



SOCIETY OF DECISION  
PROFESSIONALS  
Clarity & Insight for Decisive Action

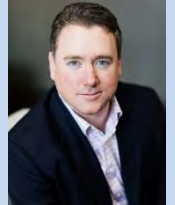
# NEWSLETTER

Issue 10

September 2018

## President's Message

by Jim Driscoll



Dear Colleagues,

In my first contribution to our newsletter as President, I hope to touch briefly on what drew me to SDP, share with you what the Board is working on and - in what I hope becomes a fixture in this part of the newsletter - leave you with a few questions we might use to continue this conversation on a topic of shared interest.

Shortly after joining SDP, I attended my first DAAG in 2012. It was an eye-opening experience. Here was a group of people who thought like me and with whom I shared a number of similar experiences. Like many of you, I was struck by the sense of community that existed amongst the attendees and I immediately wanted to be a part of such a talented and capable group of professionals. I also became increasingly convinced that our way of thinking and the decision-making skills we possess needed a much broader audience. That challenge - to grow the size of our community and to proliferate the use of Decision Quality to benefit those facing difficult decisions - has captivated me ever since. And that need has only increased with time. Whether your concern is your local community, your country or humanity itself, I think it is fair to say that the ability to make good decisions has never been at more of a premium than it is right at this moment. The chance to work with each of you to improve the state of decision-making inside our respective organizations and in the world at large has been, and continues to be, a very rewarding experience.

Fast-forward to today and I feel very fortunate to have entered into my time as President having already served on SDP's Board for the past two years, first as a Board Member under Larry Neal's leadership and then as VP supporting Ellen Coopersmith. Larry deftly laid the groundwork for change and delivered our first strategic plan. Ellen, with her diplomatic skills and sheer force of will, put us on a growth path and helped us substantially improve our financial footing. It is truly humbling to follow in the footsteps of past SDP Presidents like Larry and Ellen. While I can't hope to rival their accomplishments - no one could - I promise it won't be due to a lack of effort.

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*President's Message, continued from page 1*

So what are we working on?

First let me say thank you to our Board, our Council leaders, and our amazing volunteers for all that you accomplish every day on behalf of SDP. And nothing would happen inside this organization without our Executive Director, Hilda Cherekdjian. She is the lifeblood of our society and we are so very lucky to have her!

The initial work of our new Board and Executive Committee is on forming as a team and filling critical leadership positions. We are reviewing the state of our Councils and making changes to streamline decision-making and help increase our operational effectiveness. **One important insight from our discussions so far is that our Councils desperately need your help.** Our success as a society depends on your active engagement in one or more of our Councils. You can learn more about our Councils and get involved by clicking [here](#). Please consider joining a Council today.

For my part, my recommendations to the Board are simple: instead of revisiting our overall strategy, we need to continue Ellen's focus on improving our long-term sustainability while adding clear success metrics, providing unambiguous direction to the Councils on key priorities, extending our plans into 2020 and beyond, and more formally embedding decision-making best practices into our internal processes and procedures.

More specifically, I would like to draw your attention to three exciting developments:

Dan Hudson has been named SDP Marketing Strategist and, in addition to co-chairing the Membership and Communications Council, he will be responsible for defining and coordinating a more effective marketing strategy for SDP. I am convinced that more proactive internal and external marketing strategies are key to SDP's growth plans. If you have a passion for marketing and an interest in joining Dan in this effort, we need you; please reach out to Dan at [danhudsonphd@gmail.com](mailto:danhudsonphd@gmail.com).

Ellen Coopersmith and Carl Spetzler are jointly delivering an SDP-sponsored workshop on Leading Decision Quality in London this coming November. It follows what promises to be a very interesting Decision Quality Conference and, although still two months away, this workshop has already resulted in almost a dozen new SDP members. Building on this, our Houston Chapter, under Matt Kurtz's leadership, is currently planning to pilot their first paid event in April 2019 – The SDP Inaugural Houston Decision Quality Energy Summit. Such activities will help us learn how to support additional events for our members in the future and the proceeds from each will be critical to our march towards becoming a more sustainable organization. Thank you Ellen, Carl, Matt, and all of our passionate members in London and the Houston Chapter for your efforts in support of these important events.

Lastly, DAAG 2019 will mark the 25th anniversary of the Decision Analysis Affinity Group and we are confident that our co-chairs Somik Raha and Jon Mauer - with the help of the Program Council, DAAG committees, and SDP's Board - will put on a stellar event and a fitting tribute. Serving as SDP's annual gathering, you won't want to miss DAAG 2019 in Denver next March.

In bringing this letter to a close, I would like to briefly touch on a topic that has been very much on my mind as of late. As I have been discussing with many of you, the hour of big data analytics, of artificial intelligence (AI), and of the data scientist, more generally, is upon us. I think this evolving landscape presents our profession with a tremendous opportunity to lead. This change also entails some risk because if “the algorithm will tell me the best course of action,” or so the thinking goes, why does one need the help of a decision professional?

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*President's Message, continued from page 2*

While I believe big decisions will always hinge on the data we don't have, given this trend, what are you doing to learn more about data science, big data analytics, and/or AI? How are you learning to speak the language of data scientists? What are you doing to acquire data-science related skills? What individuals, materials, or other resources would you recommend to your colleagues who are interested in learning more about these topics? Why? If you feel so inclined, please drop me a line with your thoughts. I'd love to hear more.

Best,

Jim Driscoll ([james.r.driscoll@intel.com](mailto:james.r.driscoll@intel.com))

## Upcoming Events



SOCIETY OF DECISION  
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- Webinar: [Best of DAAG 2018: Real Life Framing: A Hurricane Harvey Case Study](#)  
Wednesday, September 19, 2018  
8 am PT | 11 am ET
- Webinar: Adventures in Analytics  
Wednesday, October 17, 2018  
8 am PT | 11 am ET
- **DAAG 2019 – SAVE THE DATE!**  
March 5 – 8, 2019  
GRAND HYATT DENVER  
1750 Welton Street  
Denver, CO, 80202, US



[London Decision Quality Conference](#) –  
Geological Society in London  
November 5 – 6, 2018  
More info on page 8



[40th Annual North American Meeting](#)  
October 14-17, 2018  
Montreal, QC, Canada

Do you know of upcoming professional events that might be of interest to other SDP members? If so, please email the SDP newsletter at [newsletter@decisionprofessionals.com](mailto:newsletter@decisionprofessionals.com)





## Spotlight on SDP Member Chuck White

*In every issue of this newsletter, we turn the spotlight on a randomly-selected member of the SDP to learn more about that member's life as a decision professional.*

*The editors*



SDP Lead Practitioner Chuck White has had a long and distinguished career as a naval architect serving the oil and gas industry. He started his career at Conoco, where he helped the company develop its worldwide deepwater exploration strategy. While at Conoco, he was introduced to formal decision-making methods including the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) and Decision and Risk Analysis (D&RA) and he began to introduce these methods in the company's decision making for technology development planning. One of his colleagues at Conoco at that time was Ellen Coopersmith (currently SDP Past-President), who was a leader in guiding the company toward higher decision quality - a vision for improved reservoir exploration and management they shared.

After working at Conoco for 18 years, Chuck served in a sequence of professional positions that included StatOil, Maringineering, WorleyParsons/INTECSEA, and Poten & Partners. Along the way, he co-founded and helped lead a company called EnerSea Transport, which focused on the use of innovative technology for offshore production and transport of compressed natural gas (CNG). During his career, Chuck has written numerous papers and taught many courses, and has received a number of patent and industry awards.

Chief among the many satisfactions that Chuck has experienced as a decision professional is witnessing an improvement in the quality of research done at both Conoco and StatOil as a result of his work. Just a few years ago, he helped develop a new methodology called Spatial AHP that combines AHP and GIS to greatly improve decision-making for such things as the routing of offshore pipelines and the siting of wind turbine farms.

A particularly tough challenge that he encountered in his career as a decision professional was trying to convince a potential client to engage his consulting team to reach for higher quality results in the face of tough decision challenges when the leadership dismissed concerns about "group think" and believed that their own team could do the job.

Chuck finds significant value in his SDP membership. He very much appreciates the discussions he hears via webinars and other SDP channels about striving for quality in decisions not just in the professional world but also in our personal lives. He has done some of that himself by helping church organizations make better decisions. He is an active member of the SDP Houston Chapter and very much enjoys the interactions with other decision professionals within the local area.



# London Decision Quality Conference 2018

## *Making Good Outcomes More Likely*

This multi-industry conference is being held at the Geological Society in London, on **Monday 5th and Tuesday 6th November 2018**, where global experts will share practical guidance on improving business decision making.

The conference is structured around the six elements of Decision Quality, and will provide an opportunity for decision professionals to improve skills and share knowledge on various applications of Decision Quality in business and government.

For 2018 we have secured a strong speaker line-up:

- Carl Spetzler, CEO, Strategic Decisions Group
- Russell Smith, VP Global Concept Developments, BP Plc
- Cath Bishop, Olympic Rower, Leadership Consultant & Speaker
- Jeremy Brann, Head of Economic Excellence, Shell Exploration & Production
- James (Jim) Weatherall, Head of the Advanced Analytics Centre, AstraZeneca
- Dominic Brittain, Principal, Dominic Brittain and Associates
- Reidar Bratvold, Professor of Decision and Data Analytics at the University of Stavanger and the Norwegian Institute of Technology
- Ellen Coopsmith, Founder, Decision Frameworks
- Ray Riddoch, Managing Director UK, Senior Vice President Europe, Nexen Petroleum U.K. Ltd

Additional features:

- Software Roadshow at lunch time on both days
- Panel Session on Embedding Decision Quality
- Followed by a short course on **Leading Decision Quality Workshops** sponsored by SDP on **7th November**.

To see the full programme and to register please visit the EDPN site by [CLICKING HERE](#).





***Dear SDP Fellows: "In your opinion what do you think lies ahead for our field? What do you believe to be the new frontiers for Decision Analysis?"***

Two obvious candidates come to mind: Big Data and AI. How decision professionals change our methods to accommodate and incorporate those two rapidly developing fields will be extremely important.

A third one that I don't think receives enough attention is Complexity (in the sense of Complex Adaptive Systems). Many of the most important problems facing society today have their roots in CAS. Global warming, nutrition and health issues, the global extinction event we are living through (and causing), the resource limitations of a finite planet, intractable pockets of poverty, the fragility of the global economy – all stem from the behaviors of Complex systems. Problem solving (and therefore decision making) in such situations requires coming up with creative "free to fail" pilots or experiments, rather than some of the more standard DA tools like probabilistic modeling and utility curves.

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One newer area I have found helpful for clients is to frame choices and analysis logic so that they can use machine learning for predictive analytics using historical data in addition to range assessments for future uncertainties in their evaluations. This can help to get the more data-driven thinkers comfortable with the probabilistic nature of DA.

Another newer area is to simulate along a decision-risk timeline to provoke discussions about possible pathways that strategies may play out. This seems to help teams and decision makers bridge the gap to possible futures and gain confidence in the initial steps of their pathway. It also helps with negotiations and contingency planning.

Aside from the new methodology areas, DA and cognitive bias awareness should be a part of the life skills courses that are being offered in high schools and colleges. Beyond making decisions, it is helpful for kids to learn how to incorporate critical thinking and creative options rather than believing their first impressions, accepting how others have framed things for them, or taking information at face value. Too many people hear what they want to hear and run with it.

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I agree with pushing better decision making skills into high schools. That's where I'm spending all my effort. At Thurston High School in Springfield OR we have developed a semester long curriculum for seniors and juniors and are piloting a sophomore version this spring.

*The following SDP Fellows contributed to answering this question: Patrick Leach, Gerald Bush and Frank Koch*

***If you have a question for the SDP Fellows about good practice among decision professionals, please send it to us at [SDP Newsletter: Ask The Fellows](#).***





## A Word From SDP Sponsor SmartOrg

*In every issue of this newsletter, we include a message from one of the SDP sponsors, whose support contributes significantly to the on-going success of the Society.*

# SMARTORG®

SmartOrg has invented Decision Analysis [methods](#) that help innovation and finance agree on how to drive upside and on where and how much to invest. We've embodied those methods into a web-based portfolio evaluation platform that focuses on [aligning innovation and finance](#) to overcome conflict and drive breakthrough growth.

[Our portfolio evaluation platform](#) evaluates uncertain opportunities and uncovers the upside potential hidden among them. Our platform also aggregates and compares projects, offering insightful analytics that help with portfolio optimization. We help build our clients' capability to deliver credible and comparable evaluations so their team members can make and accept portfolio decisions that drive breakthrough growth.

Our platform is designed to offer analysts a scalable approach to decision analysis. The platform makes it easy for decision analysts to develop solutions using a technology they already know – Excel. Coding-savvy analysts and IT departments can use SmartOrg's Javascript SDK to go beyond the Excel-based user interface and create stunning user experiences without needing to worry about the server stack.

Example portfolio management customers include Dow AgroSciences, DuPont, Corteva, Rogers Corporation and Applied Materials, all using SmartOrg's portfolio evaluation platform and services. A historical customer list and a few video testimonials are here: <http://smartorg.com/about/customers/>

## Join Us in Producing the SDP Newsletter

We, the editors, are actively looking for other SDP members to join us in producing this newsletter. If you are interested, please contact us. [Click here](#) to email the editors.

Matt Gorman and Steve Tani  
SDP Newsletter Editors



# Brain Teaser

## Congratulations to Navin Aswal

The correct answer to the brain teaser posed in the June issue is:

$$\frac{4! - \sqrt{4}}{.4} = 55$$

Navin Aswal was the first to submit the correct answer.

## THE SEPTEMBER BRAIN TEASER

*Instructions: You can win “bragging rights” by being the first to submit the correct answer of this brain teaser to the newsletter editors ([SDP Newsletter: Brain Teaser](#)). We will announce the winner in the next issue.*

### The Farmer’s Stone

To weigh bales of hay, Farmer Jones has a balance beam scale and a stone weighing exactly 40 pounds. One day, his neighbor Farmer Smith borrowed the scale and the stone. When he returned, he was very apologetic. “The stone fell out of my wagon and broke into four pieces”, he said.

A week later, Farmer Jones saw Farmer Smith and said, “You actually did me a favor by breaking that stone. Now, I can exactly weigh any amount of hay in integer pounds from 1 to 40.” What are the weights of the four pieces of stone?



### Useful Links

The SDP Board has posted the Society’s Bylaws and Policy and Procedure Manual, which can be found at: <http://www.decisionprofessionals.com/about/governance>

The SDP Knowledge Sharing Council maintains a Fellows Blog at: <http://www.decisionprofessionals.com/?scrollTo=blog-news#blog-news>

A listing of courses in decision analysis available to SDP members is at: <http://www.decisionprofessionals.com/courses/training-program>