

## Judgment Day



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With the exponential growth of technology, artificial intelligence, data, and sharing, knowledge will continue to become easily and readily available to all. As this occurs, the value of knowledge will decrease in relative value compared to the analytics of information/data and judgment. One interview question I ask is, “What is the most important attribute for an attorney?” We often bang around for a while, and then I hear the word “judgment.” My follow-up is, “What is judgment?” All too often, I feel sorry to see the blank look on the face of the interviewee — it’s so important, but they have never thought about it. Then I ask, “Can judgment be taught?” Another blank look!

I have spent a lot of time thinking about what judgment is, and I believe it definitely can be improved and practiced. I have concluded that, in the corporate environment, “good judgment” is making effective, productive decisions or actions in multidimensional settings that are aligned with business objectives. With this in mind, the elements of a good decision can be identified and used as a checklist.

Elements of making a good decision are:

- Identify what is important in any particular issue or problem;
- Gather the appropriate information to understand the issue or problem;
- Determine if there is no need for additional data or inputs (not meeting just for the sake of meeting);
- Determine when you need more information or external input;
- Integrate information to identify trends, patterns, problems, and opportunities;
- See the connections between what appear to be different unrelated issues or facts and apply them to the question;
- Critically evaluate goals, obstacles, likely responses, and proportionality of risks, costs, and benefits of various actions;
- Understand the impact of actions on multiple constituencies;
- Listen to, evaluate, and integrate (often conflicting) views before taking actions;
- Determine if anyone else has been in a similar situation (had to make the same or similar decision), if so what did they do, why, and how did it turn out;
- Have the ability to avoid immediate reactions or impulses;
- Keep self-interest or recognition out of the equation;