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STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING: BALANCING DATA, INTUITION AND ETHICS

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The rise of big data and artificial intelligence has transformed strategic decision-making. Organisations now have access to real-time analytics, predictive models, and sophisticated dashboards that were unimaginable a generation ago. Proponents of data-driven decision-making argue that removing human bias and emotion leads to more accurate, consistent, and defensible choices.

Evidence-based management – making decisions through the conscientious, explicit, and judicious use of the best available evidence – has gained significant traction. In fields ranging from supply chain management to marketing, algorithms can process vast quantities of information faster and more reliably than any human. Data helps managers identify patterns, forecast outcomes, and test hypotheses before committing resources.

However, data has limitations. First, data reflects the past. Strategic decisions, by definition, concern the future. Historical patterns may not predict unprecedented events – what the economist Nassim Taleb calls "black swans." Second, data is only as good as the questions asked and the methods used to collect it. Biased sampling, flawed metrics, and misinterpretation can lead to confidently wrong decisions. Third, data cannot capture everything. Customer loyalty, employee morale, and brand reputation resist quantification.

The Role of Intuition Intuition is often dismissed as irrational or mystical. Yet experienced managers regularly rely on what they call "gut feeling" or "professional instinct." Far from being magical, intuition is the brain's ability to recognise patterns based on accumulated experience without conscious analytical processing.

Research on naturalistic decision-making has shown that experts in complex,

time-pressured environments – fire commanders, nurses in emergency rooms, chess masters – often make superior decisions by recognising situations as typical of ones they have encountered before. Their intuition is not guesswork; it is rapid pattern recognition.

Intuition becomes valuable under specific conditions: when time is limited, when information is incomplete or ambiguous, when the problem is ill-structured, and when the decision-maker has relevant domain expertise. The CEO who senses that a merger will fail despite favourable financial projections may be detecting subtle signs of cultural incompatibility that numbers cannot reveal.

Yet intuition has well-documented vulnerabilities. Cognitive biases – confirmation bias, overconfidence, anchoring, availability heuristic – systematically distort human judgement. Intuition is also susceptible to emotional states; fear or excitement can skew perceptions of risk and reward. Moreover, intuition is domain-specific. Expertise in one field does not transfer to another. The brilliant surgeon may have no useful intuition about real estate investment.

The Ethical Dimension Strategic decisions inevitably involve ethical considerations, whether explicitly recognised or not. Choices about resource allocation, workforce reduction, product safety, environmental impact, and executive compensation all raise questions about fairness, responsibility, and the balance between shareholder interests and broader stakeholder welfare.

Ethics in decision-making requires moving beyond compliance with law. Laws establish minimum standards; ethical judgement requires asking what is right, not merely what is legal. Three ethical frameworks commonly inform strategic choices:

- Utilitarianism focuses on outcomes: the right decision maximises overall welfare or minimises harm. This framework justifies trade-offs but risks sacrificing minority interests for majority benefit.

- Deontological ethics focuses on duties and rules: certain actions are right or wrong regardless of consequences. This framework protects individual rights but may produce outcomes that seem unreasonable.

- Virtue ethics focuses on character: the right decision flows from virtues such as

honesty, courage, fairness, and compassion. This framework considers not only what one does but who one becomes.

Most strategic decisions cannot be resolved through a single framework. Ethical dilemmas arise precisely because different values conflict. Balancing data and intuition is difficult; balancing ethics adds another layer of complexity.

Integrating the Three Pillars Rather than treating data, intuition, and ethics as competing alternatives, managers should view them as complementary sources of insight. The challenge is not to choose one over the others but to integrate them effectively.

Several tools can help managers balance competing demands: Premortem. Before finalising a decision, ask the team to imagine that it has failed spectacularly. Working backwards to identify potential causes forces consideration of risks that optimistic planning overlooks. This technique counteracts overconfidence and groupthink.

Red teaming. Assign a team to argue against the proposed decision. Devil's advocacy exposes hidden assumptions and sharpens reasoning. Some organisations maintain permanent red teams specifically to challenge strategic proposals.

Ethical checklists. Simple questions can surface otherwise ignored ethical dimensions: Does this decision treat all affected parties with respect? Could it be justified to a sceptical public? How would it be viewed by the organisation's stated values?

Sensitivity analysis. Test how robust the decision is to variations in key assumptions. If a forecast is off by 20%, does the recommended course of action change? If not, the decision is robust; if so, more analysis may be warranted.

Managers pursuing balanced decision-making frequently encounter specific traps. Paralysis by analysis. Demanding ever more data can become a form of procrastination. At some point, sufficient information exists to decide, even if uncertainty remains. The cost of delay must be weighed against the value of additional analysis.

Rationalisation. People often reach intuitive conclusions first, then selectively seek data to confirm them. This confirmation bias transforms analysis from genuine

inquiry into post-hoc justification. Vigilance against rationalisation requires actively seeking disconfirming evidence.

Ethical fading. When managers focus exclusively on financial or operational metrics, ethical considerations recede from view. Ethical fading occurs without conscious awareness. Regularly making ethical dimensions explicit counteracts this tendency.

Groupthink. Cohesive teams may suppress dissent to maintain harmony, leading to decisions that no individual member would support alone. Psychological safety – the belief that one can speak up without fear of retaliation – is essential for balanced decision-making.

The Role of Organisational Culture Individual decision-making occurs within organisational context. Cultures that reward decisiveness above all else encourage managers to decide quickly based on intuition while shortchanging analysis and ethics. Cultures that demand exhaustive documentation before any action may produce analysis paralysis. Cultures that punish failure harshly discourage experimentation and learning.

Leaders shape culture through what they reward, tolerate, and model. A CEO who visibly weighs ethical considerations, admits uncertainty, and revises decisions when presented with better evidence signals that balanced decision-making is valued. Conversely, leaders who demand instant answers and punish bad outcomes – even well-reasoned ones that happened to fail – drive decision-making underground.

Conclusion Strategic decision-making will always involve uncertainty, trade-offs, and judgement. There is no formula that guarantees right answers. But managers can make better decisions by consciously balancing three sources of insight: data provides evidence about what has happened and what may happen; intuition brings accumulated experience and pattern recognition; ethics ensures that decisions respect affected stakeholders and the organisation's values.

The most effective decision-makers do not rely exclusively on any single pillar. They interrogate data sceptically, consult intuition self-critically, and deliberate ethically systematically. They recognise that a decision that looks correct on the

numbers but feels wrong on ethical grounds probably is wrong.

In an era of unprecedented analytical power, the greatest risk is not insufficient data but insufficient wisdom – the wisdom to integrate quantitative analysis with qualitative judgement, to balance organisational interests with broader responsibilities, and to decide with both rigour and humility.

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FEATURES OF UI DESIGN FOR FANFICTION SITES

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In the modern web design industry, designing interfaces for platforms with high text and social load requires a special approach to ergonomics. Studying the features of UI design for fanfiction sites allows you to solve the problem of chaotic structuring of large amounts of information. This helps to create a comfortable digital environment that meets the specific expectations of the modern Internet community. The relevance of this topic is that modern fanfiction has long gone beyond the boundaries of an amateur hobby in narrow circles of fans and has turned into a large-scale cultural and literary phenomenon. Every day, millions of users around the world create, read and