

## Tools to Inform Decision-Making

### Plus-Minus-Interesting

#### Weighing the Pros and Cons of a Decision

PMI stands for 'Plus/Minus/Interesting'. It is a valuable improvement to the 'weighing pros and cons' technique used for centuries. Before you move straight to action, it is important to check that it is going to improve the situation (it may actually be best to do nothing!) PMI is a useful tool for doing this.

#### How to use the tool

Draw up three columns on a piece of paper. Head them 'Plus', 'Minus' and 'Interesting'.

In the column underneath 'Plus', write down all the positive results of taking the action. Underneath 'Minus' write down all the negative effects. In the 'Interesting' column write down the implications and possible outcomes of taking the action, whether positive, negative, or uncertain.

By this stage it may already be obvious whether or not you should implement the decision. If it is not, consider each of the points you have written down and assign a positive or negative score to it appropriately. The scores you assign may be quite subjective.

Once you have done this, add up the score. A strongly positive score shows that an action should be taken, a strongly negative score that it should be avoided.

**Example:** A young professional is deciding where to live. Her question is 'Should she move to the big city?' She draws up the PMI table below:

| Plus                       | Minus                               | Interesting                               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| More going on (+5)         | Have to sell house (-6)             | Easier to find new job? (+1)              |
| Easier to see friends (+5) | More pollution (-3)                 | Meet more people? (+2)                    |
| Easier to get places (+3)  | Less space (-3)                     | More difficult to get own work done? (-4) |
|                            | No countryside (-2)                 |   |
|                            | More difficult to get to work? (-4) |   |
| +13                        | -18                                 | -1  |

She scores the table as 13 (Plus) -18 (Minus) -1 (Interesting) = -6 Interesting

For her, the comforts of a settled rural existence outweigh the call of the 'bright lights' – it would be much better for her to live outside the city, but close enough to travel in if necessary.