## Contents

List of Figures  xi  
List of Tables  xiii  
Preface  xv  
Acknowledgments  xix  

### Part 1. Sources of Error

Chapter 1. Man, the Reluctant Decision Maker 3  
  Key Themes 4 / Quality of Decision Making 10 / Sources of Miscalculation 14 / Scope of the Book 17  

Chapter 2. Decision-making Strategies 21  
  Optimizing and the Perils of Suboptimizing 21 / Satisficing 25 / Mixed Scanning 35 / The Decision Maker's Repertoire 39  

### Part 2. Hot Cognitive Processes

Chapter 3. A Conflict Model of Decision Making 45  
  Decisional Conflicts as Sources of Stress 46 / A Model of Emergency Decision Making 52 / Extending the Model to All Consequential Choices 67  

Chapter 4. Defective Search and Appraisal under High Conflict 81  
  Bolstering the Preferred Alternative 82 / Implications of Conflict Theory 85 / Bolstering
before Commitment 88 / Six Bolstering Tactics 91
/ Defensive Avoidance and Preconscious Biases 95
/ Defensive Avoidance and Unconscious Conflict 98

Chapter 5. Defensive Avoidance among Policy Makers 107
Wishful Thinking in the Nixon Administration 107
/ Ineffectual Planning for Desegregation 109
/ Admiral Kimmel’s Failure at Pearl Harbor 120
/ Groupthink: A Collective Pattern of Defensive Avoidance 129

Chapter 6. The Decisional Balance Sheet 135
Four Major Types of Consequence 137 / Importance of Nonutilitarian Considerations 140 / Analyzing Modes of Resolution 144 / The Defective-Balance-Sheet Hypothesis 147

Chapter 7. Stages of Decision Making 171
Five Sequential Stages 171 / Implications for Group Decisions 179 / Implications for Responsiveness to Information 180 / The Stages Prolonged: Fischer’s Break with Communism 183 / Reversions and Feedback Loops 188 / Bolstering as the Final Step toward Action 193 / The Combined Conflict and Stage-Sequence Model 194

Part 3. Major Research Findings

Chapter 8. Open-minded Exposure to Challenging Information 203
Selective Exposure: The Hypothesis That Deserved to Be True 203 / Implications of the Conflict Model for Information Preferences 204 / A Field Study of the Draft Resistance Movement 207 / Stages of Decision Making and Information Preferences 212 / Deciding Which Information to Seek or Avoid 214

Chapter 9. Anticipatory Regret 219
An Elusive Phenomenon 219 / Functional Value 222 / Determinants 223 / Five Unfavorable Conditions 224 / The Unknown Rub 228 / Fear of Unknown Risks among Disillusioned Executives 234 / Constructive Procrastination 239
Chapter 10. Threats to Freedom of Choice 243

Coercive Demands during the Watergate Coverup 243
/ Contrasting Theoretical Approaches 247 / The
Conflict-Theory Position 248 / Threats and Losses: A
Classification 251 / Threat by Chance Occurrence
252 / Loss Due to Chance Occurrence 255 / Threat
by Directive Agent 256 / Loss Due to Directive
Agent 262 / Self-concepts and Freedom 263
/ Human Costs of Losing Choice 264 / Coercive
Pressure and Defensive Avoidance 266 / The Illusion
of No Choice 268 / Governmental Power and
Restrictions on Personal Freedom 271
/ Counteracting Malignant Compliance 273

Chapter 11. Effects of Commitment 279

Commitment as a Source of Constraint 279
/ Degrees of Commitment 284 / Commitment
Traps for the Unwary 287 / Stabilizing Effect of
Commitment 298 / Effects of Commitment
Warnings 301 / Developmental Aspects of
Commitment 306

Chapter 12. Postdecisional Conflict 309

When the Honeymoon Is Over 309 / Sources of
Regret 310 / Reactions to Postdecisional Crises 312
/ Three Modes of Resolution 317 / Uses of Regret
321 / Spontaneous Regret 323

Part 4. Effective Interventions

Chapter 13. Challenging Outworn Decisions 339

Clinical Examples 341 / Cognitive
Confrontations 344 / Emotional Confrontations via
Role Playing 348

Chapter 14. Improving the Quality of Decision Making 367

Decision Counseling 368 / Applying the Balance
Sheet Schema 377 / Outcome Psychodrama 379
/ Emotional Inoculation for Postdecisional Setbacks
388 / Counteracting Defensive Avoidance in
Policy-making Groups 395 / Implications for
Professional Training and General Education 400
Contents

Appendix A. The Balance Sheet Procedure 405
Appendix B. Procedures for Outcome Psychodrama 411
Notes 415
References 445
Name Index 475
Subject Index 483