SERPIFAI · EXECUTIVE DECISION SYNTHESIS

One-Page Executive Decision Memo

Use this page for one bounded choice. Keep the deeper evidence record behind it; do not shrink the page to make every research detail fit.

DECISION

What must the executive decide?

RECOMMENDATION

WHY THIS

KEY EVIDENCE

WHAT COULD MAKE US WRONG

DECISION REQUEST

NEXT ACTION + OWNER

RELEVANT CONDITION / REVIEW

Supporting analysis: record the stable workbook, evidence record, source pack or URL where the detailed analysis can be inspected.

> **Executive rule:** the page is complete when the decision can be understood, challenged and handed off without the presenter - not when all analysis has been compressed onto it.

BUILD THE PAGE

Eight moves, in executive reading order

Start with the choice. Add depth only when it changes the decision or protects the handoff.

1 Decision

Write the bounded choice before the background. A topic is not a decision.

2 Recommendation

State your judgment: what should happen now?

3 Why

Explain why the evidence makes this choice stronger than the credible alternative.

4 Evidence

Keep only evidence that changes the recommendation, action size, ask or boundary.

5 Challenge

Show the strongest material reason the recommendation could be wrong.

6 Ask

State exactly what you want approved, rejected or chosen.

7 Action

Name the first move and the accountable action owner.

8 Handoff

Point to the deeper evidence record and carry a relevant upstream condition only when material.

> **Recommendation ≠ decision request.** “Approve the pilot” is your judgment. “Approve six weeks of work, the owner and the evidence test” is the bounded approval you need.

COMPRESSION RULE

On the page, behind the page, or out

One page is a hierarchy constraint. It should remove non-decision detail, not evidence integrity.

On the page

- Decision + recommendation
- Decision-linked rationale
- 1-2 strongest support items
- Strongest material challenge
- Exact decision request
- Next action + owner
- Supporting-analysis route

Behind the page

- Evidence statements + sources
- Calculations and full analysis
- Alternatives detail
- Assumptions and unresolved evidence
- Implementation plan
- Full A42 trigger/threshold design

Remove

- Metric inventories
- Duplicate screenshots
- Background that changes nothing
- Boilerplate risk lists
- Generic “please review” language
- Decorative certainty

Fast compression test

Question	If no
Does this fact change the recommendation?	Move it behind the page or remove it.
Does it change the size or reversibility of the action?	It is probably not executive-page material.
Does it change the exact approval or choice requested?	Keep it in the supporting record.
Does it change the review/reopen boundary?	Do not let it crowd the memo.

EVIDENCE + CHALLENGE

Keep facts, judgment and unknowns distinguishable

Observed

What the cited source or measurement directly shows.

Observed does not automatically mean causal, material or correct forever.

Inferred

What the evidence reasonably suggests after interpretation.

Make the reasoning visible enough to challenge.

Unresolved

What the current evidence cannot settle yet.

An unknown can justify a smaller action, deferral or review point.

Concept	Plain-English question	Decision use
Evidence	What materially supports this?	Inspect the support separately from the narrative.
Rationale	Why does that evidence favor this choice?	Shows the author's judgment.
Contrary evidence	What pushes against the recommendation?	Tests whether the case survives challenge.
Risk	What known adverse outcome or condition matters?	May change action size or mitigation.
Uncertainty	What important thing do we not know?	May change commitment, deferral or review.
Assumption	What are we temporarily treating as true?	Should be linked to the uncertainty it bridges.

Do not hide the counter-case. One strong, material challenge is more useful than ten generic caveats that do not change the decision.

GOOD VS BAD

A decision memo should make the call easier to challenge

WEAK

Summary-first

“Organic search is a strategic opportunity…”

- Long background before the choice
- Eleven metrics with no materiality rule
- Recommendation appears near the end
- “Risks” are generic caveats
- No explicit approval or owner

What the executive must infer: the actual decision, what you want, what could make it wrong and what happens after approval.

BETTER

Decision-first

“Decision: approve a six-week buyer-comparison pilot?”

- Recommendation immediately follows
- Two decision-bearing evidence items
- Strongest challenge is visible
- Exact decision request is bounded
- First action, owner and support route are explicit

What the executive can do: approve, reject, challenge or request one specific missing condition.

Illustrative fictional example

Recommendation: Approve the bounded pilot; do not approve the full programme yet.

Why: The fictional evidence supports a reversible first move that can generate first-party commercial evidence before larger commitment.

Challenge: No first-party conversion history exists for the exact territory.

Ask: Approve six weeks of work and the named owner.

Action: Launch the first decision-support asset and evidence test.

This example is fictional and does not claim a client outcome or observed deployment.

EXECUTIVE REVIEW

Challenge the decision before you hand it off

- [ ] **Decision clear**
  Can I answer the first line with an actual choice?
- [ ] **Recommendation explicit**
  Do I know what the author thinks should happen?
- [ ] **Rationale linked**
  Does the “why” explain why the evidence favors this option?
- [ ] **Evidence material**
  Would this evidence change the choice, action size, ask or boundary?
- [ ] **Challenge visible**
  Can I see the strongest material reason the recommendation could be wrong?
- [ ] **Uncertainty honest**
  Are material unknowns and assumptions visible where they matter?
- [ ] **Decision ask clear**
  Do I know exactly what approval, rejection or choice is required?
- [ ] **Action owned**
  Is there a first action and accountable owner?
- [ ] **Traceable**
  Can I find the supporting analysis without asking the author?
- [ ] **Portable**
  Will the memo still make sense in email, print or a later review?

> **A42 boundary:** if a reversal/reopen condition was already defined upstream and remains material, carry the concise condition. Do not recreate its trigger or threshold logic in this memo.

Method limits: this guide structures executive decision communication. It does not validate the truth of evidence, guarantee decision quality or replace a full business case when deeper economic appraisal is required. The 10/30/60-second scan model used on the web article is an editorial heuristic, not measured user-testing evidence.

Selected method sources: Atlassian DACI; GitLab decision practice; HM Treasury Green Book 2026; AQuA Book; NAO Managing uncertainty.