



The Decision Rights Map

Four–ten people · 25 minutes · one name per decision

Most team friction is not disagreement about the answer — it is two people who each thought the decision was theirs.

**Who actually decides this —
and who has been waiting for
permission nobody knew they
needed?**

Three columns per decision

- **Decides** — exactly one name. The person who holds the pen and lives with the consequence. “We” is a red flag.
- **Consulted** — who must be heard before it is made. A voice, not a veto.
- **Informed** — who just needs to be told after. Not in the room, but kept in the loop.

How the 25 minutes run

Time	Phase	The room does
0–5	List	Name the recurring decisions this team actually makes — not one-offs
5–13	Assign	One name under Decides, a consulted list, an informed list
13–19	Spot	Circle the rows where the decider was contested, blank, absent, or written as a group
19–25	Reassign	Take one unclear decision, name its single owner out loud, say what changes now
—	After	The reassigned row goes on the wall with its owner and date

Two rules hold the map

- Exactly one decider per decision. “We both decide” is not an answer — it is the finding.
- Consulted is not a veto. Being heard before a decision is not the same as holding a say over it.
- Name the person who will live with the consequence, not the person closest to the work.

A decision with no owner

gets decided by whoever is loudest.

A decision with two owners gets relitigated every time.

Three ways it stalls, three rescues

- Nobody will claim a decision → do not assign it in the room; ask “who will live with the consequence of this?” The answer names the owner.
- Everyone wants the important one → wanting it usually means they do not want the downside. Ask what they would give to not own it.
- It collapses into a committee → force a single name. The team can still be consulted; ownership is not dictatorship.

What leaves the room

- A wall of the team's real decisions, each with one named decider, its consulted circle, its informed list.
- One previously-ambiguous decision now owned out loud, with what changes written down.
- A shared vocabulary for the next argument: “is that a consult or a decide?”

Three questions before you close

**Which decisions have the same person on every row?
That is a bottleneck wearing the mask of clarity.**

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

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

What carries into real work

- New manager, first week: map the team's decisions before you inherit the invisible ones.
- After a collision: run only the row that caused the clash — the map usually shows two people who each believed they owned it.
- Re-run it quarterly; ownership quietly drifts back to whoever is loudest unless you redraw it.

One name · consulted before · informed after

The moment you cannot name one decider, you have found the real
problem.

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