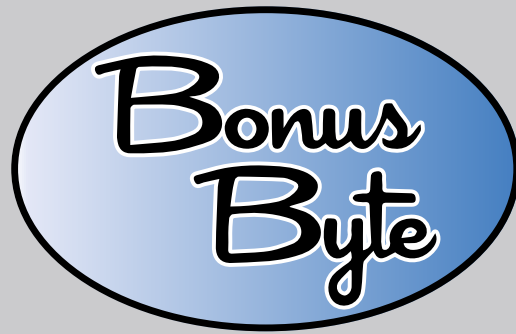


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**Do You Really Need a Meeting to Make a Decision?
5 Keys to Better Decision Making in Meetings**

DO YOU REALLY NEED A MEETING TO MAKE A DECISION? 5 KEYS TO BETTER DECISION MAKING IN MEETINGS

by Kevin Eikenberry

Lots of things happen in meetings – some of them even helpful!

While most everyone has horror stories about meetings, there also are far too many examples of meetings that, while not awful, are far from effective. One of the reasons for these less-than-stellar experiences is that meetings aren't often a place where decisions are made effectively – or even made at all.

Meetings, of course, aren't the only place where decisions can and should be made, but in the context of meetings is one way to talk about how decisions can be made. That discussion must start with the leader. The leader must consciously (better) or unconsciously (far too often) determine how a decision for any specific situation will be reached. The basic choices are:

An independent decision – one made by the leader alone. These decisions may be announced at a meeting, but by definition they don't require any input from others; a meeting isn't required to make them.

A decision with input – the leader wants input from others before making the decision; a perfect reason for a meeting.

A collaborative decision – more than just a bit of input, in this approach the group deliberates on the facts and other factors before a decision is made.

A consensus decision – a decision where the leader themselves isn't making the decision, but truly the full group comes to the decision collectively.

Each of these decision making types, including all of the nuanced versions of them, are valid and valuable in the right situation.

The rest of this article is designed to help you choose the best approach for your situation. Your answers to these questions will help you create better and more open decision making processes, and in the meantime help you create more effective and productive meetings.

But first, a caveat:

If you have already decided which direction to go, or which course of action to take, do NOT ask for input.

It damages trust, wastes people's time and is a dangerous manipulation.

Read on knowing that the questions below assume your decision making intentions are genuine and without thought of manipulation of other people.

How fast must this decision be made? If the building is on fire, you don't need to call a meeting or get people's input into the best way to leave. It's an extreme example; however, some decisions don't require input or a meeting. In these cases, make a unilateral decision, communicate it effectively and get on with it!

Who has the information needed to make the best decision? The people the information are the people who should be consulted, inside or outside of a meeting. This helps you determine not only how to make your decision, but who to invite to the meeting. If their input can be received independently, then a meeting may still not be needed.

Who needs to be engaged in the conversation? The more engagement, input and ownership that is required, the more likely that a decision with greater collaboration is required. Again, your answer to this question informs you on who to invite to the meeting and what to communicate to them about their role in the meeting. If you want their thoughts, help them come to the meeting prepared to give them.

How important is the buy-in or commitment of others to the success of the decision? This is similar to the previous question, but goes beyond it in an important way. How big of a decision is this? How will people's work and lives be impacted? The larger the impact, the longer the repercussions and overall the bigger the decision, the more input you may want people to have. People will buy into decisions when they have had more true input into them – even if the final decision isn't the one they would have made independently. Yes, more time will be involved; the balance between time and the importance of the input is the big consideration here. Important note – re-read the caveat before deciding to gain lots of input. If you have already decided . . . don't go here.

What is the trust level amongst the team members and with the leader? Simply put, if trust is high, more decisions can be made with less input (as long as the right information is considered). At the same time, if trust is low or non-existent engagement will be more difficult. When this is true, as a leader you have bigger concerns than just how you make decisions, yet how you make them will affect the future trust between you and your team.

These five questions will help you make more effective decisions by focusing first on how you will reach the decision, instead of only focusing on the decision itself.

Use these questions as a leader, and then once you are clear, let the team know how the decision will be made. Let them know if you want their input or not, and if so, how engaged in the decision making process you need them to be.

Taking these steps will help everyone be clearer and feel better about the decisions that get made.

Oh, and you will have more productive meetings too.

ABOUT BUD TO BOSS

Bud to Boss provides new leaders and organizations looking to develop new leaders with insight, resources and powerful learning opportunities designed to specifically address the challenges of successfully transitioning from peer to leader.

To speak with someone about how we can help you or your organization, send a note to **info@BudtoBoss.com** or call the number on this page.

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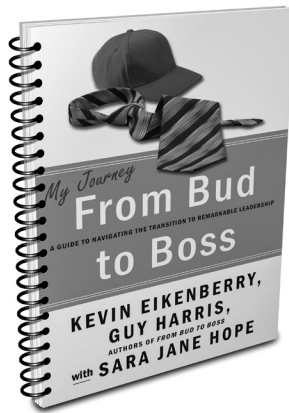
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/ BudtoBossOfficial

The Kevin Eikenberry Group
8021 Westover Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46268

(317) 387-1424

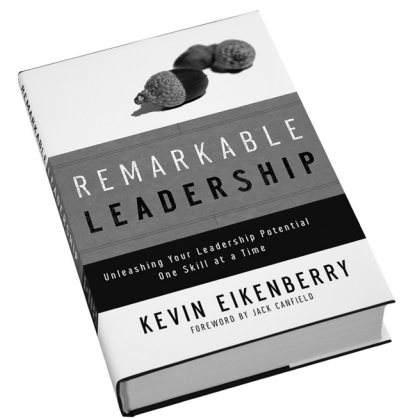


My Journey From Bud to Boss

A companion volume to the From Bud to Boss book, the Journey is a workbook designed to help you apply the knowledge gained to actual work experiences. It includes activities, questions, and exercises designed to take you beyond the concepts introduced to you during the Workshop or the book. And while this book is completely designed to be written in, all of the templates and tools are available in both PDF and Word document form so that you can use them over and over.

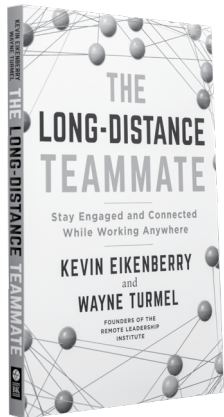
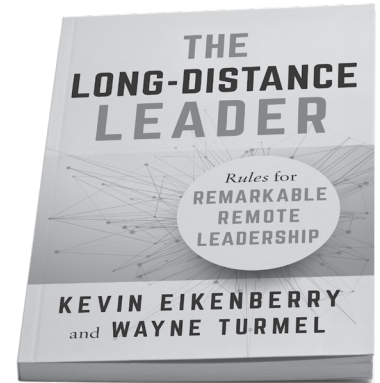
Remarkable Leadership

is a practical handbook written for anyone who wants to hone the skills needed to become a remarkable leader. This book outlines a framework and a mechanism for both learning new things and applying current knowledge in a thoughtful and practical way. It explores real-world concerns such as focus, limited time, incremental improvement, and how we learn.



The Long-Distance Leader

is a practical, candid look at what it takes to lead people, projects and teams in today's dispersed workplace. The book showcases 19 rules for being a remarkable remote leader, and offers practical models, tools, and best practices to tackle the real-world challenges from how we work and communicate virtually.



The Long-Distance Teammate

Written by the founders of the Remote Leadership Institute, this book is the most authoritative single resource for helping remote workers get work done effectively, build relationships that are both productive and satisfying, and maintain a career trajectory when they are not in constant close contact with their leader, coworkers, or the organization in general.

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