Compare Options and Trade-offs

Leader Rebellion · Weighted decision comparison

The numbers can make your reasoning visible. They cannot choose what matters for you.

Use this when: The options look good for different reasons and the conversation keeps switching criteria.

Leave with: A transparent comparison of three options—and a check on how much the weights matter.

Open the interactive tool — free to use, no login needed.

Start here

Name three options and the criteria. Describe what a high score means; keep a higher score favorable for every criterion.

Weight each criterion from 0 to 5. Rate every option from 1 to 5 against it. Missing ratings stay missing.

Try equal weights to test whether the order changes. Check evidence and non-negotiables before making a decision.

Your situation

Calculate and compare on paper

For each option, multiply each rating by its criterion weight. Add those products, then divide by the sum of the weights used. A zero-weight criterion does not affect the total; if all weights are zero, no weighted score is defined. Keep missing ratings visible and compare only on a consistent basis.

Calculate once with your recorded weights. On a separate copy, give every criterion equal weight and calculate again. Keep both versions and discuss any change in order; this paper worksheet does not switch or preserve weights automatically.

Use the criteria table to record weight, each option's rating, and the evidence behind it. A high total does not override a non-negotiable requirement.

What choice are you comparing?

Option A

Option B

Option C

Compare using...

Calculate each weighting on a separate copy so both records remain available.

Choose: Your weights / Equal weights

What cannot be traded away?

Rights, access needs, or minimum requirements belong outside the score.

What evidence or conversation is needed before choosing?

A high total does not make an uncertain rating true.

Items to add

Duplicate this block for each item.

Criterion and meaning of a high score

For cost, for example: 5 = most affordable.

Weight · 0–5

0 = excluded from your weighted total.

A · rating

Choose: Not rated / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5

B · rating

Choose: Not rated / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5

C · rating

Choose: Not rated / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5

Evidence or uncertainty

A question to keep

Whose priorities are missing from these weights?

Worked example — fictional

What choice are you comparing?
How should the team collect incoming work?
Option A
Accessible shared form
Option B
Shared spreadsheet
Option C
Keep the email inbox
Compare using…
Your weights
What cannot be traded away?
Everyone must be able to submit a request. Test assistive-technology access before choosing.
What evidence or conversation is needed before choosing?
Hear the late shift and confirm setup effort. Compare the result with equal weights.

Item 1

Criterion and meaning of a high score: Access for colleagues · 5 = easiest to use

Weight · 0–5: 5

A · rating: 5

B · rating: 3

C · rating: 2

Evidence or uncertainty: Small usability check; include the late shift next.

Item 2

Criterion and meaning of a high score: Cost · 5 = most affordable

Weight · 0–5: 2

A · rating: 2

B · rating: 4

C · rating: 5

Evidence or uncertainty: Estimated annual total, not confirmed quotes.

Item 3

Criterion and meaning of a high score: Setup · 5 = least disruption

Weight · 0–5: 1

A · rating: 2

B · rating: 4

C · rating: 5

Evidence or uncertainty: Team estimates; onboarding work may be missing.

Where this tool comes from

Weighted decision matrices make criteria and trade-offs explicit by combining ratings with chosen weights. This is an original Leader Rebellion implementation of that general technique, with no claim of a single inventor. It uses a weighted mean on a 1–5 scale and shows an equal-weight comparison; neither is a recommendation engine.

The thinking behind it

The score reflects the things you chose to count. Keep room for the experience, dignity, and constraints that should never be reduced to a compensating point elsewhere.

The Search For Unapologetic Impracticality In Leadership: Part III - How We Trained Ourselves to Mistake Certainty for Wisdom — by Nic Payne

Use the comparison to improve the conversation, not to end it with a decimal.

The web tool contains the interactive lesson and calculations. Use this worksheet for written notes.

Get Nic’s notes — optional.

Hope is rebellious.