

FIELD GUIDE TOOL #10

The Decision Quality Checklist

Chapter 10: When You Don't Have All the Facts

DATE _____ COMPLETED BY _____

SITUATION _____

Use this tool before committing to any significant decision made under conditions of genuine uncertainty. The goal is not to eliminate uncertainty but to make the decision structure explicit enough to be examined and improved.

When to use it. Best used before committing to any significant decision with incomplete information.

Part A: Environment Classification

Before applying any decision framework, establish which environment you are actually in.

Question	Your answer
Can you estimate meaningful probabilities for the key outcomes? (If yes: Risk environment)	
Can you identify plausible outcomes but not assign probabilities? (If yes: Uncertainty environment)	
Is the problem definition itself unclear? (If yes: Ambiguity environment)	
Which environment are you in, and what does that mean for your approach?	

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Part B: The Key Assumptions

List the three to five assumptions on which this decision most critically depends. For each, answer all three questions.

Assumption	What evidence supports it?	What would cause you to revise it?
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Part C: Scenario Test

Map two to three plausible scenarios and assess the decision against each.

Scenario	Key conditions	Decision outcome in this scenario
Scenario 1 (base case):		
Scenario 2 (downside case):		
Scenario 3 (upside case):		
Which decision is most robust across scenarios?		

Part D: Reversibility Assessment

Establish what level of process this decision warrants.

Question	Your answer
What is the cost of being wrong and needing to course-correct?	
How quickly could you reverse or significantly modify this decision if needed?	
Is there a reversible version of this decision that would generate useful information?	
Based on reversibility, what level of deliberation does this decision warrant?	

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Part E: Recalibration Triggers

Define the conditions under which you will formally revisit this decision.

Trigger type	Specific trigger and date
Assumption-based trigger: If assumption X is contradicted by evidence, we will review.	
Indicator-based trigger: If leading indicator Y crosses threshold Z, we will reconvene.	
Time-based trigger: Regardless of the above, we will formally reassess on this date.	
Who is responsible for monitoring the triggers and initiating the review?	

Before committing to the decision, confirm:

- ☐ You have classified the decision environment correctly and chosen an approach appropriate to it.
- ☐ You have named the key assumptions explicitly and identified what evidence would cause you to revise each one.
- ☐ You have tested the decision against at least two plausible scenarios.
- ☐ You have assessed reversibility and calibrated the level of deliberation accordingly.
- ☐ You have defined specific recalibration triggers and assigned responsibility for monitoring them.