The Economist

Guide to **Decision Making**

It is on the decisions managers make that the success of their organisations depends. Yet if it is so simple, why do businesses keep getting it wrong – and in some cases disastrously wrong?

All decisions involving uncertainty involve the risk of failure but there is also the inescapable fact that decisions are made by people and are therefore subject to human fallibility. Overconfidence, doubling up rather than admitting that a previous decision was wrong, organisational politics and turf wars, a lack of boldness or a fear of stepping out of line, a failure to spot the obvious, inadequate information, flawed assumptions or simply poor judgment are just some of the explanations for bad decisions. This book explains how to be aware of the different traps that decision-makers can fall into – and provides an invaluable guide to how to make much better decisions.

'Making the best decisions is complicated. This book reviews common mistakes associated with decision-making and gives useful practical advice on how to avoid them.' Douglas McWilliams, Professor of Commerce, Gresham College, London

Helga Drummond is Professor of Decision Sciences at Liverpool University
Management School. Among the organisations for which she has played or currently
plays a non-executive or advisory role are the Ministry of Defence, the Royal
Institution of Chartered Surveyors, the General Optical Council, the Joint Council
of the Inns of Court, and the Defence Scientific Advisory Council. This is her
12th book.



Guide to Decision laking Getting it more right than wrong Helga Drummond

Cover design: BRILL
Cover illustration © N_Design

Contents

	Acknowledgements	ix
	Introduction	1
1	Illusions of control: the confidence trap	5
2	Blinkered vision: the judgment trap	14
3	Ghosts and shadows: where is reality?	36
4	Gorilla in the room: information and decision-making	54
5	Conspiracies of optimism: group dynamics	68
6	Shifting tides: power and politics in decision-making	86
7	Predictable surprises	100
8	The march of folly: the escalation trap	123
9	Decisionless decisions: the continuity trap	148
10	Risk a little, gain a lot: options thinking	160
	Closing thoughts	172
	Notes	180
	Index	184