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## Decision Matrix for Agency Leaders

A Criteria Matrix is a helpful tool to visualize decision choices. It charts alternative solutions in its left column and organizes the criteria to measure them across the top. To use a criteria matrix for group decision-making, complete the following six-step process:

1. **Define the problem.**
2. **Identify the criteria to be used to evaluate proposed solutions.**
3. **Assign a weighting of relative importance to each criteria.**
4. **Decide on a scale to be used to rate the impact of each alternative on our selected criteria.**
5. **Identify proposed solutions.**
6. **Complete the criteria matrix.**

### Problem Definition

First, define the problem to be solved. What problem are you attempting to solve? Be as specific as possible. If more than one person is involved, all parties should agree on the statement of the problem to be solved.

*Problem Definition:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Identify the Criteria

Now develop a thoughtful list of criteria. Criteria are standards that you want to use to evaluate or compare the various proposed alternatives. The criteria may be accepted measurement indicators, common sense benchmarks, or proven yardsticks that indicate what an effective solution would look like. List criteria that you can use to help you decide whether a proposed option is good, bad, or marginal. Consider which organizational goals, objectives, or initiatives will be affected. Use your field's standards of quality and quantity if they exist. Take into account any time, cost, material or human constraints or limitations that should be considered. Look for criteria to help you judge the workability of your solution alternatives. Finally, list the top five criteria you will use to evaluate the alternative solutions to your problem.

List of Criteria	
Key Word	Definition

### Assign Weights to the Criteria

Sometimes the criteria have more or less importance than others. Weights can be used to assign different relative importance to each criterion. If all criterion are of equal importance, assign a multiplier of “1.” If one criterion is twice as important as the others, assign it a multiplier of “2.” You can even use multipliers expressed with decimals, such as “1.5.” List and rate the relative importance of each criterion you are using.

Top Five Criteria (Key Words)	Relative Importance (Weight)
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

### Decide the Criteria Rating Scale

You have defined your problem and identified and weighted the criteria you will use. Now you need to agree on a scale to be used to rate the impact of the various options on each criteria. You can rate these options using a +, -, ? scale, an A, B, C scale, or a numeric scale of 1-3, 1-5, or some other numeric scale. A numeric scale is appropriate for most decision-making situations, and is especially convenient when you have assigned different weights to the criteria. We use a 1-5 scale for most situations. Using a numeric scale, you’ll add up each row to generate a numeric score for each alternative.

*The rating scale I will use to rate the various options is:*

- +, -, ?
- A, B, C
- Yes/No
- 1-5

### Identify Proposed Solutions

The next step is to identify a list of alternative solutions. While you need not list all possible alternatives, you are looking for any strategies that will address the root cause of the problem. Make a list of alternatives that have a reasonable chance of resolving the problem. (Brainstorm a complete list of alternatives, then decide on a smaller list of reasonable alternatives.) List the five most reasonable alternatives for solving your stated problem:

Alternative Solutions	
Key Word	Definition
A.	
B.	
C.	
D.	
E.	
F.	

### Complete the Matrix

You are now ready to complete the matrix. Using the criteria you have selected and the alternative solutions you have identified, rate each alternative solution using the rating scale you have selected. The best decision is the alternative that has the highest total number of points in the Overall Rating column of the matrix. However, keep in mind that the overall score for each alternative is only as reliable as the accuracy of each individual rating.

## Critical Decision Criteria Matrix

**Problem Definition:**

Evaluation Criteria																
List Alternative Solutions	Key Word Criterion 1			Key Word Criterion 2			Key Word Criterion 3			Key Word Criterion 4			Key Word Criterion 5			Overall Sum of Scores
	Rate	Weigh	Score													
A.																
B.																
C.																
D.																
E.																
F.																