

USE THIS BEFORE A BEYOND-THE-NORM DECISION — CHAPTER 15

When The Rulebook Runs Out

DECISION

Worksheet v1.0

Every process has a limit. When you reach it, there's no script, and no handbook. This worksheet helps you make better judgement calls — and own them fully.

BEFORE YOU DECIDE — UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION

THE SITUATION

What's happened — and where does the normal process stop helping?

Be specific. What rule or policy has run out?

👉 Tap or click to type

THE PRECEDENT QUESTION

What will your team learn about the real rules if you make this call?

It's never just one decision. Every call teaches the team where the lines actually sit.

DURING — THE THREE QUESTIONS TO ANSWER BEFORE YOU ACT

If you're waiting for someone else to make the decision, ask yourself whether you're actually the person best placed to make it. **The person closest to the problem usually has the best information. Start there.**

1

What does this person actually need right now?

2

What's the fairest decision for the people involved, the business, and your own integrity?

3

Who else needs to know — and when will you tell them?

THE THIRD OPTION

Am I choosing between the two obvious answers — or is there a third?

The policy points one way. The obvious answer points another. The best decision is often neither. What else is possible?

Some decisions genuinely require escalation — legal or compliance issues, major commercial commitments, safeguarding concerns, or anything beyond your authority. **Know which ones. For everything else, the decision was always yours.**

AFTER — OWN IT FULLY**THE DECISION****What did you decide — and why?**

Write it down as if you're explaining it to your manager tomorrow. Clear, specific, defensible. Be honest: did you make the call because it was right — or because someone else told you to?

COMMUNICATION**Who needs to understand your decision, and how will you explain it?**

What you say afterwards shapes what they learn. Did you make an exception, or did you exercise judgement? There's a difference — and it's often worth making that explicit.

LEARNING**What does this reveal, and what will you do differently next time?**

Is this something to flag, clarify, or communicate so the team is better prepared? What will you keep the same?

REMEMBER

When the rulebook runs out, leadership begins. The authority didn't arrive the day you made your first difficult decision. It arrived the day you were promoted. You just hadn't believed it yet.