



Choosing By Advantages

A collaborative decision-making approach

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MAIN DESCRIPTION

Choosing By Advantages is a collaborative and transparent decision-making system developed by Jim Suhr and described in his book *The Choosing By Advantages Decision-making System* (1999). The CBA method can be used for moderately complex to very complex decisions allowing for documenting these decisions in a transparent fashion. The main purpose of this method is to help decision makers to differentiate alternatives and to understand the importance of those differences. In the Choosing By Advantages method, decisions are based on advantages of alternatives which are positive differences, not advantages and disadvantages; this avoids double counting.

STEP 1 – LIST THE ALTERNATIVES

The alternatives are people, things or plans from which one will be chosen.

EXAMPLE

We consider here that we have to choose between two models of car:

Model 1

Model 2

STEP 2 – IDENTIFY THE FACTORS

The factors are used to differentiate the alternatives. They contain data that are required to decide and evaluate.

EXAMPLE

We choose two factors the differentiate the two models:

The trunk space (liter)

The reliability

STEP 3 – DECIDE THE CRITERIA

The criteria are used to evaluate the attributes of the alternatives. A criterion is a standard, rule or test on which a judgment or decision can be based.

EXAMPLE

We decide the following criteria:

Trunk space: the more, the better

Reliability: the more, the better

STEP 4 – IDENTIFY THE ATTRIBUTES

An attribute is a characteristic, quality or quantity of one alternative.

EXAMPLE

Factor	Model 1	Model 2
Trunk space	5 liters	2 liters
Reliability	Reliable	Very reliable

STEP 5 – DECIDE THE ADVANTAGES

An advantage is a difference between attributes of 2 alternatives. It can be a benefit, a gain, an improvement or a betterment.

EXAMPLE

Factor	Model 1	Model 2
Trunk space	5 liters	2 liters
	Advantage: 2 liters more	Advantage:
	Importance: 90	Importance:
Reliability	Reliable	Very reliable
	Advantage:	Advantage: More reliable
	Importance:	Importance: 100

We consider here the "more reliable" advantage of model 2 as the paramount advantage and assign a weight of 100 to model 2 for being more reliable than model 1.

STEP 6 – WEIGHING THE ADVANTAGES

Decide the importance of each advantage by weighting the advantages. First, we select the paramount advantage and then use it as a reference to weight other advantages.

STEP 7 – SUM THE WEIGHTS AND EVALUATE COST DATA

We sum the weights of each alternative and then we compare the total importance of the advantages between the alternatives and consider the cost of each alternative to balance the final decision.

EXAMPLE

Factor	Model 1	Model 2
Trunk space	Importance: 90	Importance:
Reliability	Importance:	Importance: 100
Total importance	90	100

