★ EXCLUSIVE EDITORIAL | TRUST EDGE INSTITUTE | THE LEADERSHIP & SALES INSTITUTE | THE ACCOUNTABILITY INSITUTE ★

Professional Performance 360 Magazine

WHAT YOU NEED TO SUCCEED!

Vol. 36 No. 3 // $16.95



ICONS Share Mental Action Plans (MAPS) to SUCCESS!

TANWEER AHMED
ENTREPRENEUR & EXECUTIVE

ALAN WEISS
PHD

JAMIE HESS
SPEAKER, COACH & MEDIA PERSONALITY

KAITLYN & JEREMY CARLSON
CRISPY CONES FOUNDERS

STEPHEN SMITH
LTG

WARREN BUFFETT
CHAIRMAN & FORMER CEO
BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY

JEFFREY MAGEE
PERFORMANCE PUBLISHER

SIMON T. BAILEY

AMY FRANKO

PATRICIA FRIPP

BOB GOSHEN

DOUG HEERDEGEN

SHAWN D. MOON

MARY LOU PANZANO

MEREDITH ELLIOTT POWELL

The Leadership Cost of "Wait and See"

WHY DECISIVE LEADERSHIP MATTERS

BY AMY FRANKO


Amy Franko

Waiting can feel like the safest decision. Sometimes, it's the riskiest one.

Business leaders are making decisions in an environment where uncertainty is a given. Even with good information, the path forward isn't always clear. It can be tempting to gather more data, keep options open, and wait for more certainty.

Some of the most consequential leadership decisions are made when there is no obvious answer and no guarantee of the outcome. The question becomes whether uncertainty will stall progress or whether leaders can create enough clarity to move forward.

I experienced this firsthand during one of the most uncertain periods in recent history.

When I served as board chair for a large non-profit organization, we were in the beginning stages of a $16 million capital campaign. Then we found ourselves in the COVID-19 pandemic and faced a significant decision.

Do we continue forward? Do we permanently stop? Do we wait and see what happens and then decide?

Saying no or taking a wait-and-see approach would have been acceptable and likely a "safer" choice given the circumstances. Moving forward came with significant unknowns.

After much debate, we ultimately chose to continue forward. I knew that if we completely stopped, or even just temporarily paused, the likelihood of keeping momentum was slim. I knew that we had executive leadership, business partners, and a donor community that would help us succeed. It turned out we were right. In 2024, the vision became a reality, resulting in a transformative new resource that continues to serve the community.

That single decision became our advantage. Decisiveness drove momentum; it signaled confidence and direction. Without that decision point, I'm confident the dream would still be a blueprint gathering dust somewhere in a closet.

The Curse of a "Wait and See" Mindset

While the scenarios are different in your organization, the opportunity is the same.

When you consider your company's vision for the future, it comes with an investment of time, money, resources, and reputation.

What sometimes isn't accounted for is the sheer number and level of decisions involved. Most organizations aren't short on information, opinions, or options as they navigate these decisions.

In fact, many leaders are moving upstream against continual decision overwhelm.

There are three types of decisions:

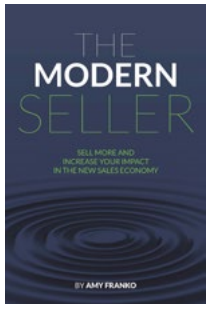
1. **Yes**. This is a decisive action that creates next steps.
2. **No**. This is a decisive action that frees up space for other initiatives.
3. **Wait and see**. This is indecision. It produces missed opportunities because it erodes both space and momentum. It can also become an unintended cultural consequence, as it begins to define the organization's pace and priorities.

How can today's leaders think and act differently to avoid the curse of "wait and see?"

1. Create clarity about the ideal outcome and the best alternative to the ideal outcome. Two possible paths to success can alleviate decision-making bottlenecks by reducing decision risk.
2. Consider the supply chain effect of any decision. Most teams consider intended outcomes, but not always unintended ones. A decision in one area of the business will influence others, and what we're not thinking of can have the greatest impact.
3. Understand the thought processes and emotions of those participating in the decision. Decision-making becomes vulnerable when leaders underestimate how people interpret risk and change.
4. Discern when to work toward consensus versus agreement. Strong leaders are upfront and consistent on this, and they communicate when they are seeking alignment and when they are seeking more immediate progress.
5. Explicitly assign ownership to key elements of the decision. Explicitly assigning and measuring ownership eliminates ambiguity.
6. Accept that a decision may change if the inputs change. Rigid and reactive are the two extremes; instead, be thoughtfully responsive when inputs change.

Begin with identifying one decision you've placed in "wait and see." Apply these practices, clarify the outcome, assign ownership, and move it forward. Momentum rarely appears on its own, but leaders can create it intentionally.

Amy Franko is the leading expert in modern growth strategies. She works with professional services firms to significantly improve their results through growth strategy design, sales skill development programs, and executive advisory.



In *The Modern Seller,* a #1 New Release and best seller on Amazon, Amy Franko explains the five critical skill sets that rise above the rest.