

Decision Authority Mapping

Clarifying who decides, recommends, consults, and needs to know

Purpose

Make decision authority visible so a leadership group can clarify who may act, whose judgment should inform a decision, and when consultation or escalation is required. Use representative decisions to identify responsibilities that can be transferred as leaders develop.

1. Build the authority map

Decision	What decision or class of decisions is being mapped?
Decides	Who has authority to make the decision within agreed boundaries?
Recommends	Who develops or presents a recommendation for the decision maker?
Consulted	Whose judgment, expertise, or perspective must be sought before acting?
Informed	Who needs to know the decision or its implications?
Conditions / escalation	What limits apply? What circumstances require consultation, escalation, or a different decision maker?

2. Run the exercise

- **Select representative decisions**
Choose a small set that reveals meaningful differences in authority, risk, or judgment.
- **Describe current practice**
Ask how each decision is actually handled, using relevant documents as inputs.
- **Clarify the roles**
Name the decision maker, recommendation responsibility, required consultation, and notice.
- **Define the boundaries**
Specify limits, escalation triggers, and how decisions and conditions will be confirmed.
- **Test the future arrangement**
Ask what should remain, change, or transfer, and agree on a trial and review point.

3. Extract the succession implications

- Which decisions could a future leader begin owning now, and within what limits?
- What judgment, information, and relationships would that authority require?
- Where can the incumbent contribute through consultation while leaving the decision with someone else?
- What should trigger escalation, and how will the decision and its conditions be confirmed?
- Which future decisions could provide practice, feedback, and progressively greater authority?

What this produces

A working authority map, clearer decision boundaries, and specific opportunities to transfer responsibility while preserving useful consultation and oversight.

Facilitator note

Treat the map as a working agreement rather than a verdict on current practice. Distinguish substantive decision authority from authority to sign or implement an approved decision. Keep the exercise focused on governing principles and representative examples; formal documents can be updated through the appropriate process.