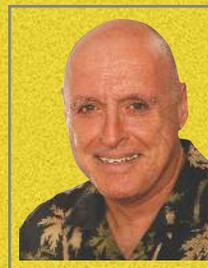


# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1199 IWIKs Can Help With Decisions

We all want to make good decisions. I believe most people would also welcome the ability to make those decisions faster. I'm Jerry Roberts, and today I may have a way that you can do just that. It's coming next, on The Extra Point.

An article in *Fast Company* magazine led off with, "This simple question will help you make better decisions." That kind of thing gets my attention and I'm immediately thinking about an Extra Point, so I jumped in. What was this simple question?

Before we get to it, we need to first touch on the reality that a massive segment of the population suffers from the disease known as *analysis paralysis*. If you haven't heard of it, you may have been or are now a victim.

Analysis paralysis is what some people develop when faced with two or more options and a decision has to be made. They go back and forth, but can't make the choice. They're stuck and the decision doesn't happen.

There's another factor that doesn't get as much discussion, and it's also a problem. This is when we confuse activity with impact. So says Christopher Frank, coauthor of *Decisions Over Decimals: Striking the Balance Between Intuition and Information*.

Frank says meetings are scheduled, emails fly, and people come together in search of the perfect decision, which doesn't exist. "You may get a good decision, a poor decision, or no decision at all." Just not a perfect decision.

Frank, vice-president of global marketplace insights at American Express and an adjunct professor at Columbia University, says a better approach is to ask one question first: What do I wish I knew? He uses the acronym IWIK.

An IWIK is the key question that needs to be answered at that moment, leading to the minimum viable decision needed. A series of IWIKs can lead to greater understanding, as

well as making a smarter, faster, or better decision.

Frank broke down the IWIK process into four steps.

1. Get clear on the ask. What really needs to be decided? What do we need to know in order to move forward? An email can go out to those involved, asking, "If I could deliver to you a piece of information that would enable you to move forward, what would that be?"

2. Start brainstorming. Frank suggests groups of two or three are best, because more than that may limit contributions, or people may be inhibited by who else is present. Multiple sessions may be needed to uncover the ideas the group requires.

3. Capture questions. Brainstorming provides the ideas, and those will need examination. You assemble all involved parties and they ask any questions that come to mind. This will lead to more questions. The key point, according to Frank, is that the process doesn't stop to evaluate the questions. Just get them out.

4. Deliberate and find answers. The person leading the IWIK assembles all the questions, and the process of answering them begins. Look for the low-hanging fruit first, questions that can easily be answered. Set aside those that don't apply to making a decision right now.

Frank says that IWIKs help people and teams to understand and connect information, which leads to discovering their biggest challenge.

Can this process be useful? The first question to ask is, "Could our decision-making be better?" This is a hurdle you have to get over, because it could be a sensitive issue for some people.

If the answer is yes, that improvement is needed, then this might be a good way to get more people involved.  
(Con't.)

It's a process that's easy to understand and quick to implement. Those are important factors in solving problems and making the right decisions.

If you want a copy of this, download the transcript at [guamtrainig.com](http://guamtrainig.com), number 1199.

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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