

# Decisions, Decisions

A man was bothered with continual ringing in his ears, bulging eyes, and a flushed face. Over a period of three years he went to doctor after doctor. One took out his tonsils, one his appendix, another pulled all his teeth — even tried the goat gland treatment in Switzerland — all to no avail. Finally, one doctor told him there was no hope — he had six months to live.

The poor fellow quit his job, sold all his belongings and decided to live it up in the time he had left. He went to his tailor and ordered several suits and shirts. The tailor measured his neck and wrote down 16½. The man corrected him: 15½. The tailor measured again: 16½. But the man insisted that he'd always worn a size 15½. "Well, all right," said the tailor, "but don't come back here complaining to me if you have ringing ears, bulging eyes and a flushed face!"

Diagnosing a problem correctly is obviously essential to solving it. Probably no set formula for analyzing problems works every time, but the following steps are usually helpful:

First, what is the problem? Is the issue you're trying to decide really the basic problem, or is it merely a symptom of something else?

Two subordinates, for example, are involved in a dis-

pute over some small item. Is this really the cause of the dispute: Or does it reflect a deeper difference that will continue to cause trouble? Be sure you know the real problem before you try to solve anything.

Secondly, what are the alternatives? Problems often look simpler than they really are. Should we do it or shouldn't we? Should we do it this way or that? Actually it may not be that simple. The possibilities may be much more numerous — there may be five or six courses of action which ought to be considered before a choice is made. Frequently the best answer is an alternative the people concerned haven't even thought about.

What are the most important considerations? Are any factors in making the decision so important that they outweigh all others? If so, let's consider them immediately and get to the heart of the matter.

What facts do we need? Are there any facts we need to help us make a clear cut decision? If so, can we lay our hands on them?

How does the risk involved in each course of action compare with the potential gain? It's foolish to take a big risk for a little gain. It's equally foolish not to take a small risk that might result in a big gain. Weighing risks against possible gains is what may decisions ultimately hinge on.

When in doubt, sleep on it! If a clear cut decision doesn't present itself — and you can afford to wait — sleep on it. Let your subconscious work on it. Let the various arguments settle back into their proper perspective. By morning the right answer may be obvious.

In 1975, there were 25,372 holes-in-one made on U.S. golf courses, according to *Golf Digest's* records. Not all were the result of skill. One man, for example, playing at a club in Reno, sliced a low ball off the twelfth hole. The ball skipped twice across a water hazard, slammed into a rake left near a sand bunker — and bounced onto the green where it rolled onto the cup, a hole-in-one!

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