

LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS

The Leadership Blind Spots We All Have

Modern leaders navigate an overwhelming volume of choices. Executive calendars tell the story. Leaders spend nearly 40% of their time making decisions and inefficient decision-making processes cost organizations hundreds of millions of dollars annually. [1]

In our work with leadership teams, executives rarely fall into cognitive traps because they lack intelligence. More often, poor decisions stem from something far more human: emotional self-preservation and decision fatigue.

Research highlights four blind spots that consistently derail outcomes:

CONFIRMATION BIAS:



We have all been there, hunting for one green metric in a sea of red data to prove our hunch is right. Confirmation bias leads leaders to overweight evidence that supports existing belief while discounting contradictory information. [2] This results in distorted judgment and missed risks.



SUNK COST FALLACY:

Executives often struggle to abandon initiatives because of past investments or the belief that additional efforts will eventually generate success. This reluctance can divert resources away from higher-value opportunities. [3]

THE HIPPO EFFECT & GROUP CONFORMITY:



Imagine a CEO opens a strategy session with, "I think we should go all-in on X". Instantly, the dynamics shift. Subordinates instinctively suppress dissenting perspectives, allowing the Highest Paid Person's Opinion to dominate, and reducing the quality of collective judgment.



DECISION FATIGUE:

After back-to-back meetings and crisis responses, our brains run on fumes. Under pressure, leaders regress to intuition-driven defaults. They mistake speed for competence and confuse the feeling of decisiveness with objective correctness.

Copyright 2026 Human Dynamic. All Rights Reserved.

The Path Forward

Exceptional leaders are not immune to bias. What sets them apart is their commitment to challenge their own assumptions. By fostering self-awareness and adopting deliberate processes, such as seeking independent viewpoints and conducting pre-mortems, leaders will make more balanced decisions and reduce costly errors.

Questions for Reflection

On motives, when I make a quick decision, am I acting on objective evidence, or protecting my desire to appear decisive?

On culture, have I created genuine psychological safety, or does my status pressure my team to conform?

On processes, what can we introduce in our meetings to identify blind spots, such as appointing a designated devil's advocate?

References

1. Stealth Agents. (2026). *Executive decision-making statistics 2026.* https://stealthagents.com/research/executive-decision-making-statistics-2026
2. Harvard Business School Online. (2026). *Confirmation bias: How it affects your organization and how to overcome it.* Retrieved October 14, 2026, from https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/confirmation-bias-how-it-affects-your-organization-and-how-to-overcome-it
3. McKinsey & Company. (2023). *What is decision making?* https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/mckinsey-explainers/what-is-decision-making





By Riva Man

Director - Customer Relationship Director & Sr. Consultant People & Culture, Human Dynamic Group

Copyright 2026 Human Dynamic. All Rights Reserved.