



A WEEK IN *Learning*

ARTICLE

THE POWER OF DATA IN DECISION MAKING

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My husband and I recently celebrated our 13th anniversary, and for us, “13” is a special number. Naturally, we wanted to mark the occasion with a meaningful trip. Being born and raised in Arizona, we try to escape the heat whenever we can, and our obsession with the Pacific Northwest made Washington the perfect destination.

Once we picked the location, my Type-A personality kicked in, and I began planning the perfect getaway. Did I mention we were traveling with our 16-month-old? Needless to say, I had my work cut out for me. But despite the added challenge, my approach stayed the same: data-driven decision making.

The Airbnb we stayed in, the hiking trails we explored, and even the brand of socks we wore—everything was carefully chosen after hours of

online research. Let’s call it what it is: Data-Driven Decision Making (DDDM).

What Exactly is DDDM?

DDDM is a term often heard in the business world, but it’s useful in everyday life, too. It’s the practice of using data to guide decisions, based on analysis rather than relying on intuition, opinions, or past experiences.

My husband likes to joke that my motto is, “If we have data, let’s use data; if all we have are opinions, we’ll go with mine.” (In my opinion, my opinions are facts.) But in all seriousness, opinions are often shaped by personal biases, which may not apply to the situation at hand.

This is where DDDM comes in. By grounding decisions in data, you minimize the influence of those biases. For instance, when planning our trip, I didn’t just assume what would be fun. I looked up reviews, statistics, and trends to get a clearer picture of what we could expect.



“Data can guide your decisions, but be ready to adapt as new information becomes available.”

-Trisha Martin



How Do I Implement DDDM?

Adopting a data-driven mindset can have a big impact. Here's how to start:

- **Do the Research:** Before making decisions, invest time in gathering reliable data. At work, this could mean reviewing industry reports or customer feedback. For personal matters, it might involve checking social media, blogs, or podcasts. Always cross-check your sources!
- **Define Clear Objectives:** Set specific goals for what you want to achieve, whether it's for work or personal life. Clear objectives help identify important data and keep your focus. (If you're my husband, just smile, nod, and go with it.)
- **Stay Flexible:** Data can guide your decisions, but be ready to adapt as new information becomes available. Keep reviewing the data and adjust your plan if needed.
- **Evaluate Outcomes:** After making a decision, review the results. Did the data lead you to the right choice? Was that 8-mile trail really worth the blister? Use feedback and results to improve your future decisions.

Whether you're planning a vacation or tackling a work project, having a data-driven approach leads to better decisions, clearer communication, and more successful outcomes. Data is your best ally!

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