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THE SBRA COMMUNITY DECISION MAKING 101



**By Gary Seibert, CEO,
Small Business Resource Association**

I spent the last week trying to make a decision about what my October article would be about. I did some research as to hot topics for today's small to mid-sized business owners. The list was endless so I was even more confused about what

I really should write about. I started talking to friends and members of our association (SBRA) about things that would be of interest to them and now with even more ideas, it made my decision that more difficult.

At the same time, our Emerging Entrepreneurs Academy is entering into our 5th year. This time of the year is critical for fundraising and meeting with students at all the local high schools to generate student registrations for the summer of 2026. Where do we start and how do we divide up the responsibilities? Important decisions need to be made.

Then there are similar day-to-day operational decisions that every business owner has to make every day, and they never seem to go away.

In addition to our business responsibilities comes the responsibilities we have to our spouses and children. How do we decide how much of our time could and should be spent with them? And what about ME? I need to go to the gym to stay healthy, play a round of golf to clear my mind or just go to breakfast with a good friend to share my decision-making problems.

I know that none of you reading this article have never experienced any of the above. You are a true black and white kind of thinker with no gray clouding your decision-making process. You are a forward thinking, optimistic thinker that replaces the word problem with opportunity. Now you have a whole new set of decisions to make trying to figure out what opportunity is the best one to chase.

There is never a day, from the moment we wake up till we fall asleep at the end of the day, that we are not dealing with decisions. Most of them are pretty simple and do not take a whole lot of thought. However, the major decisions like making changes in your business direction, expanding your facility, hiring or firing employees, borrowing money or any other decision that keeps you awake at night, are the decisions that we really need help with.

PLEASE understand that the results of all the decisions we make will have a consequence, either good or bad. Therefore, our decision-making process should be one that directs us in a path that leads to a positive and beneficial result.

All of us make hundreds of decisions (choices) every day. Most choices have no right or wrong attached to them—like what you decide to wear or what you eat. But we always face decisions that carry a little more weight. We don't want to do wrong, and we don't want to cause others to do wrong, so how can we make such decisions?

If I choose one course of action:

1. Does it reinforce the kind of person I am trying to be?
2. Am I motivated by a desire to help others?
3. Does it help me do my best?
4. Is it in line with my morale and ethical being?
5. Is it the best and most beneficial action available?
6. Am I thinking only about myself, or do I truly care about other people's reaction?
7. Am I acting lovingly rather than selfishly?
8. Does it reflect my Mission, Vision and Core Values?
9. Will this decision prevent hurting someone else?
10. Have I discussed this decision with my trusted advisors and are they in agreement?

If you answered "YES" to all the above questions then you can be pretty secure feeling that your decision is a good one. However, sometimes, even well thought out decisions negatively affect others. An example is de-hiring someone. Even though the decision had to be made, the bigger decision is how do I de-hire this person. Losing your job is, in most cases, a horrible and very challenging situation for the person losing their job. Great employers are equally concerned as to how they deal with the employee as they were with dealing with the decision to de-hire the employee. I would suggest reflecting on the chart above.

As for the process for making decisions

1. Identify exactly what it is that you are making a decision on. What is the real problem?
2. Do your due diligence and gather ALL the information you can.
3. Bring a trusted advisor in to discuss the options, discuss the pros and cons.
4. Chose the best option that aligns with your culture and core values.
5. Take action by implementing your decision and reviewing its results.

Finally, once you have made that decision, ask yourself "How will I feel about this decision 10 minutes, 10 months, and 10 years from now?" This may help you gain perspective and clarity, leading to SMARTER DECISIONS in the future. Remember, your decisions do not affect just you. In most cases other people are subjected to the consequences of your decisions, good or bad. Choose wisely and remember the 10-10-10 rule.



SBRA Business Spotlight



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- Breakfast Referral Club – October 3rd at B2 Bistro
- SBRA Mingle – October 29th at the Windsor Inn

CULTURE LIVES WITHIN PEOPLE®

By Craig Neal®, The Collaborator®

In the relentless rush to stay competitive, business leaders are pouring resources into an ever-growing stack of technology, automation, and AI. The search is on for a silver bullet—a tool that will provide a definitive edge, preferably one that installs in five minutes and requires zero human interaction. But this focus on external fixes is dangerously misplaced. The most powerful force in any business is not its software; it is, and always has been, its people.

That's because **CULTURE LIVES WITHIN PEOPLE®**.

It is not a program you can install or a variable you can manufacture. Many leaders believe their job is to "build" a culture, but you cannot construct a living thing. You can't assemble it like a piece of flat-pack furniture and hope the instructions are in a language you understand. It's a living, breathing outcome of the interactions, beliefs, and behaviors of the individuals on your team.

As a leader, your true role is not to construct the culture, but to ensure your vision is consistently manifest in the one that emerges. The people who make up your organization will inevitably create a culture. In a leadership vacuum, they will develop their own, often based on little more than survival and good coffee. But when guided by a clear and consistently demonstrated vision, they will manifest that vision in their daily work, creating a powerful, aligned culture.

When this living culture is healthy, the benefits are tangible and impossible for a competitor to replicate. It's what:

- Turns a first-time customer into a loyal advocate.
- Inspires a team member to flag a costly mistake before it happens or to pioneer a game-changing opportunity.



Craig Neal® The Collaborator®

- Attracts the right collaborators who are drawn to your way of operating.

So, while your competitors are focused on the temporary advantage of the latest tool—one that will be obsolete by the next quarter—you can cultivate the enduring power of your people. They can always copy *what* you use. They can never copy the vibrant, resilient culture that lives within your team.

About the Author: What if your company's true potential is locked behind internal friction? Craig Neal®, The Collaborator®, is an **executive advisor** who helps leaders find the key. He applies his deep experience in **strategy & execution, team alignment, and intellectual property** to change the "condition" that holds a business back, elevating its culture and overall performance. To learn more, visit craigneal.com or follow [@changecondition](https://twitter.com/changecondition).

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