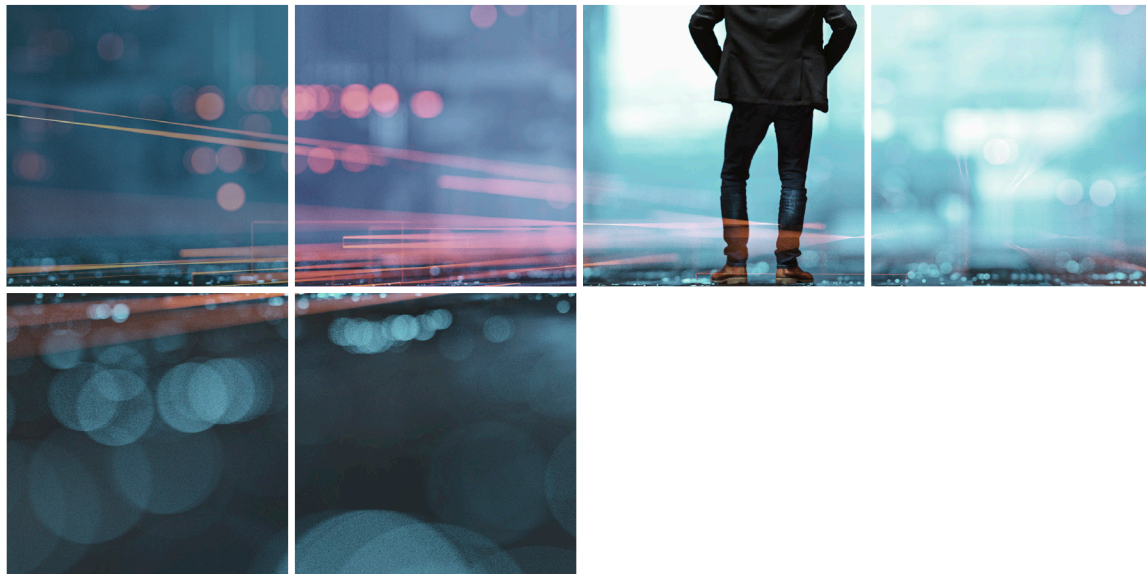


July
2023

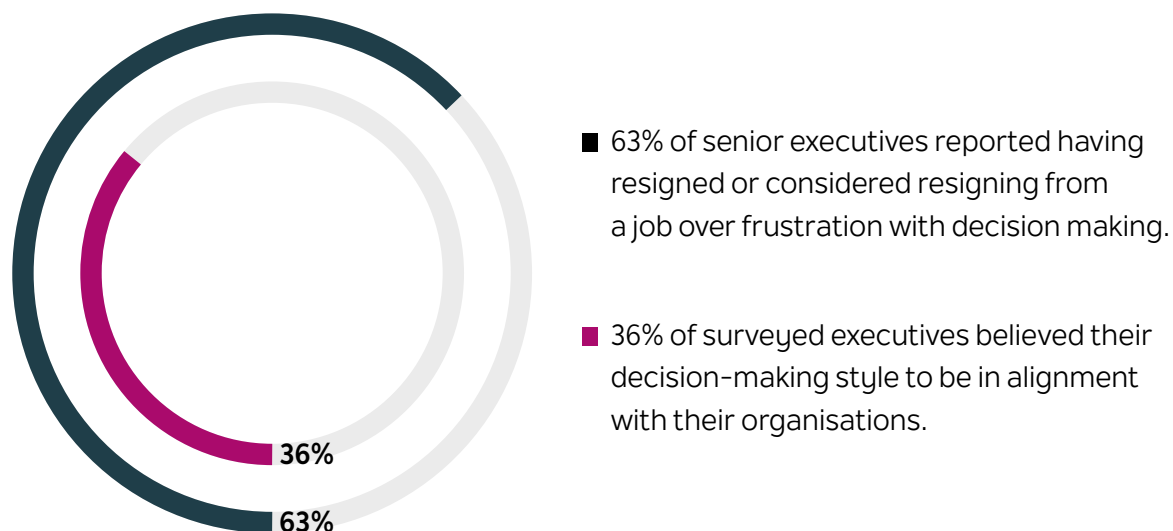
**Visionary, Energiser,
Architect, Reformer:**
**Winning in Distinct
Executive
Decision-Making
Environments**



By **Arnaud Despierre** and
Aaron Mitchell Finegold
Published Date: **17 July 2023**

An innovative new framework transforms the conversations executives have about the decisions to be made and the environments in which they must materialise.

As is fairly established, senior executives tend not to be highly satisfied with the day-to-day decision making that takes place at their companies. In fact, according to [new research published by Kingsley Gate](#) and FT Longitude of the Financial Times Group, 63% of senior executives reported having resigned or considered resigning from a job over frustration with decision making. One source of friction may be a lack of stylistic alignment: our research showed that only 33% of surveyed executives believed their decision-making style to be in alignment with their organisations.



How Leadership Alignment Impacts Decision Making

Explicit discussion of both the new leader and the organisation's decision-making style can help both parties surface issues early and assess the likelihood of alignment/satisfaction. Keep in mind, however, that full alignment is not always the goal.

Management often seeks disruptive outsiders with specialised skills or experience, with new leaders also frequently shaping a company's decision-making abilities and approach. Our research confirmed that improvements in decision effectiveness resulted from changes to “company leadership” and “new employees”, far more often than they resulted from technology, process, or data improvements.

[According to Gianpiero Petriglieri](#), Associate Professor of Organisational Behaviour at [INSEAD](#), leadership, “at its core, is an argument with tradition,” meaning that, to move companies forward, great leaders should both respect and challenge the decision making status quo.

A Complete Framework to Understand the Executive Decision-Making Environment in the Workplace

Kingsley Gate has created a proprietary framework to help organisations understand their own decision-making environment (into which newly-hired leaders will integrate) and the decision-making style or approach a candidate might intrinsically apply.

By understanding and visually mapping these two realities, we equip both parties with the language and knowledge necessary to “argue with tradition” effectively.

Business Objective Set

Our framework's first axis (informed by organisational theory) is the “business objective set”, which describes a company's intent or a candidate's problem solving inclination. On one end is “expansion”: focus on category creation, breakthrough innovation, and new market entry, with value derived from new vs. existing sources and top-line or share growth often prioritised over bottom-line performance.

The other end of the spectrum is “optimisation”: focus on productivity, consistency, quality, and costs, with value derived from improvements along existing source lines and the bottom line top of mind.

Organisational movement on this spectrum is particularly interesting because those companies can improve their success likelihood with the right executive hire. According to [Noah Askin](#), Assistant Professor of Organisation and Management at the University of California at Irvine's Merage School of Business, these companies (whether a maturing, “expansion” to “optimisation” start-up or an innovation-hungry, “optimisation” to “expansion” enterprise) require a candidate who can “signal both their conformity and their iconoclast nature.”

Operating Culture

Our framework's second axis "operating culture" describes how decisions get made. On one end is "accountability" (similar to "top down" deciding from [Erin Meyer's The Culture Map](#)): describing styles characterised by decisions from a single accountable party which favour process clarity and speed.

The other end of the spectrum is "collaboration": describing styles characterised by teams making decisions collectively which prioritise flexibility, thoroughness and inclusion.

Movement on this axis is frequent since organisations striving for both speed and quality often need to flex between various spectrum locations to improve. According to Noah Askin, organisations looking to evolve their operating culture should seek an executive leader "who can pick up their culture and also translate that into the future state."



Understanding the archetypes of Decisions Framework

The 2x2 nature of the framework yields 4 quadrants which we describe as "archetypes" describing an organisation or an individual: "Visionary" (high on expansion and accountability), "Energiser" (high on expansion and collaboration), "Architect" (high on optimisation and accountability), and "Reformer" (high on optimisation and collaboration).

The following descriptions help bring to life what each quadrant might represent:

- **Visionary:** Marches toward a future that others might not believe in or understand; has the conviction to be held accountable for decisions that other organisations or leaders wouldn't make
- **Energiser:** Pushes the envelope creatively while giving the entire organisation a seat at the decision-making table; seeks growth by elevating multiple different perspectives to a position of power
- **Architect:** Moves quickly and gets things working correctly: strengthens performance through clear processes that allow questions to be raised, trade-offs to be considered, and decisive action to be taken
- **Reformer:** Enlists advocates from across the organisation in a mission around optimising existing offerings and capabilities to the point of outperformance

How Kingsley Gate Helps You Find the Perfect Decision-Maker Executive

In delivering executive search work, we always start with understanding the company's business objective set and operating culture context, and discussing the types of candidates that might be worth exploring based on the company's needs.

We then assess candidates' decision-making styles and approaches. Discussions with clients centre around the distinct impact potential various well-qualified candidates' bring based on their alignment with or ability to challenge the company's status quo.



Get In Touch

