



Are we answering the right question?

Independent Decision Intelligence

A bounded, independent examination of a decision, assumption, recurring difficulty or proposed course of action, to find the material question that has not yet entered the room.

The question that never entered the room

A successful organisation can have competent advisers, sound systems, accurate reports and a profitable core business, yet still miss a consequential question.

Each specialist may have answered the question assigned correctly. The missing question may sit between disciplines, beneath a familiar assumption or outside the boundaries of the original enquiry.

Independent Decision Intelligence asks whether an unexamined question could alter a decision, cost, obligation, timing, valuation, capital allocation, opportunity or exposure.

What it is

- A decision instrument, applied before or during a consequential choice
- Independent and cross-disciplinary
- Built for your specific decision, not a standard checklist
- Bounded in scope, fixed in fee

What it is not

- Another audit
- A legal opinion, valuation or engineering certification
- An environmental authorisation or specialist scientific opinion
- A substitute for your regulated specialists

WHO IT IS FOR

Owners and executives of successful businesses who are about to make a consequential decision, or who suspect a recurring problem has a cause nobody has named yet.

HOW TO BEGIN

The first engagement

INITIAL ENGAGEMENT

US\$ 500

Payable in advance

Further work only by separate written scope and fee

CLIENT INPUT

A short intake form, a bounded set of existing documents and, where useful, a focused online discussion of approximately 30 minutes.

ASSESSMENT

Independent examination of the agreed decision, assumptions and information within a bounded initial scope.

DELIVERABLE

A concise written Decision Intelligence Note identifying potentially material questions or information gaps and a proportionate recommendation.

TIMING

Delivery date confirmed at intake, once the scope and information are agreed.

WHAT YOU RECEIVE

01

A clearer statement of the decision or uncertainty being examined.

02

Potentially material questions or information gaps specific to your circumstances.

03

A distinction between what the information supports and what remains uncertain.

04

A recommendation to stop, continue, redirect or consider a separately scoped next stage.

How the questions are developed

Ravenscroft Economics applies an independent, cross-disciplinary examination to your particular decision and information. The questions are developed specifically for that engagement and are not generated from a standard checklist.

Professional boundaries

The engagement does not guarantee discovery or any particular commercial outcome. You remain responsible for your decisions and for obtaining regulated or specialist advice where required.

What one more question can change

4×

approximate
increase in
conception
performance, as
recalled by the
principal

CASE 02

Conception rates

SITUATION An artificial-insemination conception rate of approximately 25 to 30 per cent was accepted as an industry average.

OUTCOME In an earlier paid assignment, examining what the average represented led to different interventions. Within practical constraints, the principal recalls that conception performance increased approximately fourfold.

SIGNIFICANCE A descriptive average need not be an immutable operating limit.

+33%

higher income
reported by the
farmer

2×

cattle value

CASE 03

Agricultural enterprise and genetics

SITUATION The established selection focus was kilograms of live weight at weaning, because weaners were sold by the kilogram.

OUTCOME Selection emphasis shifted towards fertility. The farmer subsequently reported approximately 33 per cent higher income, a doubling in cattle value and a transition from ordinary beef output towards selling breeding genetics.

SIGNIFICANCE A different performance criterion changed cash flow, asset value and the product the enterprise sold.

CASE 04

Arr Mauritania hydrology

A conventional route would have been a comprehensive GIS catchment study. A low-cost preliminary enquiry identified observations that justified a new hydrological hypothesis and proportionate next tests, and stopped before expensive work was undertaken.

An inexpensive question can redirect a costly investigation.

CASE 01

African data governance

A researcher began with cross-border data regulation and AI in Africa. The enquiry broadened to the practical chain required for data to be discovered, accessed, authorised, transferred and used. She left with a better question and could continue independently.

A modest intervention changed direction before more effort was committed.

Historical recollections and reported outcomes are identified as such.

What a timely question can protect

The previous page shows value found. These three show value at risk: successful businesses meeting an unfamiliar problem outside their core expertise. Each was identified from outside and is still developing, so names are withheld.

R20m

potential profit that now depends on how quickly one question is answered

CASE 05

Property development

BLIND SPOT	A specialist assessment that could affect the development had not been commissioned.
COST TO CHECK	Roughly R25,000–R50,000 for an initial assessment, and a day or two.
WHAT FOLLOWED	The offer was declined. Within two weeks the matter had escalated and further information was requested. A question settled in days may now take months.

8 weeks

of production a single day's interruption can cost, in a R50–60 million facility

CASE 06

Agricultural production facility

BLIND SPOT	A highly competent producer built a new facility without fully addressing certain statutory requirements. Producing and developing are different disciplines.
AT STAKE	Around 700,000 day-old chicks, a full production cycle, contractual exposure and possibly the growing contract itself.
COST TO CHECK	An initial engagement of US\$500, with perhaps US\$1,000 of further work.

Reputation

the exposure that never appears on the project budget

CASE 07

Healthcare facility expansion

BLIND SPOT	A protected tree was removed during construction. The species is not expected in that region, so a conventional desk assessment could miss it. Its protection still applies.
AT STAKE	Less a sum of money than a name: a respected group linked to an escalating environmental dispute.
BETTER RESPONSE	Establish the facts, contain the problem, obtain expertise, move forward.

The arithmetic of an earlier question

On R20 million, one week of delay carries a time-value cost of roughly R31,000–R38,000 at 8–10% a year, more than the assessment that could have answered the question. **The fee does not buy a guaranteed outcome. It buys a better-informed decision when the cost of being wrong is large.**

Why these examples look environmental. Physical and statutory matters are the ones visible from outside an organisation. Most consequential gaps sit inside: in assumptions, financial models and operating systems. **If they can be found from the outside, imagine what an invited examination could find.**

Developing situations, described without names and with identifying details removed. They are observations, not findings of wrongdoing, and do not predict that any consequence will occur. Figures are approximate.

Before your next consequential decision

These examples are here to stimulate thought. They are not a checklist, a promised scope of work or Ravenscroft Economics' internal analytical framework. The questions used in an engagement are developed for your particular decision.

01 Are we measuring the right variable before making this decision?

02 Which assumption would most affect the outcome if it proved incorrect?

03 What information exists in one part of the organisation but is unavailable to another?

04 Which external dependency could prevent delivery to customers?

05 Does an inherited asset correspond with the records on which management relies?

06 Could a small expenditure avoid a substantial recurring cost?

07 Has a change outside the organisation altered the validity of an earlier decision?

08 Which profitable opportunity falls between departmental responsibilities?

09 What important question has not been allocated to any adviser?

10 What would justify stopping rather than spending more?

"I left with a much better question."

“

I brought a question that had been sitting at the intersection of my work in AI governance and data protection. Then the questioning began. And the question moved.

The result challenged my original assumption. Regulatory fragmentation may matter, but it is only one possible constraint.

For me, that was the most valuable part of the exercise. I came in with a problem I thought I understood. I left with a much better question.

Achieng' Mary Oduor · Data Protection Officer & Digital Policy Researcher

Excerpt from her published LinkedIn post · lnkd.in/p/d5JWVhJK

Ready to examine your next decision?

For US\$500, commission an initial Independent Decision Intelligence engagement.

1

Contact Douglas
Ravenscroft

2

Complete the short
intake form

3

Provide the agreed
information and fee

4

Receive your
Decision
Intelligence Note

Every engagement is fully independent. Conclusions follow the evidence, not the fee.

Douglas Ravenscroft

Ravenscroft Economics

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