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FIVE DILEMMAS OF PERCEPTION IN THE POLITICAL AND BUSINESS WORLDS

***Donald L. Buresh, Ph.D., Esq.**

Morgan State University, Maryland.

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses five dilemmas of perception that commonly occur in the business world. The first section defines a dilemma, providing a simple example. A dilemma is characterized by two major hypothetical premises, a disjunctive minor premise, and a conclusion. The second subsection describes the dilemma of perception. The following five subsections provide examples of the dilemma of perception. First, clarity and precision versus flexibility dilemma is discussed. Second, the dilemma of the top-down versus the bottom-up methods are illustrated. Third, the process versus substance dilemma is depicted. Fourth, the confrontation versus compromise dilemma is exemplified. The final dilemma deals with the tangible versus the intangible. The conclusion observes that business decisions are not necessarily clear-cut. Choices are typically made between bad decisions and worse decisions, where there are known consequences, unknown consequences, and incidental consequences. The key to resolving a dilemma of perception is to recognize that it is an example of a Hegelian dialectic, where thesis and antithesis are synthesized into a cohesive whole.

Keywords: Confrontation versus Compromise, Dilemma of Perception, Precision versus Flexibility, Substance versus Process, Tangible versus Intangible, Top-Down Methods versus Bottom-Up Methods.

INTRODUCTION

This article discusses five dilemmas of perception that commonly occur in the business world. The first section defines a dilemma, providing a simple example. A dilemma is characterized by two major hypothetical premises, a disjunctive minor premise, and a conclusion. The second subsection describes the dilemma of perception. The following five subsections provide examples of the dilemma of perception. First, clarity and precision versus flexibility dilemma is discussed. Second, the dilemma of the top-down versus the bottom-up methods are illustrated. Third, the process versus substance dilemma is depicted. Fourth, the confrontation versus compromise dilemma is exemplified. The final dilemma deals with the tangible versus the intangible. The conclusion observes that business decisions are not necessarily clear-cut. Choices are typically made between bad decisions and worse decisions, where there are known consequences, unknown consequences, and incidental consequences. The key to resolving a dilemma of perception is to recognize that it is an example of a Hegelian dialectic, where thesis and antithesis are synthesized into a cohesive whole.

DEFINITION OF A DILEMMA

What is a dilemma? What does it mean? How does one know when a political or business dilemma exists? According to the Encyclopedia Britannica Online, a *dilemma* is a form of inference with two hypothetical central premises and a disjunctive minor premise.[1] A conclusion follows the three premises. In general, the form of a dilemma is:[2]

If X, then Z.	*(Major hypothetical premise)*
If not X, then Z.	*(Major hypothetical premise)*
Either X or not X.	*(Disjunctive minor premise)*
Therefore, Z.	*(Conclusion)*

For example:[3]

If we increase the price, sales will slump.	*(Major hypothetical premise)*
If we decrease the quality, sales will slump.	*(Major hypothetical premise)*
Either we increase the price or decrease the quality	*(Disjunctive minor premise)*
Therefore, sales will slump.	*(Conclusion)*

Essentially, a dilemma is a difficult situation that involves a difficult choice that has to be made between two or more alternatives, usually undesirable alternatives. In a dilemma, the alternatives are neither unambiguously acceptable nor preferred. The issue with a dilemma is that it is a choice that one typically does not want to make. In business, a dilemma can lead to choices, none of which are ideal, but rather the lesser of two or more evils.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE DILEMMA OF PERSPECTIVE

A perspective depicts object and spatial relationships, where a three-dimensional object appears on a two-dimensional plane.[4]Another way of looking at it is that a perspective is a vantage point or frame of reference where an individual can view the world.[5]Essentially, a perspective is another approach that helps understand another person's viewpoint.

[1]Dilemma, *Encyclopedia Britannica Online* (2006), *available at* http://www.britannca.com/eb/article-9030445?query=dilemma&ct=.
[2]*Id.*
[3]*Id.*
[4] Perspective, *Encyclopedia Britannica Online* (2006), *available at* http://www.britannca.com/eb/article-9059357?query=perspective&ct=.
[5]Glenn E. Haas, Visitor Capacity: A Dilemma of Perspective:When Is PopularityToo Much of a Good Thing?,*Parks and Recreation* (Mar. 2003), *available at* www.nrpa.org.

The problem with a perspective is that it is only a partial view of reality, and thus it can act as a trap or a bias by not allowing an individual to see the totality of a situation.[6]Since each person has a perspective and possesses incomplete and imperfect information, a perspective can promote poor decision-making. When a situation is viewed from multiple perspectives, a person can take advantage of these different perspectives, engage in multi-framing, and achieve effective decisions through this diversity of perspectives.[7]

Given these definitions, what is a dilemma of perception? From a logical point of view, a dilemma of perception is again an argument with two major hypothetical premises, a disjunctive minor premise, followed by a conclusion. In this case, the argument takes on the form:

If event A is viewed from perspective X, then Z. (*Major hypothetical premise)*

If event A is viewed from perspective Y, then Z. *(Major hypothetical premise)*

Either event A is viewed from perspectiveX or Y. *(Disjunctive minor premise)*

Therefore, Z. *(Conclusion)*

Another issue with the dilemma of perspective is that there may be neither a straightforward nor a universal way to achieve Z, whatever Zis.[8]The fact is that Z may occur regardless of where it is being observed.

Thus, a dilemma of perspective occurs because different people have different viewpoints. Different perspectives can crop up due to the variety of life experiences that individuals may encounter. This can include a person's education, political opinions, or even the tribulations coming their way. No matter how the dilemma of perception is born, what it means, or how it manifests itself, how it is resolved is the crux of the matter. As always, the key lies in overcoming the contradictions and conundrums that the dilemma represents.

CLARITY AND PRECISION VERSUS FLEXIBILITY DILEMMA

In this section, the dilemma of perception is characterized by clarity and precision versus flexibility. The subsections discuss the description of the dilemma, the causes of the dilemma, including fixed manufacturing and flexibility manufacturing, the meaning of the dilemma, and ethical concerns.

Description of the Clarity and Precision versus Flexibility Dilemma

It is appropriate to examine its logical form of the clarity and precision versus flexibility dilemma of perception. The dilemma takes on the following syllogistic structure:

If clarity or precision is achieved, Z is produced. *(Major hypothetical premise)*

If flexibility is achieved, Z is produced. *(Major hypothetical premise)*

Either clarity and precision or flexibility is achieved. *(Disjunctive minor premise)*

Therefore, Z is produced. *(Conclusion)*

As can be seen, the key to understanding this example lies in prescribing what Z is. In other words, this version of the dilemma of perception has power, particularly in a business setting, when Z happens to be an event one typically sees while running a firm.

It should be noted that clarity, precision, and flexibility are all perceptions. According to the Compact Oxford English Dictionary, *clarity* is the adverbial form of the adjective *clear*.[9]It means to be easy to perceive or understand, leaving no feeling for doubt. As an adverb, clarity means being out of the way or uncluttered. Furthermore, the word *precision* is a noun that is precise, exact, attentive to detail, and very accurate.[10]The origin of precise is the Latin word *précis*, essentially a summary of speech or text. With that said, what constitutes a summary, what is summarized, and more importantly, what is contained in the summary is a matter of perception. Finally, the word *flexibility* is a noun derived from the adjective flexible and the verb *flex*, which means to bend.[11]How flexible something is, or should be, is also a matter of opinion, or perception. Thus, since all of the keywords in the syllogism above deal with perception in one form or another, it is apparent that a dilemma indeed exists.

Causes of the Clarity and Precision versus Flexibility Dilemma

The causes of the dilemma are fixed manufacturing and flexible manufacturing. Each one is discussed in turn.

Fixed Manufacturing

In a fixed automated system, efficiency is crucial to produce a high volume of products. Fixed manufacturing products are made to precise specifications that are easy to implement and understand.[12]The disadvantage of a fixed automation system is that it is not flexible. An example of a fixed automation system would be the assembly line at Ford Motor Company during the 1920s when the Model T was in its heyday. When the company attempted to introduce the Model A, it took 18 months to retool, and its market share tumbled.[13]Ford Motor Company has never recovered from this fiasco.

Flexible Manufacturing

The cause, or causes, of the dilemma, depends upon the nature of Z. For this discussion; it will be posited that Z is a manufacturing system producing a good. According to Russell & Taylor, a flexible manufacturing system consists of many programmable machines connected by an automated material handling system and controlled by a computer or a network of computers.[14] It differs from a traditional automated system because the machines are not hard-wired to perform a specific task.

[6]*Id.*
[7]*Id.*
[8]Jeroen C.J.M. van den Bergh, & Ruud A. de Mooij, An Assessment of the Growth Debate: A Comparison of Perspectives. *Tinbergen Institute Discussion Papers,* 97-096/3, *available at* https://www.researchgate.net/publication/4871094_An_Assessment_of_the_Growth_Debate_A_Comparison_of_Perspectives.

[9]Clarity, *Compact Oxford English Dictionary* 195 (Oxford University Press 2nd ed. 2003).
[10]Precision, *supra*, note 9 at 890.
[11]Flexible, *supra*, note 9 at 418.
[12]*Id.*
[13]ROGER G. SCHROEDER, OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT: DECISION MAKING IN THE OPERATIONAL FUNCTION (McGraw-Hill, Inc. Jan. 1993).
[14]ROBERTA S. RUSSELL, & BERNHARD W. TAYLOR, OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT: FOCUSING ON QUALITY AND COMPETITIVENESS (Prentice-Hall, Inc. Jan. 1997).

The Meaning of the Clarity and Precision versus Flexibility Dilemma

The fact that a dilemma of perception occurred in this example is obvious. Two competing perceptions worked at cross purposes to produce quality products in the volumes demanded by the marketplace. This dilemma had seemingly no resolution until it was discovered how to reduce setup times drastically.[15]Then, and only then, when technology came to the rescue, was the dilemma put to rest.

Ethical Concerns Regarding the Clarity and Precision versus Flexibility Dilemma

The ethical concerns of this example lie in the realm of scientific management. According to Russell & Taylor, scientific management was to break down a job into elementary activities and simplify a job so that only a limited amount of skill was required to perform it.[16]The ethical concern is that profit and production dominate the activities of workers, preventing them from finding meaning in their jobs.[17]Workers frequently became bored and dissatisfied, no matter how much they were paid. The psychological challenge of the work was conspicuous by its absence since workers were not allowed to prove their worth or to hone their abilities for advancement.[18]With almost no opportunity to interact with their fellow workers, employees retaliated through an increasing occurrence of tardiness, turnover, absenteeism, and the general feeling of discontent. These issues demonstrate that this is an example of a dilemma of perception.

TOP-DOWN METHODS VERSUS BOTTOM-UP METHODS DILEMMA

In this section, the dilemma of perception is illustrated by top-down methods versus bottom-up methods. The subsections describe the dilemma, the causes of the dilemma, fixed manufacturing and flexibility manufacturing, the meaning of the dilemma, and ethical concerns.

Description of the Top-Down Methods versus Bottom-Up Methods Dilemma

To comprehend why this is a dilemma of perception, an examination of the following syllogistic structure yields:

If a top-down estimate is used, Z is estimated accurately.	*(Major hypothetical premise)*
If a bottom-up estimate is used, Z is estimated accurately.	*(Major hypothetical premise)*
Either a top-down or bottom-up estimate is used.	*(Disjunctive minor premise)*
Therefore Z is estimated accurately.	*(Conclusion)*

The key to finding what Zshould be is remembering that top-down and bottom-up estimates are essential. One of the more relevant business activities where top-down and bottom-up interests matter is project management and using work breakdown structures and parametric estimation.

Since Z will be the time estimates for a particular project, it is crucial to define the notions of top-down and bottom-up so that it is readily seen that a dilemma of perception exists. According to McDaniel, *top-down* refers to a method or a procedure that begins at the highest level of abstraction and proceeds towards the lowest level.[19]In contrast, the word *bottom-up* pertains to a method or procedure that commences at the lowest level of abstraction and then works its way up to the highest level.[20]

Although it could be argued that what constitutes the highest and lowest levels of abstraction is absolute, it is apparent to this author that both concepts are perceptions. At the so-called highest level, it is always possible to amalgamate other concepts, and thus attain greater and greater levels of abstraction. On the other hand, details never seem to end, so what is posited to be the lowest level of abstraction appears to be a matter of choice or perception. Thus, it is evident that the above syllogism is indeed a dilemma of perception.

Causes of the Top-Down Methods versus Bottom-Up Methods Dilemma

The causes of the dilemma are top-down methods and bottom-up methods. Each one is discussed in turn.

Top-Down Methods

When evaluating a project proposal, there are various ways to derive accurate time and cost estimates, particularly when the design is not finalized. They include:[21]

- Consensus Method
- Ratio Method
- Apportion Method
- Function Point Method

When employing the consensus method, the cumulative experience of senior and/or middle management is used to estimate project duration and cost.[22]This usually involves holding a meeting where experts can discuss, argue, and hopefully reach a decision regarding their best guess estimate. One popular consensus method is known as the Delphi Method. It is important to remember that the consensus method provides only a rough-cut estimate, one that may miss the mark because little, if any, detailed information is employed in generating the estimate.[23]

The ratio method is sometimes called a *parametric method* because a specified ratio is used in the estimation process. For example, when building a house a general contractor may employ the statistic *dollars per square foot* to estimate the cost of the building. By multiplying by the number of square feet, an estimate of total cost can be calculated.[24]The apportion method is an extension of the ration method and can be used when a given project closely resembles projects done in the past.[25]A statistic is created for some portion or percentage of the project, and other statistics are generated for other portions of the project. This method can be used in conjunction with a work breakdown structure, or when the project's total cost is known or previously estimated.[26]

[15]Roberta S. Russell, & Bernhard W. Taylor, *supra*, note 12.
[16]*Id.*
[17]*Id.*
[18]*Id.*

[19]G. McDaniel (ed.), IBM Dictionary of Computing 696 (McGraw-Hill, Inc. Jan. 1993).
[20]*Id.* at 71.
[21]Erik W. Larson, & Clifford F. Gray, Project Management: The Managerial Process (McGraw-Hill, Inc. 7th ed. 2017).
[22]*Id.*
[23]*Id.*
[24]*Id.*
[25]*Id.*
[26]*Id.*

The function point method is employed in software and system projects, where the number of inputs, outputs, inquiries, data files, and data interfaces are known.[27]The variables are weighed, adjusted for a complexity factor, and then added together to form a labor estimate and the cost of a project.[28]One of the problems with the function point method is that it is also a rough estimate, subject to finer analysis.

Bottom-Up Methods

Employing a bottom-up method typically involves creating a work breakdown structure (WBS). A work breakdown structure is a detailed listing of all the tasks involved in conducting a project, where the lowest level is known as a work package, essentially 10 days or 80 hours of work.[29]The characteristics of a work breakdown structure are that it defines the work, identifies the time to complete each work package, uses time-phased budgeting, ascertains the resources needed, pinpoints the individual responsible for the work package, and singles out the monitoring points for measuring progress.[30]

The Meaning of the Top-Down Methods versus Bottom-Up Methods Dilemma

The dilemma of perception arises from the assumptions inherent in both estimation techniques. If a top-down method is employed, then a significant amount of knowledge must already exist before the project is begun. If the project's unique or distinctive features are not well known but can drive up costs, then a top-down estimation method is suspect. On the other hand, if a work breakdown structure is used to estimate the time and the cost of the project from the bottom up, then one of the problems that may be encountered is that the individual creating the project plan may not be sufficiently versed to specify all of the tasks that need to be accomplished.[31]When this occurs, additional work packages must be created as the project is in progress to capture the work done. In either case, the problem lies with perception and what constitutes an accurate estimate of the work involved.

Ethical Concerns Regarding the Top-Down Methods versus Bottom-Up Methods Dilemma

The ethical issues are concerned not only with the information employed in the generation of the estimates but also with what information is provided to the customer. For example, if a parametric estimate is initially employed in obtaining approval for the project, but the project has unique characteristics that are not taken into consideration by the statistics, then the expectations of the customer have been incorrectly built. The customer could be led to believe that the project will cost X dollars when the project will cost Y dollars, where Y is significantly greater than X.

In contrast, if a work breakdown structure had been initially employed, these additional costs could have been identified, but the project may not have been approved due to excessive perceived costs. This is not to say that work breakdown structures are necessarily comprehensive. It is possible that the project manager creating the work breakdown structure could not see far enough into the future to specify all of the necessary work packages, thereby underestimating the project's scope, time, and cost. A parametric estimate may have captured the cost and time overruns, remarkably if the given project resembles projects finished previously. Thus, both estimation techniques can more than promote a dilemma of perception.

PROCESS VERSUS SUBSTANCE DILEMMA

In this section, the dilemma of perception is portrayed by process versus substance. The subsections list a description of the dilemma, the causes of the dilemma, including fixed manufacturing and flexibility manufacturing, the meaning of the dilemma, and ethical concerns.

Description of the Process versus Substance Dilemma

In figuring out why this is a dilemma of perception, the following syllogistic structure may need to be examined:

If process is what matters, Z is successful. *(Major hypothetical premise)*

If substance is what matters, Z is successful. *(Major hypothetical premise)*

Either substance or process is what matters. *(Disjunctive minor premise)*

Therefore, Z is successful. *(Conclusion)*

It should be remembered that substance and process go hand in hand, and the key to understanding this dilemma of perception may come from the resulting conflict between the two ideas.

According to the Compact Oxford English Dictionary, the word *substance* is the quality of being significant, important, or valid.[32]Substance is the most important or essential meaning of a person, place, thing, or even an event. The word substance is derived from the Latin word *substantia* which means "being or essence."[33]In contrast, a *process* is a series of actions or steps to achieve a particular objective or goal using an established procedure.[34]

The difference between substance and process is like the difference between position and velocity in physics or between a stock and a flow in economics. Essentially, the substance is a state of being, while the process is the act of becoming. The dilemma of perception exists because the former is static, while the latter is dynamic, and both depend upon the observer's perspective. Thus, the key to understanding this dilemma is to come up with an example where substance or results are thought to be able to achieve a certain modicum of success, while another perspective firmly believes that an effective process is more important. The only dichotomy that comes to mind is the dilemma between management by objective versus total quality management. Thus, Z is the condition of achieving and maintaining a successful business.

Causes of the Process versus Substance Dilemma

The causes of the dilemma are management by objective and Deming's 14 points. Each one is discussed after the other.

Management By Objective

According to Evans and Lindsay, management by objective (MBO) is a process whereby senior and middle managers identify common goals together, define an employee's areas of responsibility in terms of results, and then use measures to guide the organization and each

[27] *Id.*
[28] *Id.*
[29] *Id.*
[30] *Id.*
[31] *Id.*
[32] Substance, *supra*, note 9 at 1148.
[33] *Id.*
[34] Process, *supra,* note 9 at 902.

of its members.[35]With that said, MBO does suffer from obstacles that may affect its viability. First, MBO objectives typically do not support the company vision but are formulated independently.[36]This usually focuses management on individual performance and optimal gain rather than attempting to improve the organization.[37]Second, MBO is a mechanism to maintain tight control by the management of employees, where subordinates succumb to management desires. Finally, MBO objectives are typically not considered in evaluating daily work habits but instead appear during performance reviews, where the spotlight is on results or substance.[38]

Deming's 14-Points

In contrast, Deming's 14 points deal with helping make an organization successful on a daily basis. They include:[39]

1. Create constancy of purpose toward improvement of product and service
2. Adopt a new philosophy
3. Cease dependence on mass inspection
4. End the practice of awarding business based on price tag
5. Improve constantly and forever the system of production and service
6. Institute training on the job
7. Institute leadership
8. Drive out fear
9. Break down barriers between departments
10. Eliminate slogans, exhortations, and targets asking for zero defects and new levels of productivity
11. Eliminate work standards that prescribe numerical quotas by substituting leadership
12. Remove barriers that rob hourly workers of their right to pride of workmanship
13. Institute a vigorous program of education and self-improvement
14. Everybody in the company must work to accomplish the transformation

The first principle deals with the fact that there are two problems that all companies face on an ongoing basis:(1) the problems of today, and (2) the problems of tomorrow.[40] The second principle deals with the fact that in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the American management style was obstructing competitive behavior. According to Deming, a transformation was required, or American industries would inevitably die.[41]

A dependence on inspection to improve quality is both ineffective and costly since quality in a product comes from improving production processes rather than finding the mistakes after the fact and reworking them.[42]The fourth principle appears to contract the laws of economics, but if all of the input information is contained in its price, then higher-priced inputs may have more value, thereby lowering total costs. Fifth, Deming believed managers need to look beyond price and develop long-term relationships with suppliers to encourage innovative activities.[43]The sixth point says managers should institute the training of their subordinates. This includes both managers and individual contributors. The seventh principle states that leadership is critical and must be nurtured in all employees. The eighth point stated that fear must be driven out of the workplace to increase productivity. This includes the fear of losing one's job, the fear that a supervisor may move to another company, the fear of expressing an idea, the fear of not receiving a raise, the fear of not knowing the answer when asked, the fear of admitting a mistake, the fear that comes from the mistrust of management, and the fear of starting another job.[44]

According to Deming, people in different departments must understand the organization's functioning.[45]Eliminating slogans, exhortations, and targets must be directed towards managers rather than workers since they can breed frustration and resentment.[46]Eliminating numerical quotas for the workforce and numerical goals for management is the eleventh of Deming's 14 points. Numerical quotas are usually set to accommodate the average worker, where half of the workforce produces below the average. The result is a loss of productivity, dissatisfaction and turnover.[47]

According to Walton, when workers do not know what is expected of them from day to day, when standards are changed frequently, or when supervisors are arbitrary, the quality of the work suffers.[48]Deming noted that when people are treated as a commodity, they do not take the time to learn their job. The result is that pride in workmanship is lost.[49]

Training and education are critical for empowerment, as it is Deming's thirteenth principle.[50]An organization must continually acquire new knowledge and skills to cope with an ever-changing marketplace.[51]According to Deming, there is no shortage of good people, but there has always been a shortage of individuals dedicated to continuous learning.[52]The last principle states that companies must take action to accomplish the transformation.[53]bAccording toWalton, the effective steps that must be taken are known as the Shewhart Cycle, the Deming Cycle, as it is known in Japan, the PDCA Cycle, or the Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle, which is displayed in Figure 1.[54]

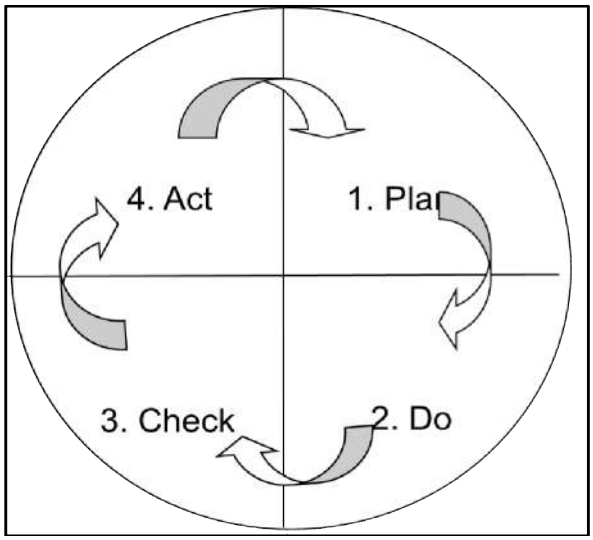

Figure 1. Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) Cycle

[35]JAMES R. EVANS, & WILLIAM M. LINDSAY, THE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF QUALITY (South-Western CollegePublishing 6th ed. 2004).
[36]*Id.*
[37]*Id.*
[38]*Id.*
[39]W. EDWARDS DEMING, OUT OF THE CRISIS (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Center for Advanced Educational Services 1982).
[40]*Id.*at 24.
[41]*Id.*at 28.
[42]*Id.*at 29.
[43]*Id.* at 33-34.
[44] Id. at 60-61.
[45]*Id.* at 62-65
[46]*Id.* at 66.
[47]*Id.* at 71.
[48]MARY WALTON, THE DEMING MANAGEMENT METHOD 81 (Perigee Books 1988).
[49] W. Edwards Deming, *supra*, note 39 at 78.
[50]*Id.* at 86.
[51] Mary Walton, *supra*, note 48 at 84.
[52] W. Edwards Deming, *supra*, note 39 at 86.
[53] I*d.*
[54] Mary Walton, *supra*, note 48 at 86.

In planning, the questions include what is most essential to be accomplished, what the desirable changes are, what new observations are needed, and how the observations will be used.[55]In doing so, there is the search for the data to answer these questions or to collect enough data to see the effect of the change. The idea behind the third step is to observe the effect of the change. The last step is to study the results and learn from what was accomplished.

The Meaning of the Process versus Substance Dilemma

The dilemma comes from understanding what is essential, the process of becoming a successful organization, or the individual performance of the employees. This is a matter of perception, where the emphasis is subject to debate. Finally, it should be noted that focusing on results rather than on achieving these results can adversely affect performance, for employees are simply afraid to act in the firm's best interest.

Ethical Concerns Regarding the Process versus Substance Dilemma

The ethical concerns of this example are concerned with how people are treated. If employees are thought of only as resources rather than human beings, then management can replace them, and they will have little or no loyalty to the firm. If substance is all that matters, then employees will recognize that the organization does not value them, and they, in return, will not value the organization. Fear and mistrust originating from both sides of the fence will be the order of the day.

If process is what matters, then it is possible that the company can fail because results are not taken into consideration. Evans and Lindsay aptly observed that after winning the Deming Prize in 1989, Florida Light and Power did not anticipate the implications of deregulation and was forced into bankruptcy.[56]Although the firm had outstanding quality processes in place, a single-minded focus on improving quality resulted in economic hardship and the loss of jobs.

In the final analysis, the way out of this dilemma of perception is to become a juggler, where substance and process are like the left and right hands, one working with the other, and both keeping the balls moving.

CONFRONTATION VERSUS COMPROMISE DILEMMA

This section depicts the dilemma of perception as confrontation versus compromise. The subsections address the description of the dilemma, the causes of the dilemma, including fixed manufacturing and flexibility manufacturing, the meaning of the dilemma, and ethical concerns.

Description of the Confrontation versus Compromise Dilemma

Given the nature of confrontation and compromise, this is dilemma of perception appears to possess the following syllogistic structure:

If confrontation is successful,
then Z occurs. *(Major hypothetical premise)*

If compromise is successful,
then Z occurs. *(Major hypothetical premise)*

Either confrontation or compromise
is successful. *(Disjunctive minor premise)*

Therefore, Z occurs. *(Conclusion)*

Negotiation and other forms of human relations are where confrontation and compromise are relevant. There are many examples of confrontation and compromise yielding the desired result, but the one that comes to mind is the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. Thus, the event Z is the removal of the Soviet missiles from Cuba. Confrontation and compromise are an integral part of a negotiation. According to the Compact Oxford English Dictionary, *confrontation* is a noun derived from the verb *confront,* which means to meet face-to-face in a hostile or defiant manner.[57]It also means to face up to or deal with a problem, usually in a compelling way. On the other hand, the word *compromise* is an agreement between two parties, where each party makes some concessions.[58]It also means settling a dispute by mutual concession by accepting standards lower than individually sought. The word comes from the Latin *compromittere*, and from *promittere*, the latter meaning *to promise*.[59]

The reason that the use of these two words may pose a dilemma, is because confrontation occurs during the process of a negotiation, while a compromise is the result of a negotiation. Like the distinction between substance and process, a compromise is a stock, while confrontation is a flow. A dilemma of perception exists because of how confrontation and compromise are perceived by the parties involved in the negotiation, either viewed positively or negatively depending upon the participants' thoughts, feelings, and previous experiences.

Causes of the Confrontation versus Compromise Dilemma

The causes of the dilemma are confrontation and compromise. To better understand this form of the dilemma of perception, it is proposed that Z be associated with the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 and the removal of those missiles from the Western hemisphere. This event marks the closest that the human race has ever come to a nuclear holocaust. The decision to place long-race missiles in Cuba was strategic because of the opportunity to obtain a political advantage.[60]The Soviet plan, which began in the Spring of 1962, relied on cover and deception in constructing four ballistic missile complexes that would house approximately 40 launching pads.

Confrontation

On September 4, 1962, President Kennedy publicly stated that the United States possessed knowledge of surface-to-air missiles in Cuba.[61]Three days later, President Kennedy requested authority from Congress to call up reserve troops. On September 11, 1962, the Soviet Union publicly disclaimed placing these weapons in Cuba.[62]Two days later President Kennedy went on national television, warning the Soviets to remove the missiles. On September 22, 1962, the Soviets acknowledged that it had provided defensive weapons to Cuba.[63]On October 14, 1962, the Kennedy administration possessed positive proof that medium-range missiles existed in Cuba, and 7

[55] *Id.* at 87.
[56] James R. Evans, & William M. Lindsay, *supra*, note 35.
[57] Confrontation, *supra*, note 9 at 224.
[58] Compromise, *supra*, note 9 at 219.
[59] Michele Straube, I Abhor the Word "Compromise", The University of Utah: S.J. QuinneyCollege of Law (Oct. 10, 2022), *available at*https://www.law.utah.edu/news-articles/i-abhor-the-word-compromise/.
[60] E. FRANK HARRISON, THE MANAGERIALDECISION-MAKING PROCESS 376 (Houghton MifflinCompany 5th ed. 1998).
[61] *Id.*
[62] *Id.*
[63] *Id.*

days later it was decided to blockade Cuba.[64]On October 22, 1962, President Kennedy publicly warned the Soviet Union of the tremendous consequences if missiles were not removed immediately.[65]

With the confrontation in full swing, it was time for the compromise to take effect. On October 26, 1962, through formal and informal diplomatic channels the Soviet Union signaled that it was willing to back away from this very real threat of nuclear war.[66]Two days later, Premier Khrushchev publicly announced its decision to remove these missiles from Cuba. Three weeks later, Premier Khrushchev also agreed to remove Soviet aircraft and personnel from the island regime. Between October 28, 1962, and March1963, the United States verified via aerial reconnaissance the removal of the missiles, and the Cuban missile crisis was over.[67]

During this crisis, there was an earnest search for alternatives that would take into consideration the genuine lack of information and the existing complex international relations.[68]There were essentially the following six viable alternatives that were considered:

- Do nothing
- Apply diplomatic pressure through the United Nations, etc.
- Negotiate with Castro in secret
- Invade Cuba
- Engage in surgical air strikes on the missile complexes
- Establish a naval blockade around the country

Compromise

Of all of the options considered, it was determined by the Executive Committee that the advantages of blockading the transport of offensive weapons outweighed the disadvantages of a similar action by the Soviets against Berlin.[69]As it turned out, the blockade was right in the middle between inaction and attack. The advantage of this compromise was that the United States possessed naval superiority in the Caribbean. The obvious disadvantage was that a nuclear war could have been started by accident, where the discharge of nuclear missiles was under the direct control of the naval captains of ships in the area, either on the United States or the Soviet Union side.[70]

The Meaning of the Confrontation versus Compromise Dilemma

The dilemma was one of what to do, and what was perceived as accurate. Since Castro refused to permit any on-site inspections of the dismantling, loading, and return shipment of these missiles, the United States had to rely on an aerial inspection of the Soviet ships that were at sea. The captains of the Soviet vessels deliberately pulled back the tarpaulins covering the missiles to reveal the departing missiles.[71]The result was that nuclear was averted and that the decision was quite rational, given that the United States never lost sight of the objective to remove the missiles from Cuba.[72]

[64]*Id.* at 377.
[65]*Id.*
[66]*Id.*
[67]*Id.*
[68]*Id.* at 378-9
[69] Id. at 380-81
[70]*Id.* at 381.
[71]*Id.* at 382.
[72]*Id.* at 384.

Ethical Concerns Regarding the Confrontation versus Compromise Dilemma

The ethical concerns for this example of this form of dilemma are evident. With confrontation, nuclear was a certainty. With compromise, the missiles could have stayed in Cuba, threatening the security of the United States. A balance had to be made that, on the one hand, the United States would appear to have acted decisively while, on the other hand, allowing the Soviet Union to save face. The naval blockade could accomplish this goal, provided that there was sufficient leeway for the two superpowers to maneuver diplomatically. The risk of enforcing a naval blockade was that a naval commander on either side and of their own free will and choice would accidentally start World War III. There were no easy solutions here, just poor ones and far worse ones.

TANGIBLE VERSUS INTANGIBLE DILEMMA

In this section, the dilemma of perception is exemplified by tangible versus intangible. The subsections are composed of a description of the dilemma, the causes of the dilemma, including fixed manufacturing and flexibility manufacturing, the meaning of the dilemma, and ethical concerns.

Description of the Tangible versus Intangible Dilemma

The tangible and intangible always seem to be at odds with each other. Thus, the structure of this dilemma of perception is as follows:

If tangible benefits occur, then Z is the correct way.	*(Major hypothetical premise)*
If intangible benefits occur, then Z is the correct way.	*(Major hypothetical premise)*
Either tangible or intangible benefits occur.	*(Disjunctive minor premise)*
Therefore, Z is the correct way.	*(Conclusion)*

As in the previous sections, selecting Z is the issue. In contrast to previous cases, the dilemma of perception occurs at the end rather than at the beginning or during a given process. This is because tangible and intangible are characteristics of benefits or results.

The Compact Oxford English Dictionary defines *tangible* as the ability to perceive something clearly and definitely by touch.[73]The word comes from the Latin word *tangibilis*, the noun, and *tangere*, the verb, meaning to touch.[74]On the other hand, *intangible* refers to the inability to be touched.[75]The other meanings of the word intangible express a characteristic of something that is not solid, not real, vague, or abstract. The Latin root of both words is the same.

What is apparent is that tangible is the antithesis of intangible. The former describes things of this world, while the latter concerns ephemeral things, like ideas, concepts, and promises. Both words are concerned with perception, and thus the meanings and implications of the dilemma are obvious.

Causes of the Tangible versus Intangible Dilemma

The causes of the dilemma are tangible resources and intangible resources. For this version of the dilemma of perspective, it is no mean feat to come to grips with the tangible and the intangible in a

[73] Tangible, *supra*, note 9 at 1175.
[74]*Id.*
[75] Intangible, *supra*, note 9 at 584.

business setting. By definition, they are opposites, but how these opposites play out in a real-life example is a question that begs an answer. One example where tangible and intangible have meaning lies with strategic resources. A characteristic of a resource is that it is either tangible or intangible, and these resources directly affect the organization's strengths and weaknesses.[76]No matter how large the firm is, the quality of its resources ultimately determines what it can and cannot do.

Tangible Resources

According to Kerzner, the strengths and weaknesses of a company are typically determined by its tangible resources.[77]The more common types of tangible resources include:[78]

- Equipment
- Facilities
- Manpower
- Materials
- Money
- Information/technology

The equipment of an organization consists of the machinery that is employed by a firm in conducting its business. The facilities are made up of the physical building or building that the company used on a daily basis. The manpower is made up of the employees and independent contractors that are hired to do the actual work. The raw materials and the materials in process are the inputs of the organization that are transformed into products and/or services. The amount of available cash is the amount of money that is available to be use by the firm. Finally, the information and the technology are the building blocks required for the company to remain innovative, and a market leader.

Intangible Resources

According to Kerzner, human, physical, organizational, and financial are tangible resources, while intangible resources include the following:[79]

- Organizational culture
- Reputation
- Brand name
- Patents
- Trademarks
- Know-how
- Relationships with customers
- Relationships with suppliers

The organizational culture of a firm is essentially the inside environment of a company. A company's reputation is the esteem that individuals and organizations outside a firm hold regarding the organization. A brand name is the name of a company's product given by the firm and recognized by its customers. Patents are licenses from a governing body, such as the United States, that give a firm the exclusive right to market the associated product or products for a specified period. Trademarks are commercial identifiers that name specific products and are the legal property of the organization. Know-how is the internal and collective knowledge within an organization whose purpose is to help the firm market the products and services sold in the marketplace. The relationship with customers and suppliers is the bond between a customer and/or a supplier that oils the wheels of any transaction, ensuring its ultimate success. The key characteristic of these seemingly different intangible resources is that they are not visible like tangible resources but can promote a competitive advantage.[80]

The Meaning of the Tangible versus Intangible Dilemma

The dilemma lies in the varied nature of a tangible and intangible resource. The tangible resources are things of this world that can be touched and manipulated by human hands and machines. On the other hand, intangible resources consist of ideas, laws, perceptions, and relationships. While tangible resources are the input to productivity, intangible resources are the basis of human thought, at least in business and economics. The crux of the dilemma captures the inherent dichotomy between the chicken and the egg and which came first. It is the difference between reality, the ideas used to shape it, and the outputs that we take for granted.

Ethical Concerns Regarding the Tangible versus Intangible Dilemma

This is a fairly complex issue to address, the inherent dilemma of perception between the tangible and the intangible. The primary ethical concern is focusing on the tangible while downplaying the intangible, or vice versa, concentrating on the intangible while ignoring the tangible. The fact is that both the tangible and intangible are required to convert inputs into outputs. It is not as if one is more important than the other, but the dilemma may be transcended to achieve the desired ends. Only then, do the two ends of the spectrum come together to form a cohesive whole.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the five dilemmas of perception were discussed in this article to illustrate that business making is not necessarily a clear-cut activity. It is often a choice between a bad option and a worse option. In business, there are always consequences, some of which can be predicted, others that are unintended, and still others that are incidental. The key to making good business decisions is to recognize that a given decision typically presents a dilemma of perception, where the possibilities are seemingly opposite. If there is a trick to resolving one of these or other dilemmas of perception, it is to recognize that decisions are usually not either-or situations. The key to solving a dilemma of perception is to look upon them as a Hegelian dialectic, where thesis and antithesis are merged by synthesizing them to form the solution. In this manner, a given dilemma may be solvable.

DONALD L. BURESH BIOGRAPHY

Donald L. Buresh earned his Ph.D. in engineering and technology management from Northcentral University. His dissertation assessed customer satisfaction for both agile-driven and plan-driven software development projects. Dr. Buresh earned a J.D. from The John Marshall Law School in Chicago, Illinois, focusing on cyber law and intellectual property. He also earned an LL.M. in intellectual property from the University of Illinois Chicago Law School (formerly, The John Marshall Law School) and an LL.M. in cybersecurity and privacy from Albany Law School, graduating summa cum laude. Dr. Buresh received an M.P.S. in cybersecurity policy and an M.S. in cybersecurity, concentrating in cyber intelligence, both from Utica

[76]HAROLD KERZNER, PROJECT MANAGEMENT: A SYSTEMSAPPROACH TO PLANNING, SCHEDULING AND CONTROLLING (John Wiley& Sons, Inc. 14th ed. Apr. 2025).
[77]*Id.*
[78]*Id.*
[79]*Id.*
[80]*Id.*

College. He has an M.B.A. from the University of Massachusetts Lowell, focusing on operations management, an M.A. in economics from Boston College, and a B.S. from the University of Illinois-Chicago, majoring in mathematics and philosophy. Dr. Buresh is a member of Delta Mu Delta, Sigma Iota Epsilon, Epsilon Pi Tau, Phi Delta Phi, Phi Alpha Delta, and Phi Theta Kappa. He has over 25 years of paid professional experience in information technology and has taught economics, project management, negotiation, managerial ethics, cybersecurity, business law, and quality management at several universities. Dr. Buresh is an avid Chicago White Sox fan and is active in fencing épée and foil at a local fencing club. Dr. Buresh is a member of the Florida Bar.

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