnaire about these decision-making tasks that will find out more about people's decision-making process. For example, questions might include 'How far in advance do you normally decide to book your annual leave?'
- 3 When your questionnaire is ready, interview people in the other groups in the class. Try to interview as many people as possible.
- 4 Return to your group and compare your questionnaire results. Create a chart showing all the data collected by the group. Present it to the class and draw any conclusions.