WORKSHOPSKILL · FACILITATION KIT

The Decision Rights Map — Facilitator Run Sheet

Folder: `the-decision-rights-map` · Category: leadership · 4–10 people · 25 min · offline + online · print props · tool pack

License: CC BY 4.0

CONTENTS

Objectives
Decides · Consulted · Informed
How to run it
Failure modes
Facilitation notes
Props in this folder
How to run this debrief
The twelve debrief questions
When to use this activity
Setup
The card
Variations
Put it on the wall
Agent version
Read the column
Failure modes of the debrief

25	4–10	print props
MINUTES	PEOPLE	SETTING

The Decision Rights Map — Facilitator Guide

A 25-minute, 4–10 person leadership tool. Most team friction isn't disagreement about the answer — it's two people who each thought the decision was theirs, or one person waiting for permission nobody knew they needed. This lays out the decisions a team actually makes and names, for each, exactly one decider, who must be consulted first, and who just needs to be told after. Then it finds the decisions where the pen is in the wrong hand and reassigns one.

Objectives

By the end of the activity, participants will have:

1. Named **exactly one decider** for the team's recurring decisions — and felt the discomfort that forces, which is where the real problems surface.
2. Separated *consulted before* from *informed after*, killing the permission nobody knew they had to ask for and the veto nobody actually held.
3. Reassigned one decision that was sitting in the wrong hand, out loud, with what changes now written down.

When to use this activity

- Two people each believed the same call was theirs, and it blew up — or will.
- A new manager is inheriting a set of invisible decisions in their first weeks.
- You have 4–10 people who share recurring decisions and 25 minutes; online, the three columns live on a shared board.

Decides · Consulted · Informed

Column	The question it answers	The failure it prevents
Decides	Who will live with the consequence of this call — one name, only one	the decision made by whoever is loudest, or by consensus-by-drift
Consulted	Whose input the decider must hear *before* moving	the late ambush: "why wasn't I asked?"
Informed	Who just needs to be told *after*	the rumor mill filling the gap a non-decision left

Forcing exactly one name onto *Decides* is uncomfortable and useful — the moment you can't write one, you've found the real problem.

Setup

- 4–10 people who share a set of recurring decisions — what we build, what we spend, who we hire, how we schedule, what we ship.
- A wall or shared board with three columns per decision: **Decides · Consulted · Informed**.
- The card faces from `the-decision-rights-map-prop-cards.pdf`: a "who decides (one name)" card, a "consulted before" card, an "informed after" card, "the unclear one" card, a "reassign + owner" card, and a blank (see **The card** below).
- Put `the-decision-rights-map-activity-poster.pdf` (A3) on the wall so the two rules stay in view.

- Print one `the-decision-rights-map-worksheet.pdf` per group — the one-page artifact sheet the room fills while it talks.
- Put one `the-decision-rights-map-workbook.pdf` at each seat if people want their own copy; the sheet above is the group version.
- Optional: open `the-decision-rights-map-slide-deck.html` in any browser to run the 12-slide deck on the wall (S opens the presenter drawer, T starts the round timer); `the-decision-rights-map-slide-deck.pdf` is the same deck for print.
- Online: one shared doc or whiteboard, three columns; the cards become a legend pinned at the top.

How to run it

Time	Phase	Facilitator does	Participants do
0–5	List	Push for the recurring decisions — the ones that come up again and again, not one-offs	Name the decisions this team actually makes
5–13	Assign	Hold the pen to one name per row; flag every "we" as a finding, not an answer	Write exactly one name under **Decides**, list who's **Consulted** before and who's only **Informed** after
13–19	Spot	Ask the room to circle, silently, then compare	Circle the decisions whose decider was contested, blank, held by someone not in the room, or written as a group
19–25	Reassign	Make the reassignment specific: who, what changes, what they still must consult	Pick one unclear decision, name its single owner out loud, say what changes now that it has one

Then run the debrief — see `the-decision-rights-map-debrief.md`.

The card

The sheet from `the-decision-rights-map-prop-cards.pdf` (poker spec, 63.5 × 88.9 mm, bleed and cut guides, branded back, blanks) carries six faces: **who decides (one name)** — the pen; **consulted before** — input, not veto; **informed after** — told, not asked; **the unclear one** — the flag you circle; **reassign + owner** — the decision this session actually moves; **blank** — for your own rows. Stand the *unclear one* card beside every row that stalls; it is the finding the map exists to produce.

Failure modes

1. **The map quietly becomes the org chart.** People write job titles, not the hand that actually decides. Rescue: ask "who signed the last time this got decided?" — the name that surfaces is the row's true owner, chart or not.
2. **"We decide" gets accepted as an answer.** It never is. Rescue: a row with no single name gets circled, not discussed — the circling *is* the outcome.
3. **Consulted balloons into veto.** If everyone must be consulted on everything, the drift you just mapped returns through a polite door. Rescue: for each consulted name ask "does the decider have to *incorporate* you, or *hear* you?" Mark the difference honestly.
4. **The session ends with a map and no reassignment.** A fully drawn map with nothing moved is documentation, not a tool. Rescue: guard the 19–25 block; if time dies elsewhere, cut rows from Assign before you cut Reassign.

Variations

- **New manager, first week:** map the team's decisions before inheriting the invisible ones; catch the "who actually calls this?" gaps early.
- **After a collision:** take the one decision that caused a clash and run only that row — the map usually shows two people who each believed they owned it.
- **Quarterly:** re-run it; ownership quietly drifts back to whoever is loudest unless you redraw it.

Facilitation notes

- The right to the pen follows the consequence, not the volume. When two people reach for a row, ask who will live with the outcome — the answer usually ends the argument without you refereeing it.
- Treat every stall as data. The moment nobody can write a name is the most valuable ninety seconds of the session; put the *unclear one* card there and move on rather than solving it live.
- Anchor the abstraction with one real recent decision before starting the list — a team that maps "pricing" in the abstract maps differently after it maps last Tuesday's discount.
- The reassignment must say what changes. "Ana decides, consults Dev before, tells everyone after" is a sentence the room can act on; "it's clearer now" is not.

Put it on the wall

Print `the-decision-rights-map-activity-poster.pdf` (A3) to put the run of show, the three columns and the two rules on one wall while you facilitate.

Props in this folder

- `the-decision-rights-map-prop-cards.pdf` — poker-spec print sheet (63.5 × 88.9 mm, bleed and cut guides): the six card faces, branded back, blanks
- `the-decision-rights-map-guide.md` — this run sheet
- `the-decision-rights-map-debrief.md` — twelve numbered debrief questions with what each targets, plus failure modes of the debrief
- `the-decision-rights-map-worksheet.pdf` — the one-page session sheet, print-and-fill: the decision rows, each with its one decider, consulted circle and informed list
- `the-decision-rights-map-workbook.pdf` — participant workbook: the idea in plain words, your own rows as fill-in pages, notes and a before-you-leave page
- `the-decision-rights-map-slide-deck.html` / `.pdf` — the 12-slide deck for teaching or projecting: presenter drawer (S), round timer (T), built-in QR, print fallback; the `.pdf` is the same deck for print
- `the-decision-rights-map-run-sheet.pdf` — the print edition: this run sheet + the debrief, bound as one A4 document with bookmarks
- `the-decision-rights-map-activity-poster.pdf` — the whole activity on one A3 wall sheet: run of show, the three columns, watch-outs
- `the-decision-rights-map-tool.json` — machine-facing file (not listed in the download table): the artifact as a machine-readable template: columns, flow, fields, prompts, watch-outs
- `the-decision-rights-map-start-here.md` — one page, thirty seconds, then print and go

- `the-decision-rights-map-license.md` — what you may do with all of this: run it, copy it, translate it, rebrand it; keep the attribution line
- `SKILL.md` — machine-readable manifest for AI agents
- `*-Letter.pdf` — US Letter editions of the print documents

Agent version

Every file in this folder has a stable public URL — an AI agent can fetch the props, the debrief and this run sheet with three curl commands (see `SKILL.md`). The paper version itself needs no screen at all: no projector, no accounts, just a wall, a pen and one name per row.

The Decision Rights Map — Debrief

> Twelve questions, three failure modes of the debrief itself, one rule: a name or a circle — "we" never closes a row.
>
> Use with `the-decision-rights-map-guide.md`. The debrief runs the last five minutes of the twenty-five.

How to run this debrief

- Keep the map visible — the wall, the board, the worksheet; wherever it lives, debrief looking at it, not at each other.
- Take the circled rows first; the clean rows need no discussion.
- End on the one reassigned decision, said back as a sentence: ____ decides, consults ____ before, tells ____ after. If the room hesitates at the sentence, the reassignment isn't done.

Read the column

- Stand in front of the **Decides** column without talking. Count how many names surprised you.
- Look at who has the most rows. That's the map's real news, whether it's your manager or your quietest teammate.

The twelve debrief questions

1. Expected versus actual.

"Looking down the Decides column — how many decisions have a name you'd expected, and how many surprised you?"

→ The gap between the chart and the hand that actually holds the pen.

2. The bottleneck in disguise.

"Which decisions have the same person on every row?"

→ A bottleneck wearing the mask of clarity.

3. The unowned rows.

"Which decisions have nobody who'll admit they own it?"

→ The ones quietly not being made; absence is a finding too.

4. Chart versus reality.

"Where does the person who *actually* decides differ from the person the org chart says decides?"

→ The real map — the one that predicts next quarter's collisions.

5. Who decides, or whether to decide.

"For the decision you circled: was the ambiguity about who decides, or about whether it *should* be a decision at all?"

→ Some friction is ownership; some is a non-decision nobody has the courage to make or kill.

6. The penless absorber.

"Who has been absorbing this decision without the authority — doing the work, carrying the risk, never holding the pen?"

→ The unpaid decider; giving them the name is usually the fastest fix on the wall.

7. The cost of one more quarter.

"What's the cost of leaving it ambiguous one more quarter — who pays it?"

→ Makes the abstraction expensive; ambiguity always has a payer, usually not the people in the room.

8. Can the new owner actually decide?

"Does the new owner have the information to decide well, or do they still need a real consulted circle built first?"

→ Ownership without information is a setup, not a hand-off.

9. Say it back.

"For this decision: ___ decides, consults ___ before moving, and tells ___ after. Does everyone actually agree?"

→ The reassignment's acceptance test — hesitation is the honest answer.

10. What the old owner hands over.

"What will the previous informal owner hand over, and what might they keep doing out of habit?"

→ The pen moves on paper first and in behavior later; naming the habit is how you catch the drift.

11. Noticing the move.

"How will you notice, in a month, that the pen really moved — not just on paper?"

→ The observable test; without it, the map fades back into the org chart by default.

12. The escalation path.

"What's the escalation if the new owner keeps deferring back to the group?"

→ A decider who can't decide is still an ambiguity — say now what happens then, while nobody's hurt.

Failure modes of the debrief

1. **It turns into a grievance session.** The map becomes "things Joe does wrong." Rescue: rows are decisions, not people — every complaint gets rewritten as a missing name in a column.
2. **The room applauds and moves on.** Everyone agrees the map is clarifying; nothing changes Monday. Rescue: the debrief ends only when the reassigned row is stated as a sentence out loud — question 9 is not optional.
3. **A second decision sneaks into the reassignment.** The energy is high, so the room "also fixes" three more rows without naming owners. Rescue: one named move per session; everything else gets circled for the quarterly re-run.