

## Natalia Karelaia

Associate Professor of Decision Sciences

### Key Finding

**Mindfulness can improve decision-making quality.**

### Business Application

**Creating a culture of mindfulness in organisations can boost employee wellbeing, performance, and decision-making.**

The popularity of mindfulness has skyrocketed over the past decade. It is on the news, magazine covers and in best-selling books. It is endorsed by celebrities, monks, athletes and business leaders alike. Many organisations offer mindfulness training to their employees. Mindfulness does not only improve individual wellbeing. It also has great potential to improve the quality of decision-making for both individuals and organisations. Being mindful means being actively aware of the here and now, of whatever is happening within us (our thoughts, emotions, sensations) and around us. As such, *mindful decision-making* implies the ability to take a step back and see ourselves with a degree of detachment – that is, the ability to maintain a certain distance from our own thoughts and emotions and witness them impartially.

Mindfulness can help us deal with many biases that hinder decision-making. It can assist us in understanding our fundamental goals and values and guide us through tough choices. It can help us recognise whether, when and what decisions should be made; have the courage and humility to recognise the limits of our knowledge; attend to both intuitive hunches and data; take responsibility for our decisions; and learn the right lessons, even if the outcome of a decision is less positive than expected. Beyond offering mindfulness training or dedicated spaces, business leaders can create a culture of mindfulness by encouraging attention to the present moment during both individual and team work, facilitating a shift towards a more reflective, curious and observant mindset, and optimising jobs to reduce multi-tasking. Ultimately, it's a matter of attitude; mindful individuals are not only happier and perform better, but are also more capable of aligning their intentions with their behaviours – key to being authentic and gaining respect as a leader.

#### Read more:

Karelaia, N. (2014), "Why Mindful Individuals Make Better Decisions", *INSEAD Knowledge*.

Karelaia, N., Reb, J. (2015), "Improving Decision-Making Through Mindfulness". In *Mindfulness in Organisations*, Cambridge University Press.

**Natalia Karelaia** is an Associate Professor of Decision Sciences. Her current research focuses on topics related to decision-making, identity, humility, authenticity, and influence. To know more, visit her [website](#).

**Research interests:** decision-making, identity, gender, influence, leadership, authenticity, humility.