



THE 5 CS OF STRATEGIC THINKING, DECISION MAKING, AND DELEGATING

1. Context

No one has optics on everything that's going on in an organization. What's happening in other areas that will impact or be impacted by this decision or deliverable? Is there history or previous experience that we need to understand? Is there a broader context we need to discuss (geopolitics, supply chain, unspoken expectations; do we need vettings or briefs on partners, etc.)?

2. Color

Setting a clear intention and painting the fullest, most detailed picture you can. Can you describe your vision of what this looks like or how it works? How would you assign the level of importance, seriousness, and urgency? Is this ideation and brainstorming, or are we going to do this? If this is ideation and “throwing out ideas,” how will we know when or if it moves to a serious plan, decision, etc.?

3. Connective Tissue

Pull the thread! How does this plan/strategy/decision/deliverable connect to other plans/strategies/decisions/deliverables? Do we think what we're doing solves or amplifies what's already happened or what's happening now? Or, how does it lay the groundwork for what hasn't happened yet but is part of the vision for the future? Using anticipatory thinking — what will be the ripple effect of this decision?

4. Cost

What will it cost us to do this in terms of money, time, bandwidth, focus, priority shifts, etc.? Is this cost tolerable? Expected? Agreed upon? Controversial? Communicated? Does everyone involved understand the cost AND how we're going to deal with the money, time, and energy spend?

5. Consequence

Are there consequences of not doing this, and if so, what are they? What's at stake? What are the consequences of getting it wrong? Are there any unintended consequences that we can anticipate or problem-solve now?