



Head-to-Head Comparisons

What is it?

A decision-making method used to evaluate and select a preferred alternative, even when the criteria for the choice are unclear or cannot be agreed upon.

There are two versions of the Head-to-Head method:

- ◆ For use with up to 18 options, simply record “wins”.
- ◆ For use with 8 or fewer options, record “wins” and *Pros/Cons*. These represent the reasons for each choice, and can easily be converted into a set of criteria for the decision.

The *8 Options with Pros/Cons* is explained here, since the other is a subset of it, with space for more options.

How do I use it?

- ❶ **State the decision** to be made in the form “Choose the best X”. Recognize the statement you write implies some decisions have already been made.
- ❷ Clarify [decision rights](#) and allow 45-60 minutes. What type of decision is it? (Consensus, Consult, Command, or Delegate). This determines who to involve and when.

POINTER: To generate options, use [Brainstorming](#) or other methods from [Chapter 4: Making Ideas](#).



- ❸ Identify the options to be evaluated and write a brief description of each one in the option tables.
 - ◆ For 8 options use the *Pros/Cons* form with tables A-H.
 - ◆ For up to 18 options, use the form with A-R.
- ❹ Go round the circle and do “head to head” comparisons of each pair of options.

Start with A versus B.

Use the following question to choose between each pair of options:

“If you could only do one thing, and these were the only two options to choose from, which would you select?”



- 5 Decide upon an option and record the winner or the total number of favorable votes in the “Wins” column.



HINT: Wins can be recorded as:

A simple checkmark to indicate which option was preferred by the majority of the team, or

As the number of votes each option received.

If necessary, try to reach consensus on the choice for each paired comparison. This can take time!!

- 6 As options are being discussed and voted upon, record the reasons for each choice as *Pros/Cons*.



HINT: *Pros/Cons* provide a way of documenting the rationale for each choice between option pairs. It is especially useful if the decision being made is representative of other decisions that will be made in the future between different options, but using similar criteria. The final record of *Pros/Cons* can be easily converted into a set of criteria for future decisions that individuals or the team will make in similar circumstances.

- 7 Continue round the circle, comparing A vs. C, A vs. D, A vs. E, etc.

After completing the A's, go on with B vs. C, B vs. D, etc. Continue until all head to head choices have been made, the *Pros/Cons*, and “wins” are recorded.



Go around the circle methodically or you will get hopelessly lost. After each “round” of paired comparisons is finished, cross out or circle the letter of the option that was done, e.g., A, then B, then C.

- 8 Tally the TOTAL of “Wins” or favorable votes received by each option to identify the favored option(s).

Rank the options based upon number of “wins”, but remember that small point differences should not be considered indicative of a clear choice between options.



Remember, these numbers are only used to objectify a subjective process, not for numerical precision.

On the next two pages are examples for 8 Options with *Pros/Cons*, and for 18 options.



HEAD to HEAD with PROs/CONs

2 Roles

1 Decision: CHOOSE a HOUSE

Scribe: _____

Facilitator: _____

Date: _____ Participants: _____

Timekeeper: _____

Who will decide? _____ Review decision process? _____

Be consulted prior to? _____

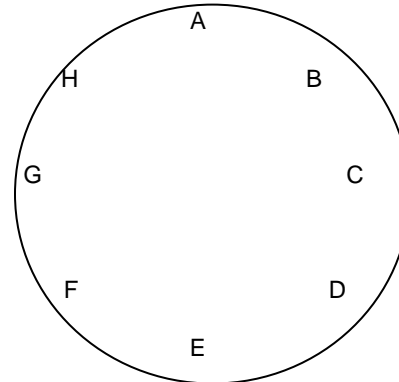
Be informed after? _____

Option A	"Wins"			TOTAL
Belden	✓	✓	✓	4
Pros	Cons			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One level Located in town Low maintenance Size Floor plan Neighbors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distance from house to garage Maintenance fees 			

Option B	"Wins"			TOTAL
Maple	✓	✓	✓	4
Pros	Cons			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trees on lot Quaint & charming Large kitchen Located near family and town Good investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Old -- needs work Small room sizes Located on busy street Detached garage 			

Option C	"Wins"				TOTAL
Gartner	✓	✓	✓	✓	6
Pros	Cons				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 Bedrooms Close to park Good buy Nice home office 2 car garage Screened back porch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Somewhat busy street Taxes 				

Option D	"Wins"				TOTAL
Grove	✓	✓	✓	✓	7
Pros	Cons				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located near town Near schools Open floor plan Kitchen/room sizes Attached garage Porch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighborhood Parking Taxes 				



Option E	"Wins"		TOTAL
Curtiss	✓	✓	2
Pros	Cons		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Back porch Located near town Located near family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plumbing and heating issues Small rooms Parking a problem Not a good investment 		

Option F	"Wins"			TOTAL
Blatt	✓	✓	✓	4
Pros	Cons			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ranch Big yard Neighborhood Low taxes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located far from work, family Somewhat busy street 			

Option G	"Wins"		TOTAL
Justice	✓		1
Pros	Cons		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basement Low price Located near highways Room sizes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located far from family Tiny kitchen Not a good neighborhood 		

Option H	"Wins"		TOTAL
Brook			0
Pros	Cons		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor investment Neighborhood 		



HEAD to HEAD (up to 18 options)

2 Roles

1 Decision: CHOOSE which methods to include in a custom program Scribe: Johan Facilitator: Edward
 Date: April 13, 2000 Participants: Ed, Ned, Fred, Jed, Ted, Freddie, Betty Timekeeper: Rollie
 Who will decide? Johan Review decision process? No one Be consulted prior to? Those listed above Be informed after? Everyone in the universe

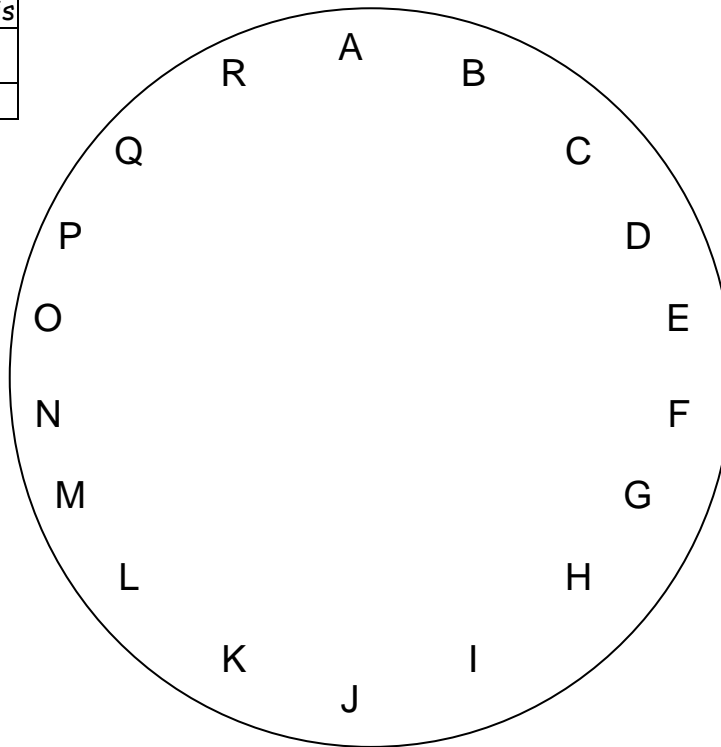
Option R	3 Hats	
"Wins"	✓	
Total	1	Rank= 18

Option A	Issue Exploration	
"Wins"	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
Total	14	Rank= 3

Option B	Classic Brainstorming	
"Wins"	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
Total	11	Rank= 7

Option Q	Best Feature Analysis	
"Wins"	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
Total	12	Rank= 6

Option C	Round Robin Bstorming	
"Wins"	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
Total	8	Rank= 10



Option P	Upgrading IDEAs	
"Wins"	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
Total	16	Rank= 2

Option D	Affinity technique	
"Wins"	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
Total	16	Rank= 1

Option O	Schnookerdoodle	
"Wins"	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
Total	4	Rank= 14

Option E	Brainscribing	
"Wins"	✓ ✓ ✓	
Total	3	Rank= 15

Option N	Dinglehopper	
"Wins"	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
Total	7	Rank= 11

Option F	SCAMMPERR	
"Wins"	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
Total	13	Rank= 5

Option M	Function analysis	
"Wins"	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
Total	14	Rank= 4

Option G	Zabadabadoo	
"Wins"	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
Total	6	Rank= 12

Option L	Rasemplasm	
"Wins"	✓	
Total	1	Rank= 17

Option J	5 W's Matrix	
"Wins"	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
Total	9	Rank= 9

Option H	Leebenloben	
"Wins"	✓ ✓	
Total	2	Rank= 16

Option K	OK or NOT diagram	
"Wins"	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
Total	4	Rank= 13

Option I	SurrogateBstorming	
"Wins"	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
Total	11	Rank= 8

⑨ If you documented *Pros/Cons* (as in the *Choose a House* example), summarize these into a set of criteria. For this example, a summary of the criteria used in evaluation of different houses follows:

- ◆ Location – the preferred options are...
 - Near town
 - Near family
 - Near schools and parks
 - Near work
 - Near highways
 - In good neighborhood
 - On a less busy street
- ◆ Style/floor plan – the preferred options are...
 - One level or ranch style
 - Open floor plan
 - Ample and available parking
 - Attached garage
 - Quaint and charming
 - Screened porch
 - Home office
 - Lot with large yard, mature trees
- ◆ Size – the preferred options have...
 - 4 bedrooms
 - Large kitchen
 - Good size rooms
 - Basement or other storage options

- ◆ Financials – the preferred options are...
 - Good investment
 - Less expensive
 - Lower taxes
 - Low or no maintenance fees
- ◆ Maintenance – the preferred options are...
 - New or need little work
 - Require less maintenance (painting, etc.)

Review these criteria versus the preferred option(s) to verify your decision.



HINT: To use these criteria for future decisions, you would need to determine:

- Whether to separate or keep the criteria "bundled" into these groupings,
- The relative importance of different criteria.

The next two pages are blank Head-to-Head comparison worksheets, for 8 and 18 options.



HEAD to HEAD with PROs/CONs

Roles

1 Decision: *CHOOSE*

Scribe: _____ Facilitator: _____

Date: _____ Participants: _____ Timekeeper: _____

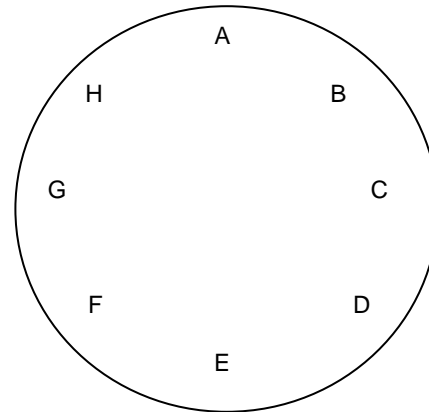
Who will decide? _____ Review decision process? _____ Be consulted prior to? _____ Be informed after? _____

Option A	"Wins"	TOTAL
Pros	Cons	

Option B	"Wins"	TOTAL
Pros	Cons	

Option C	"Wins"	TOTAL
Pros	Cons	

Option D	"Wins"	TOTAL
Pros	Cons	



Option E	"Wins"	TOTAL
Pros	Cons	

Option F	"Wins"	TOTAL
Pros	Cons	

Option G	"Wins"	TOTAL
Pros	Cons	

Option H	"Wins"	TOTAL
Pros	Cons	



HEAD to HEAD (up to 18 options)

2 Roles

1 Decision: CHOOSE Scribe: _____ Facilitator: _____
 Date: _____ Participants: _____ Timekeeper: _____
 Who will decide? _____ Review decision process? _____ Be consulted prior to? _____ Be informed after? _____

Option R	
"Wins"	
Total	Rank=

Option A	
"Wins"	
Total	Rank=

Option B	
"Wins"	
Total	Rank=

Option Q	
"Wins"	
Total	Rank=

Option C	
"Wins"	
Total	Rank=

Option P	
"Wins"	
Total	Rank=

Option D	
"Wins"	
Total	Rank=

Option O	
"Wins"	
Total	Rank=

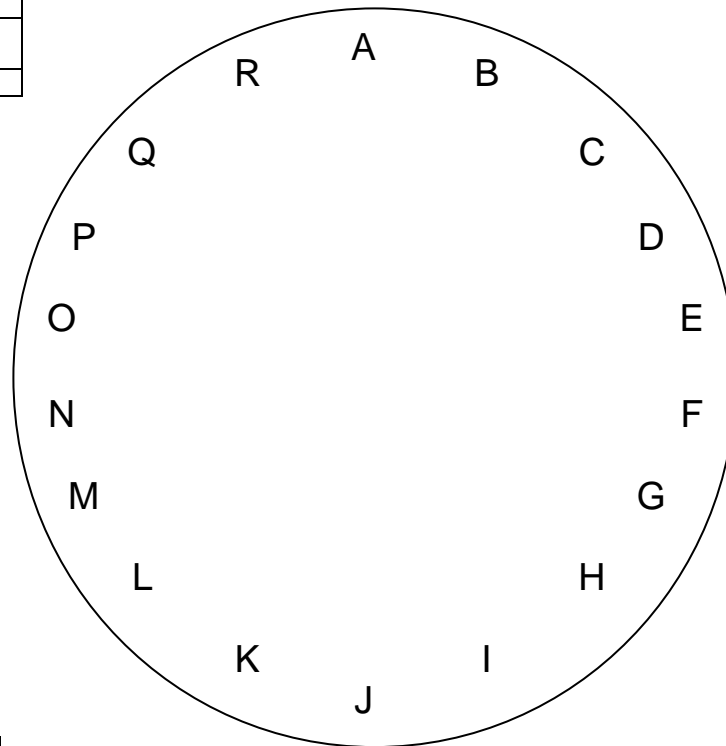
Option E	
"Wins"	
Total	Rank=

Option N	
"Wins"	
Total	Rank=

Option F	
"Wins"	
Total	Rank=

Option M	
"Wins"	
Total	Rank=

Option G	
"Wins"	
Total	Rank=



Option L	
"Wins"	
Total	Rank=

Option H	
"Wins"	
Total	Rank=

Option K	
"Wins"	
Total	Rank=

Option J	
"Wins"	
Total	Rank=

Option I	
"Wins"	
Total	Rank=