

The Power of Pausing

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Your team brings a question for a decision. They considered the situation and gathered relevant details. You listen, evaluate, and respond. The team leaves with clear direction, and work continues.

This routine exchange reflects standard expectations: someone presents a question, and leadership provides resolution. Standard operating procedures synthesize context to keep work moving forward.

Nothing about that expectation needs to change. The question was legitimate, relevant information was considered, and responding promptly is routinely valued as decisive leadership.

The Turning Point: What happens if you pause?

Waiting does not require looking for more information or assuming something was missed. The same question and information remain in front of you. Without the immediate need to provide an answer, another question becomes possible: What does the information in front of me actually *allow* me to know?

Pausing allows leaders and teams to examine collective understanding. Operational data may establish parameters about past performance while falling short of pointing to a single future action, preventing partial insight from becoming premature direction.

Information can inform without answering the immediate question. What you learned remains valid, even when the answer remains unresolved. A detailed data set might confirm a trend or highlight a bottleneck without revealing the root cause. By honoring what data proves while leaving final conclusions open, leaders avoid forcing resolution on incomplete premises.

Evidence can establish *something* without establishing *everything*. The information available can be useful, relevant, and accurate without supporting every conclusion that might be drawn from it. Knowing where the evidence ends does not require setting aside what it has already established. An unanswered question does not mean nothing is known. By holding space between analysis and action, decision-makers ensure that choices are grounded in firm knowledge rather than the urgency of the moment.

Not knowing *yet* is different than *not* knowing.

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