

The Decision Challenge - Know before you commit.



**Know before
you commit.**

Is your business case strong enough to justify the investment?

You're considering a new business system, automation, equipment, a major supplier change, or another operating investment. The proposal promises a result. Before you commit, you need to know whether the benefits are supported, the costs are complete, and the business can do the work required to deliver them.

An outside second opinion on one important business commitment.

We challenge the evidence and assumptions, compare credible alternatives, and check the work needed to produce the result. The goal is a decision you can defend, without turning the review into another lengthy project.

The business case can leave an important question unanswered

A proposal can pass finance, technical and management reviews while still depending on something nobody has checked. The savings might require eliminating work that still needs doing. New capacity might sit unused because demand isn't there. A system might work as designed while nobody takes responsibility for the daily work needed to produce the promised result.

We look for assumptions like these and check whether the evidence supports them. If an unanswered question could change your decision, we explain what you need to find out.

The numbers can add up while the decision still depends on an untested assumption.

Your other options

Use the reviews already completed

Your finance, technical, procurement and management reviews may already answer the important questions. Check whether, taken together, they establish that the business can achieve the promised result.

Ask your team or an adviser

They know the business and may already have the records. Bringing them together takes time, and people involved in developing the proposal may share assumptions that need questioning.

Run a pilot

A pilot can test an assumption that existing records can't settle. It costs time and money, though, and success on a small scale may leave the savings from a full rollout unproven.

Commit and manage the remaining risk

Going ahead may be reasonable when the evidence is sufficient and waiting has a cost. Consider which remaining uncertainties could become expensive to resolve once you've signed the contract or retired the old process.

One commitment.

Scope, fee, and timing agreed first.

Written Decision Brief with one of five clear recommendations

Starts with the evidence your team already has

Fee does not depend on the recommendation

HOW THE REVIEW WORKS

Start with the case. Test its assumptions. Then decide what deserves to happen next.

We start with the proposed commitment, its expected result, and the existing case for approving it. The review concentrates on questions that could change the action, terms, timing, or acceptable downside.

We use the records your team already has and focus follow-up questions on what could change the recommendation.

1 Evidence and assumptions.

What the records establish, what is estimated, and which unresolved assumptions could change the choice.

2 Alternatives.

Other ways to achieve the result, including a smaller commitment, delay, or continuing with the present approach.

3 Required work.

What must start, change, continue, or stop, and who is accountable for it.

4 Operating feasibility.

Whether those owners have the authority, capability, information, funding, and time required; how handoffs, approvals, dependencies, and competing demands affect the plan.

5 Economics and downside.

Supported benefits and costs, transition and ongoing support, the cost of waiting, and what it would take to exit.

6 The challenge to our answer.

Contrary evidence, material objections, and what could make another option the better choice.

A detailed plan can be useful evidence.

We check whether its assumptions about people, work, and operating conditions are supported. We distinguish measured savings from estimates and released employee time from cash savings. When a critical specialist claim cannot be verified from the available records, we identify what the company's qualified people need to establish.

What kind of decision can we review?

One defined operating commitment at a time, using the evidence available to support it. Examples include:

Business systems

Buying, replacing, or upgrading ERP, CRM, or other business software; expanding a rollout.

Process changes

Changing approvals, handoffs, service delivery, or workflows for cost, speed, or reliability.

Equipment and capacity

Adding equipment, production or warehouse capacity, or another operating location.

Automation

Automating document handling, order processing, reporting, or a defined workflow, including a specific AI use case.

Vendors and services

Replacing a major supplier, changing service arrangements, or bringing a defined process in-house.

Project commitments

Approving the next project phase, extending a pilot, or deciding whether further spending is justified.

WHAT YOU GET BACK

One of five findings, in a Decision Brief that puts the recommendation first.

Proceed.

The evidence supports the commitment, the operating work is feasible, and the risk is within accepted limits.

Proceed with changes.

The evidence supports going ahead once specific changes are made. The brief explains those changes, why they are sufficient, and how to check they've been completed.

Test before committing.

A limited trial can answer a question that could change your decision before you need to commit. The brief explains what to test, the limits on cost and risk, who is responsible, how to measure results, and when to stop.

Get specific evidence first.

Information we can obtain could change the decision. The brief identifies what's missing or conflicting and who can resolve it.

Do not proceed.

The proposal exceeds a firm limit, isn't justified by the evidence, or carries more risk than the company has agreed to accept.

The commitment should fit the evidence and the consequence of being wrong. A resolvable evidence gap calls for a specific check or test, not automatic rejection.

Your ES Decision Brief

One of five findings, with the commitment reviewed and its intended result.

The decisive evidence, assumptions, and what could change the conclusion.

The serious alternatives, supported economics, and the work the benefit requires.

The strongest objection to our recommendation.

The next action, responsible role, and review point.

What it does not promise

No preparation of the business case, and no sale of the proposed solution.

No engineering, legal, tax, cybersecurity, valuation, or acquisition due diligence.

No certified specialist claims and no guaranteed outcome.

The decision owner retains the final business decision.

Method note: Decision Challenge is a new, AI-assisted ES method that we're still evaluating. We don't yet have client results or references to demonstrate its effectiveness. The example on our website is fictional. Jim Wilde or a designated ES reviewer must review and approve each client Decision Brief before it is sent.

Start with one decision.

Tell us what you're considering, when you must decide, and what you're unsure of. We'll determine whether a focused Decision Challenge can help and agree on the next step before any engagement begins. A request does not begin an engagement or create a fee.

Request or discuss a review: emergentskills.com/request_decision_challenge
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