

## : *What is the Amazon working backwards approach?*

Daniel J. Power

Editor, DSSResources.com

Jeff Bezos, Amazon CEO, has had great success since the Amazon e-tailing website launched on July 16, 1995 as an Internet bookseller. Bezos pushes innovation and a Day 1 mentality. One process tool that Amazon managers use is called "working backwards" (WB). Using WB seems to encourage more successful innovation. The approach has become formalized, but the idea is simple: start product development with a vision of the final product and then work backwards to make that vision a reality. Goal or vision-driven behavior is not a new concept. It seems that managers at Amazon have added a few process twists that seem to work.

The process described by Ian McAllister (2010, 2012), is interesting, but it is not rocket science, a secret weapon, or a magic bullet. The Amazon working backwards process is an approach to help envision and define a new product prior to development. The process involves a series of interrelated tasks that, together, transform a vague idea into a more concrete product press release.

The Amazon working backward method is a product development approach that starts with the team imagining the product that will be ready to ship. The product team's first step is to draft a press release announcing the product's availability. The audience for this press release should be the envisioned product's intended customer.

A project proposal press release describes ideal customer end state and it contains information about the problem, how current solutions are failing, and why the new product will solve this problem. The proposal is intended to be a "gut-check" for whether the "new" product is worth building. If no one is excited about the product press release then document needs to be revised or perhaps the idea should be abandoned. The process of developing the press release encourages a new product team to reflect on the idea.

Bariso (2019) notes "By working backwards, you get the chance to work on your idea and flesh it out. But you're also forced to put it to the test. After writing and rewriting, refining and reiterating, it will become clear if the idea is really worth pursuing. That clarity often helps you to let go of mediocre ideas so you can concentrate on great ones."

Structured processes like working backwards can be very effective planning and decision making aids. McAllister's (2020) press release template is a thinking and decision aiding tool. Following the references is an example created with the template.

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Ian McAllister has a number of resources related to the working backwards approach at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ianmcallister/>.

## References

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McAllister, I., "Working Backwards Press Release Template and Example," LinkedIn, April 23, 2020 at URL <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/working-backwards-press-release-template-example-ian-mcallister/>

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CEDAR FALLS, IA –January 1, 2024 - Power Enterprises, a Cedar Falls, Iowa company, today launched a new artificial Intelligence application for iOS and Android that converses with a decision maker about his or her decision situation. The app, MYDAVI, asks and answers questions, retrieves information, and thinks with a person to decide, plan, and problem solve. MYDAVI is a conversational, intelligent decision structuring aid. MYDAVI is a personal decision advisor with a voice interface.

Improving decision making can have many benefits for an organization. MYDAVI is a real-time interactive advisor that provides access to a vast store of knowledge, information, and data. MYDAVI implements a rational, structured question and answer thinking process. MYDAVI learns about a specific individual decision maker and helps support and document the rationale for that person's decisions. Regulators, compliance officers and others want to know about the quality and rigor of certain decisions, and it sometimes becomes necessary to document the facts used in a decision to demonstrate a lack of bias in a rational process. MYDAVI helps analyze situations, provides facts and documents their use.

MYDAVI is the first intelligent decision aid and advisor. MyDAVI solves challenges and problems associated with decision making by interacting and recording the collaborative decision process. MYDAVI makes thinking more explicit and more rational. MYDAVI learns about you and your job and the routine and less structured decisions you make. MYDAVI is a memory aid and an intelligent assistant. MYDAVI can monitoring changing situations and alert a decision maker to facts and problems. MYDAVI lets you customize the events to monitor and set criteria for alerts and notifications. You remain in control with a smart advisor.

“Our goal with MYDAVI is to help managers make better decisions,” said Daniel Power, creator of the MYDAVI app. “Managers face both routine and recurring decisions and decisions that are unforeseen and unusual. Using the app creates a personalized decision aid that knows about you and your decision style.”

You can try a version of MYDAVI with limited memory by downloading the app. Initially you will answer questions to "train" MYDAVI and then your interactions and questions will create a truly personal decision assistant. Connect the app to company and public data bases, and then set your initial alerts. MYDAVI will be always monitoring your world and ready to assist. The more you use MYDAVI the smarter it becomes. You can even give the app a new name like Simon, Albert, or Elizabeth.

One of the beta testers, Alex Jones noted “MYDAVI, named AL, is my constant companion. Where I

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go AL goes.” Alex noted, "I'm always in the loop and AL prompts me, reminds me, and assists. I am more effective with AL and I make better decisions.”

If you want to make better decisions and be able to explain them to others, then visit [intelligentdecisionaids.com](http://intelligentdecisionaids.com) today. Download the trial version of MYDAVI.

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Author: Daniel Power

Last update: 2020-08-16 05:20