The two-door rule

Most owners lose money to slow decisions, not bad ones. Sort every open decision into one of two doors, then act.

Revolving door · cheap to undo	Vault door · hard or expensive to undo
If being wrong costs little money or time, decide today (or by the end of the day). Log it with a review date. Correct fast if it is wrong.	These deserve a short checklist and a deadline, not endless research. Name the problem, list what must be true, test the riskiest assumption cheaply, check the worst case, and decide by a set date.

How to use this log

1. List every open decision in the business. 2. Estimate the cost of reversing it if you are wrong (money and time). 3. If that cost is cheap compared with the benefit, decide now and write a review date. 4. If it is a vault door, run the five questions on the next pages and set a decision date. 5. Keep the log where the review date will not get lost (Systex, our own product, or this sheet).

Blank log · make a copy of the editable Doc or Sheet to fill this in. No contact details are collected here.

What we decided	Why	Review date	Cost to reverse (USD)	Door	Status

This week: list every open decision, write the cost of reversing each one, make every cheap one by Friday, and run the five questions on your biggest vault-door decision, with a date.

Worked example · Marcus in Atlanta

Illustrative only. A 25-person construction company. Marcus listed 11 open decisions one Monday and decided 8 of them in one afternoon. These figures are examples, not promises, targets or forecasts.

Revolving-door examples (cheap to undo → decide today)

What we decided	Why	Review date	Cost to reverse	Door
Try the scheduling app for one month	Needed a shared calendar; can cancel	After 2 weeks	~$300 (one month + some training)	Revolving
Try supplier B for drywall	10% cheaper and faster delivery	After three orders	~$2,000 (one trial order; old supplier still available)	Revolving
Change the ad headline	Test a clearer offer	After 5 days	5 minutes to change	Revolving
Add Saturday site visits for one month	See if weekend visits bring jobs	After 1 month	Stop if they do not pay	Revolving

What the Saturday visits illustrated (examples, not forecasts)

After 7 weeks of delay	What he logged once he started
About $60,000 of jobs he could have started were missed during the wait.	4 extra jobs in month one, about $38,000 in revenue. He made 8 of 11 decisions in one afternoon.

Vault doors he still had (use the checklist, with a deadline)

Decision	Why it is a vault door	What he did
Second truck — $60,000	Expensive and slow to undo	Compare with other uses of the same $60,000 (marketing or a manager).
Permanent project manager (salary)	Hard to reverse a permanent hire	Run the five questions before committing.
Open in a second city	A failed office could cost about $150,000	4-week, $2,000 ad test. Needed 15 enquiries, got 3, did not open. Moved the money to commercial work at home (2 contracts). Cost of learning: $2,000.

Savings in the illustration: $150,000 − $2,000 = $148,000 not spent on a failed office. 8 ÷ 11 ≈ 73% of the list cleared in one afternoon. These are examples, not promises.

Vault-door checklist · five questions + a date

Use this for hard-to-undo decisions. Care does not mean waiting. It means answering these, then deciding by the date you set.

1. What problem are we trying to solve?

"Growth" is not a problem. Keep asking until the actual problem comes out. In the example, the home market was slowing and he had more crews than work — which also opened other options, such as commercial jobs in the same city.

2. What would have to be true for this to work?

List the assumptions. For a second city: enough demand; reliable crews; the owner can manage jobs without being on site every day.

3. How can I test the riskiest assumption cheaply before committing?

In the example: local ads for 4 weeks with a $2,000 budget, jobs through subcontractors. Need 15 enquiries. If not, he saved the cost of an office lease.

4. What is the worst realistic outcome, and can we survive it?

If it threatens the whole company, shrink the bet or do not make it.

5. What could this money and time produce instead?

Every big yes is a no to something else. $60,000 on a truck versus $60,000 on marketing or a manager.

Decision date · Big does not mean endless. In the example, Marcus gave himself 30 days for the second-city test. Write the date here: _____

Mistakes to avoid

Revolving doors: waiting for complete information; treating a reversible choice as permanent because it feels important; deciding fast with no review date. Vault doors: skipping assumptions because you are excited; testing the easy assumption instead of the riskiest one; no deadline, so a big decision becomes a permanent maybe.

These are examples, not promises. Results vary. This is general business education, not financial, legal or tax advice.