



Medtronic Aligns Portfolios and Budgets Strategically Using Expert Choice

CASE STUDY

Challenge Instill a fair, practical process for collaborating on crucial business decisions.

Action Leveraged EC solutions and training to engage decision-makers in a better evaluation process.

Results A repeatable, transparent process for strategic planning and prioritizing funding.

[Challenge]

Medtronic has long provided medical solutions to help people with chronic disease. Constant collaboration with physician researchers who use their products has yielded new therapies through the years. Since there are always more ideas than budget, time and resources, Medtronic sought to:

- Improve the process of evaluating projects
- Inform decision making on which projects to fund
- Align decisions with strategic goals
- Provide a fair, balanced assessment process
- Gain confidence in decisions made among stakeholders

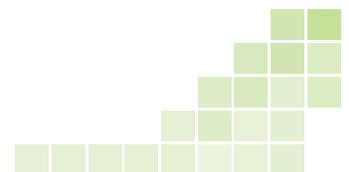
“It’s a big feedback loop. When the rubber hits the road, and you have to commit funding, are you on strategy? Expert Choice provides both a reality check and feedback mechanism to consider different views and what-if scenario.”

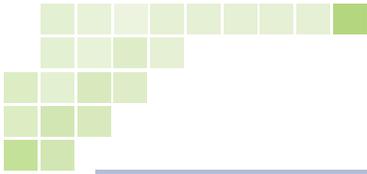
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Medtronic knew they needed a better way to prioritize and make funding decisions. Ultimately, only 10 or so of every 100 proposed research projects could be funded. Given the collaborative environment in which they operate, it was essential the physician researchers felt their ideas were carefully considered and that a fair and balanced process was being used to make determinations. Internally, management also had to align the research portfolio with the company’s strategic goals and Budget and Government Accounting Office.

[Action]

Medtronic is in the business of alleviating pain for millions. So there was a natural instinct to make its own processes less painful for stakeholders.





External	Internal
Physicians	Sales
Patients	Product Development
Government	Legal
	Marketing

Armed with Expert Choice 11, EC Resource Aligner software, Keypad hardware and Green Belt training, the Medtronic team launched into the prioritization process with a robust toolbox and a new attitude. The team built 5-6 template models which they use several different ways to simplify decision-making in key areas that include research portfolio decisions and annual operations planning.

Up front, Medtronic made the smart decision to use Expert Choice staff to moderate their meetings. With an expert leading the way, people got engaged faster. This is especially crucial when dealing with contentious situations or reluctant participants. Such facilitation reassures everyone of the fair process and forces all involved, in an effective way, to express and justify their views. The Expert Choice framework gathers all inputs and synthesizes them into prioritized decisions.

Expert Choice allowed the team to “see what we were doing. The tool makes you do what you mean, and mean what you do. It really put a fine point on where we were off the mark in our portfolio and helped us agree and move forward.”

The process was evolutionary, with management acknowledging that once participants got on board with the methodology, they noted significant qualitative improvements in their process. In the end, by engaging in this systematic approach, Medtronic is able to elicit buy-in at all levels on crucial decisions. Along the way, they can adjust the various constraints and review new outcomes.

“There used to be a lot of ‘gaming’ of the system. Now, we have a process that helps level the playing field, address the strategy, and help our team do the right thing.”

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Results

Medtronic was able to stem the downward spiral of budgeting based on last year’s activities. Now, they take a fresh look at all of the incoming project requests and make reasoned decisions. Success in this area has led to widespread use. People across the organization now turn to the Expert Choice process/tool first for big, critical decisions because they are assured of:

- A repeatable, trusted process for making reasoned decisions
- Transparency cross the organization and stakeholders
- Visibility into what things cost and how they align with strategic goals

The company is now measuring the financial impact of its new decision-making process. Productivity is definitely on the rise.

Expert Choice brings rational decision making to a complex world. Since 1983, Expert Choice has been a leader in collaborative decision making software, serving more than 100 of the Fortune 500 and 30 U.S. federal agencies. Expert Choice software is taught in over 100 universities and used in 60 countries worldwide. Its solutions are designed for business and government leaders who want to save time and improve the bottom line.

