

How to spend less time making a decision



If I asked you how much time it takes to make a decision, you may be flustered by the question for a moment. You are likely to say **“it depends”** – meaning various factors can affect the amount of time it takes for you to make a decision.

For example, if I ask you how long does it take to decide which tomatoes to buy in the market or which selection of steaks you probably wouldn't know. But, based on prior purchasing experience you wouldn't think it takes too long. **Actually, your prior purchasing experience is really based on your own criteria standards** for food preferences. As long as both items meet your criteria, your decision time will be less.

Now, if I ask you how much time does it take to make a decision for purchasing a home or deciding on which health plan to purchase, you probably would say again *it depends*. But here, you see the factors as more complex and complicated, especially if you have little or no prior experience. These kinds of **decisions you believe will take more time to make**.

Let's compare decisions with prior experience with those with less or no experience. Let's say your criteria for purchasing tomatoes and steaks are based on **price, size and satisfaction** i.e., flavor. You want your tomatoes and steaks to be juicy, the right size and at price you can afford. Your decision time is reduced when you are able to meet all or the most of your criteria.

When it comes to more complex decisions and ones that you may

have little or no prior experience, you also have a set of criteria for your decision. Whether it's purchasing a house or health plan, you may be surprised to discover **the same criteria** as your tomatoes and steaks (price, size and satisfaction i.e., meeting your needs). You essentially want a house or health plan you can afford, one that fits in terms of scale or coverage and one that gives a satisfaction of a lifestyle or peace of mind.

The time it takes to make a decision, is less about the *it depends* and more about meeting the criteria you identify as being important. Once your basic criteria have been met, **any decision will take less time.** However, the key is taking the time to identifying the basic criteria you want your decisions to meet.