

**Software Support
for
Decision Making**

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Help In The Decision Making Process

Decisions,decisions, decisions. So many possibilities, so many variables, so many things to take into account ... you freeze. You are sometimes overwhelmed by all the possible directions your search for an answer can take.

How many times have you been faced with having to make important decisions in a complex and dynamically changing environment? You have a gut feeling about what you should do, but you would prefer to make sure you have covered every possible angle. How?

Large Companies Have Ways and Means

When you are the president of a large company, you use the brain power of the people working for you to help you:

- identify the various aspects of the problem you want to solve
- identify the various potential solutions
- attribute a factor of importance to each aspect and potential solution
- identify the pros and cons
- attribute a weighing factor to each pro and con
- etc, etc, etc ...

Often, higher management will hire a consultant to help them identify and sort everything out. Others will ask the information technology department gurus to develop an in-house, computer based decision support system.

What of Small Businesses?

It's a complex business world out there. No question about it. But decision making does not have to be complicated, nor does it have to be mysterious and overwhelming.

As a small home based web entrepreneur, you have problems to solve, and decisions to make ... like everyone else.

How do you deal with complex decision making?

You do not have lots of knowledgeable people working for you. You do not have the means to hire highly specialized consultants to help you with your decision making.

One solution involves the use of computerized applications to help break down a problem, and take into account a multitude of possibilities.

Decision Support System (DSS)

Your daily decision making may be business related or not. But some decisions have to be made under complex circumstances.

Things can rapidly get out of hand if you always have to rely on specialized consultants to help you solve complex problems, even if you can afford it.

More specifically, you cannot afford the dependence. You must strive to maintain your autonomy, but not at the expense of efficiency and effectiveness.

A well designed, user friendly, computer based **Decision Support System** (DSS) is often the tool that will make the difference.

What is a DSS?

A “**Decision Support System**” (DSS) is an interactive, computer-based system that uses user-supplied data to help answer questions, or solve complex problems.

You feed it what you know about a given problem, and it helps you “see”, not only all possible solutions but, more importantly, the the best possible solution.

Such a system is sometimes called an “on line analytical processor” (OLAP), or Executive Information Systems (EIS).

A DSS can take many forms. Some are highly specialized while others are general purpose. Some DSS are enterprise wide – collaborative systems – while others run on desktop PCs and are intended for a single user.

The enterprise systems will generally be multi-purpose and require multi-processor computing power and powerful database management systems (DBMS) handling hundreds of gigabytes of data. We will not concern ourselves with these large systems in this report.

The Single-User DSS

Many people have relied for years on spreadsheets like Excel or Lotus 1-2-3 to develop specific “DSS” applications, such as for financial analysis, marketing analysis, or human resources management.

Others sometimes push into DSS service small DBMS like MS-Access.

The trouble with spreadsheets and DBMS is that they were not primarily designed to serve as a DSS. They can be pushed into serving as a DSS (after a fashion ...), but they require a fair amount of “programming”. Not everyone is comfortable with the technical aspects of application building using general purpose tools.

There are only a few significant software DSS for the desktop PC on the market today.

They help the decision maker to:

- break down a problem into it's essential elements (sometimes called atomic form),
- give a relative importance to each element,
- identify and assess different alternatives or scenarios,
- ultimately get a “clearer” picture of the best possible solution, given the data supplied to the DSS by the decision maker.

However, good DSS typically cost thousands of dollars and are usually too sophisticated for the small home-based business requirements.

So where do you turn to for an affordable DSS, suitable for small business?

The Layman's DSS

As you might have guessed by now, I was not going to leave you without a viable solution!

I use a DSS that is:

- general purpose,
- needs no programming,
- very effective,
- very user friendly,
- and very affordable: it costs **nothing!**

How can something that costs nothing be of any real use to a small business person?

Why give away something valuable?

More and more businesses develop *freeware* to illustrate their capabilities. They give away free tools and applications as a marketing move to convince people of their expertise in the hope that this will persuade them to do business with them.

Not all users of free software become customers, of course, but enough do that it is a very worthwhile

marketing strategy.

Here are a few examples of well known large organizations who **freely give away** very useful, fully functional software:

- **Adobe Systems Inc.:** *Adobe Reader* free software, capable of displaying the contents of documents encoded in Portable Document Format (PDF).
- **Sun Microsystems Inc.:** *OpenOffice* free software is a functional equivalent of the entire Microsoft Office Suite. (I wrote this report with *OpenOffice Writer*, and exported it as a PDF document).
- **Linux International** is a non-profit association of groups, corporations and others that work towards the promotion of growth of the **Linux operating system** and the Linux community. *Linux is a Unix-like operating system*, the core of which was created by Linus Torvalds. He released it to the world in 1991 and, since then, a large community of programmers around the world has contributed thousands of software tools and applications **to be used freely** under the Open Source philosophy.

As you can see, “free” software does not necessarily mean useless, or less than adequate. Quite the opposite has been observed over the past decade or so.

The DSS That I Use

The Decision Support System (DSS) I use is called “***Choose It!***”. It runs on the server of my “remote application provider” (RAP). I use Internet to access it any time I need help in my decision making process.

The more complex the situation, the more I turn to ***Choose It!*** for help.

Choose It **Helps You Make Sound Decisions** **Even In The Most Complex of Situations**

Choose It! was developed by [SiteSell Inc.](#) to help users of their flagship product, ***Site Build It***, in their daily decision making as web entrepreneurs.

[SiteSell](#) also decided to give **free, unlimited access** to a “public version” to illustrate the power and user friendliness of their products and services.

In spite of its “no cost” “public version” status ...

Choose It!
is a fully functional DSS

Try it now!
Decide for yourself!
You will find yourself making the sound decision to

Choose It!

Users beware! Even the best DSS can produce bad or useless results. *Choose It!* is not different!

However, I can **guarantee** that:

- if you feed it honest, verifiable facts about a given problem you want to solve,
- it will give you very useful results.

Avoid feeding it “garbage” ... because it will simply cough up “garbage”. You have been “warned”.

Choose It!

The DSS of Choice For Small Business People
Who Need Reliable, Affordable Answers
Now!