FRAMEWORK 3

Two-Way Door vs. One-Way Door Decisions

> **PURPOSE:** *Decide how much time and analysis a decision deserves by asking one question first: can we walk back through this door if we are wrong?*

Decision: *One sentence*	**Decision-maker:** *Enter name*	**Date:** *MM/DD/YYYY*

HOW TO USE THIS FRAMEWORK

Not all decisions deserve the same level of analysis. Jeff Bezos's reversibility framework sorts decisions into two-way doors (reversible) and one-way doors (irreversible or very costly to reverse) so you can match your process to the stakes.

First, categorize. Then match your process to the type. Don't slow down two-way doors with one-way door processes, and don't rush one-way doors with two-way door speed.

THE TWO DOOR TYPES

	Two-way door	One-way door
Reversibility	Easy to undo. You can walk back through if wrong.	Hard or impossible to undo.
Cost to reverse	Low	High
Time horizon	Fast to course-correct	Long-term consequences
Who it affects	Mostly your team	Many people and teams
Approach	Decide quickly with 70% information. Involve fewer people. Bias toward action. Learn by trying.	Take time to analyze thoroughly. Seek diverse input. Consider second-order effects. Aim for 90%+ confidence.

CLASSIFY THIS DECISION

How easy is it to undo?	*Easy / hard / impossible*
What would it cost to reverse?	*Money, time, credibility*
How long do the consequences last?	*Weeks / quarters / years*
Who is affected?	*Your team only, or many people and teams*
Door type	*TWO-WAY or ONE-WAY*

MATCH YOUR PROCESS TO THE TYPE

How much information do we need before deciding? (Two-way: about 70%. One-way: 90%+.)

Who needs to be involved? (Two-way: fewer people. One-way: diverse input.)

One-way door only: what second-order effects should we consider?

Two-way door only: how will we know whether it is working, and when will we check?

WHAT TO SAY

> Two-way: “This is a two-way door decision, we can change course if needed, so let’s decide quickly and learn by doing.”
>
> One-way: “This is a one-way door decision, hard to reverse, so let’s take time to get it right.”

EXAMPLES

Two-way door: “Let’s try daily standups for two weeks and see if they help.”

One-way door: “We’re migrating our entire platform to a new architecture.”

Watch-Out: Treating every decision as a one-way door is analysis paralysis. Treating a one-way door as a two-way door is recklessness. The most common mistake of all is never stating which type it is.