

Sort Through Ideas

Pros and Cons

Description

Weighing up pros and cons can speed up the decision-making process, improve your understanding of the situation, and help you avoid decision-making paralysis. Using a simple “pros” and “cons” list encourages you to approach your decision objectively, without letting your “gut feeling” impact your choice. This method is particularly useful in group decision making, when team members favor a certain idea, point of view, or plan. It encourages each person to consider other perspectives, and it can help your team reach a balanced, informed decision.

Level ★☆☆☆☆

🕒 5-15 mins

👤 1-5 people

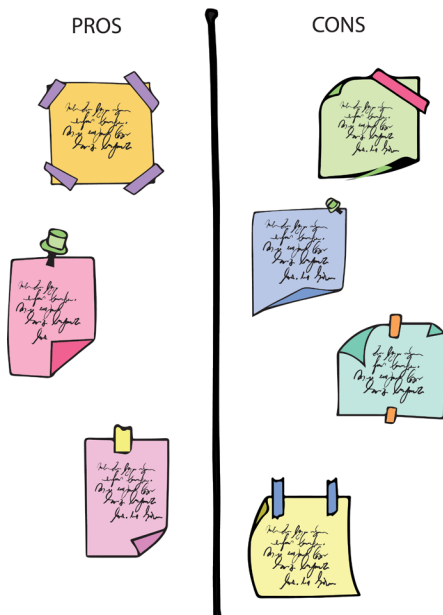
Materials & Prep

This exercise can be done on a whiteboard, a large poster board, or even just a piece of paper.

Access Online Toolkit



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Pros and Cons

Case Study

A departmental committee on handling the department budget had a range of ideas and needs that required prioritisation. Not all ideas could be implemented under the limited budget. Thus what would normally have been a series of difficult meetings through this structured method the committee formulated a clear rationale based on a range of factors to justify the decisions made by the committee to the rest of the academic community and provided transparency and clarity.

Process

Step 1. Write the decision you have to make at the top of a sheet of paper.

Step 2. Divide it in half vertically, and label one side “Pros” and the other “Cons.”

Step 3. List all of the possible positive consequences of the decision in the pros column, and all the negative effects in the cons column.

It may already be obvious whether you should implement the decision at this stage. If not, consider the points you’ve written down, and assign a positive or negative value to each one. For example, a score of +5 may be strongly favorable, while -1 may be mildly unfavorable. Once you’ve finished, add up the scores in each column, and subtract the total cons from the total pros. A positive overall score indicates that you should go ahead with the decision, while a negative one suggests you should scrap it. Remember, always use your common sense. If you suspect that the solution isn’t appropriate, take some time to identify any factors you may have missed. Try to score as objectively as possible!

Tip! This can be done either individually and then points are tallied up or collectively as a group.