

Paired Comparison

Definition:

- A technique for evaluating a small range of options by comparing them against each other.

Uses:

- To select the alternative that will be the most effective.
- To choose the most compelling problem to solve.

Examples:

- Selecting the concept design for a new product before marketing.
- Deciding which skills, qualifications and experience are essential when hiring people for a new role.
- Deciding how or where to spend your coming summer holidays.

When to use?

- When alternatives are completely different.
- When comparing different subjective options.
- Where there is little objective data to base our decision on.

How to construct and use?

- Identify the alternatives to be evaluated.
- Identify the evaluation criteria (*e.g. the most important or the easiest*).
- List all alternatives on the left hand column and on the top row of the matrix.
- In each blank cell, compare the option in the row with the option in the column, then write in the cell the option that better meets the criteria.
- Count the number of times each option has been chosen.
- Rank the options based on their count.
- Consider the options with the highest ranking.

Paired Comparison Matrix

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Option 1			
Option 2			
Option 3			
Count			
Rank			

The matrix will ensure that each comparison is made only once, and prevents to compare an option with itself.

The highest ranking alternative is not necessary the best, which provides an opportunity for further thoughts and discussion.