



ASK – Checklist Step 3:

What is the preferred solution?

	Very clear	Fairly clear	Somewhat unclear	Very unclear
1. How clearly defined is the solution (what, who, when, where, why)?				
2. Is it clear what the logic model is—that is, how the solution would solve the problem?				
3. How clearly defined are the costs and benefits of each solution?				
4. Is it clear what the best and/or most feasible solution is?				
Before you ask questions to determine whether a solution is clearly described, it is important to determine whether you have considered more than one solution. The scientific literature suggests that considering multiple solutions tends to lead to better decisions than fixating on yes/no or either/or choices. When we consider only one solution, we tend to ignore evidence contradicting its expected results.				

ASK – Checklist Step 4:

What is the evidence for the preferred solution?

Evidence from practitioners	Yes	Mostly	Somewhat	No
1. Do they agree on which solution is the best and/or most feasible?				
2. Do they see downsides to or unintended negative consequences of the preferred solution?	Yes		No	
3. Do they see alternative solutions to the problem that may work better?	Yes		No	
The professional judgment of experienced practitioners inside and outside the organization is an essential component in determining how likely a proposed solution is to work in a particular context. In addition, experienced professionals are often in a good position to rate the solution in terms of implementation costs and other feasibility and risk issues. Finally, experienced professionals may think of alternative solutions that you haven't considered.				

Evidence from the organization	Yes	No
1. <i>Can organizational data be used to monitor the future effectiveness of the preferred solution(s)?</i>		
<p>Organizational data can be hard, or quantitative, indicators such as team performance, staff turnover, error rates, or productivity levels, but they can also include soft elements such as job satisfaction or attitudes toward senior management.</p> <p>Ideally, you would have organizational data available that could help determine which solution has the highest likelihood of solving the problem.</p>		

Evidence from the scientific literature	Yes	Mostly	Somewhat	No
1. <i>Does the scientific literature indicate that the preferred solution will be effective?</i>				
2. <i>Does the literature suggest other solutions to the problem that may work better?</i>				
3. <i>Is the evidence generalizable to the organizational context (PICOC)?</i>				
<p>When referring to scientific literature, we mean empirical studies published in peer-reviewed academic journals. In recent decades, a large amount of research has been published on a wide range of managerial issues, such as absenteeism, job satisfaction, improving performance, preventing errors, and motivating employees. Many of these studies also provide insight into which variables or management interventions may have a positive impact. Thus, when it comes to tackling these issues in practice, it is important to consult these studies.</p>				

Evidence from stakeholders	Yes	Mostly	Somewhat	No
1. Do they agree on which solution is the best and/or most feasible?				
2. Are they supportive of the preferred solutions?				
3. Do they see downsides to or unintended negative consequences of the preferred solution?	Yes		No	
4. Do they see alternative solutions for the problem that may work better?	Yes		No	
Even the best solution can fail upon implementation if the stakeholders see serious downsides or if they feel an alternative solution may work better. Gathering evidence from stakeholders is therefore an essential component in determining how likely a proposed solution is to work in a particular context. In addition, stakeholders are often in a good position to judge the preferred solution in terms of implementation costs and other feasibility and risk issues. Finally, stakeholders may see alternative solutions that you haven't considered.				

Based on the answers to these questions, you should be able to conclude whether the evidence supports the decision regarding the best and/or most feasible solution. When the answers suggest that the preferred solution is not supported (or even that it is contradicted) by the evidence, the likelihood that the solution will effectively address the problem is low. In that case, you are left with only one option: to go back to the drawing board.

In addition, if you conclude that the available evidence is too limited, you should acquire additional evidence. Only when sufficient (strong/trustworthy) evidence supports the potential effectiveness of the preferred solution would you consider the decision to implement to be an evidence-based decision.