PILLAR 2 · DECISION ARCHITECTURE UNDER AMBIGUITY

1-Page Decision Brief

About 30 minutes, for one real decision

Owner

Date

Review date

1 The decision, deadline & door type

What exactly are we deciding?

Decide by

☐ Reversible (two-way door) ☐ Irreversible (one-way door) | ☐ Low stakes ☐ High stakes

High stakes + irreversible? Slow down and finish every part.

2 First principles

What do we know for certain?

What are we assuming?

Starting from zero, what would we build?

3 Options & second-order effects

	Option (at least three, plus wait)	And then what? (a month, a year, three years)
A		
B		
C		
Wait		

4 Ranges, expected value & risk size

	Base rate: how do cases like this usually go?	Worst	Likely	Best	Most we'll lose
A					
B					
C					

Size the bet so the worst case is survivable. Never bet from the core 85–90%.

5 Alignment & integrity check

Moves us in our direction?

At a speed we can sustain?

Crosses a non-negotiable?

6 Pre-mortem, tripwires, owner & review

It's six months from now and this failed. Why? (top three)

Tripwires: what would force us to decide again?

We chose

We expect (range)

Confidence

Log this brief in your decision journal. On the review date, judge the decision by how it was made, not only by how it turned out.

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1-Page Decision Brief

Example: a 12-person consulting firm replacing its biggest client's revenue

Owner: Founder
Date: Mar 3
Review date: Jun 1

1 The decision, deadline & door type

What exactly are we deciding?

How do we rebuild our top client's revenue (about 45%) within 12 months?

Decide by

End of this month

[X] Reversible (two-way door) [ ] Irreversible (one-way door) | [ ] Low stakes [X] High stakes

High stakes + irreversible? Slow down and finish every part.

2 First principles

What do we know for certain?	What are we assuming?	Starting from zero, what would we build?
Clients buy expert judgement, not headcount. Referrals bring our best clients.	That growth means one more big client.	Several mid-size clients, none above 20% of revenue.

3 Options & second-order effects

	Option (at least three, plus wait)	And then what? (a month, a year, three years)
A	Land another big client	Rebuilds the same concentration risk we just escaped.
B	3–4 mid-size clients via referral partners	Slower start; spreads risk; partners become a channel.
C	Scale the workshop	New product, but pulls time from client work.
Wait	Wait	Runway shrinks if the top client leaves first.

4 Ranges, expected value & risk size

	Base rate: how do cases like this usually go?	Worst	Likely	Best	Most we'll lose
A	Big deals take 6–9 months	−$40k	+$150k	+$300k	Too big
B	Partners refer 1 in 4 leads	−$10k	+$110k	+$200k	$15k
C	First workshops rarely fill	−$5k	+$20k	+$80k	$5k

Size the bet so the worst case is survivable. Never bet from the core 85–90%.

5 Alignment & integrity check

Moves us in our direction? Y (B only) | At a speed we can sustain? Y | Crosses a non-negotiable? N

Direction: high margin, no client above 20%. Only B moves us that way.

6 Pre-mortem, tripwires, owner & review

It's six months from now and this failed. Why? (top three)

1. Partners send poor-fit leads. 2. We under-invest in partner onboarding. 3. Top client leaves sooner than expected.

Tripwires: what would force us to decide again?

Fewer than 2 new mid-size clients by day 90: revisit. Cash below 3 months of costs: pause all bets.

We chose	We expect (range)	Confidence
B, mid-size clients through partners. Workshop stays a small side bet.	2–3 new mid-size clients in 6 months; top client below 25% of revenue within a year.	70%

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