

Sound Professional When Discussing Research and Decision-Making

Decision-making is a key part of anyone's personal or business life. In order to make the right decision, it is important firstly to **carry out** some **comprehensive** or **in-depth research** or analysis into a topic.

After our research is complete it is important to **weigh up** all of our options to find the best one. There may be many factors which we need to take into consideration. If we are trying to decide on which social media platform to market a product, for example, we may need to **factor in** the price, the ease-of-use, the target audience of each social media platform.



If we are still not sure at this stage, it may be necessary to **dig a little deeper** into each option, in order to make sure that we have the best understanding of the pros and cons of each. This will also help us to look to the longer term and **see the bigger picture**.

During the decision-making process, we may start **leaning towards** one option, but we might then change our minds during the discussion. Eventually, we will reach a **consensus** and **settle on** a final decision.



If we need to make a decision on whether or not to do something, we need to weigh up the pros and cons of this action. If we find that there are more pros than cons, we can say that the pros **outweigh** the cons, or the benefits outweigh the risks.

By weighing up all of our options, and factoring in everything which is important, we can **pinpoint** the most effective option moving forward. It may be more tempting just to make a quick decision, but following this much longer process is certainly worth it. It will mean that your decision will **pay off** in the long-term.

A) Match the phrases to the definitions

Based on the context of the article, can you match the words in the box to the definitions listed below? Then add the word into the example sentence. You may need to change the form of the word to fit the meaning of the sentence.

to weigh up	to carry out	to outweigh	to pinpoint
to pay off	to see the bigger picture	comprehensive research	to factor in
a consensus	to dig a little deeper into	to lean towards	to settle on

1. A general agreement: _____

"We have finally reached a _____ on the issue."

"We should build a _____ before we jump into any decision."

2. To find something very precisely: _____

"We have managed to _____ the root cause of the problem."

3. To do something or perform a process: _____

"We have _____ a detailed assessment into all of the potential risks."

4. To evaluate something very carefully, including all of the positives and negatives, risks and benefits: _____

"I think that we need to _____ a few more options before rushing into a decision."

5. To include something when you are weighing up your options: _____

"We need to _____ the problems that we had during the covid 19 crisis if we want to make an accurate assessment of how well the company has performed over the past 5 years."

6. To be more significant than something else in the outcome of a decision: _____

"I believe that we should go ahead with the expansion of the company, because the benefits clearly _____ the risks."

7. Research which is very detailed: _____

"We need to carry out more _____ to understand the risks involved."

8. To give a good result after a difficult process: _____

"Our hard work has really _____".

9. To be more supportive of a particular decision or point of view: _____

"I am currently _____ accepting the offer, but I need a little more time to think about it."

10. To try harder or to research more into something: _____

"I think we need to _____ into this before we come to any final decision. The situation is clearly far more complicated than we first thought."

"John, if you could _____ into that before our next meeting, and then present your findings, we can make a more accurate assessment."

11. To choose something after considering other choices: _____

"After in-depth discussion and debate, we have finally decided to _____ option A."

12. To see an overall view or perspective on a situation: _____

"We need to _____. We can't keep making short-term decisions which won't benefit us in the future."

B) Key Words in a New Context

Below you can find a paragraph. Can you fill in the gaps in the paragraph with the words from the box below? One of the words in the box is used twice. You may need to change the form of some of the verbs in order for them to fit into the sentence.

to weigh up	to carry out	to outweigh (x2)	to pinpoint
to pay off	comprehensive research	to factor in	
a consensus	to dig a little deeper into	to lean towards	

How to avoid making rash decisions in an emergency

We all know the feeling. Stress is running high, deadlines are fast approaching and suddenly an unwanted problem comes up out of nowhere. You need to make a decision on how to solve it, and fast. The temptation is to make a quick decision without _____ any of the pros and cons and just hope for the best. This kind of approach almost never _____, as the decision will likely not bring the desired solution that you are looking for.

So how should you make a decision in a crisis? Well, the first step is to take a deep breath, take a step back and think for a second about what exactly is happening. You then need to take some time to collect all the information that can help you to solve the

problem. One major error in making decisions quickly is that you fail to _____ all the potential options order to make the right decision. Read articles on the subject and _____ as much _____ as possible into the problem. This may take some time, but if you _____ into the problem then you are more likely to _____ the most effective solution. Don't try to solve the problem all by yourself. You may be _____ one solution which is completely inappropriate, and your team could be the ones to change your mind and save you from making a terrible decision. Call a meeting with them, an emergency meeting if necessary, bounce a few ideas around and try to build _____ even if it has to be a quick one. Do the positives _____ the negatives? Do the benefits _____ the risks?

After you have followed all of these steps, the key now is to be confident enough to make the decision and implement it, safe in the knowledge that this is now a measured decision taken through implementing the correct steps.

C) Comprehension Questions

1. In the first paragraph, the author says that 'an unwanted problem comes up out of nowhere'. What do you think the author means with the phrase 'come up' in this sentence?

2. What 3 pieces of advice does the author give for making a good decision in a crisis?

3. What do you think the author means by 'bounce ideas around' in the second paragraph?

4. What do you think is a 'rash' decision and what is a 'measured decision'?

5. To what extent do you agree with the author's advice about making a decision in a crisis?

D) More Uses of Selected Key Words

To weigh up

'weigh up' is very flexible and can be used with a range of phrases:

to weigh up our options

"We need to weigh up all of our options before deciding on a suitable venue for the event"

to weigh up between.. and ..

"The HR department is currently weighing up between Spain and France for the next team- building trip"

to weigh up the pros and cons of something

"We need to weigh up the pros and cons of each strategy before coming to a decision"

to weigh up whether to do something

"I am currently weighing up whether to change career direction"

to weigh up + (question word: which / how / what / who)

"The HR department are weighing up who has been the most promising candidate throughout the interview process"

To carry out

Here are some great collocations with 'carry out':

carry out research / carry out an analysis / carry out an assessment / carry out tests / carry out an experiment/ carry out a survey / carry out a task / carry out a role / carry out a project

To pinpoint

This is a great phrase, because nearly every meeting has the goal of pinpointing the solution to a problem or pinpointing the best strategy moving forward. The three best uses of pinpoint are:

To pinpoint the root cause of a problem

To pinpoint the solution to the problem

To pinpoint the most effective strategy

To pay off

With the use of 'pay off' that we have been looking at, we cannot 'pay off

something'. Basically, 'we did something and it paid off (because..)':

"I prepared really well for the interview, and it paid off because I got the job"

We can also use this with a simple noun, but it is a bit more restrictive in this use:

"Hard work always pays off"

"My determination really paid off because I achieved my goal in the end."

To outweigh

The phrase outweigh is extremely useful, especially as it doesn't really have a synonym. However, it is mainly restricted to the following phrases:

The pros outweigh the cons
 The advantages outweigh the disadvantages
 The benefits outweigh the risks
 The benefits outweigh the costs

A consensus

Here are some verbs which can be used with this noun:

To build a consensus / to reach a consensus / to form a consensus / to establish a consensus / to achieve a consensus / to seek a consensus / to work towards a consensus / to challenge a consensus

To lean towards

When we are in the decision making process, we often use this verb in the present continuous, because we are temporarily leaning towards one option right now. We can lean towards something or we can lean towards doing something. Using the -ing form after this phrasal verb is very common:

"I'm leaning towards accepting the offer, but I need to research the company a little more before making my final decision."

We can also use 'lean towards' in the present simple tense to talk about our general preference for something:

"When hiring staff, there is a big debate about whether qualifications or experience should be the main factor in whether we should hire someone. Personally, I tend to lean towards experience, and any candidate with extensive experience is usually looked upon very favourably."
"In a choice between tea or coffee, I usually lean towards coffee."

E) Glossary of words for sounding professional when discussing research and decision making

to weigh up
 to carry out
 to outweigh
 to pinpoint
 to pay off
 to see the bigger picture
 comprehensive research
 in-depth research

to factor in /out
 a consensus
 to dig a little deeper into
 to lean towards
 to settle on
 a measured decision
 to bounce ideas around