Decision Master Log: The Project's "Black Box"

*In the fast-paced environment of construction management, verbal agreements are the seeds of future disputes and litigation. At **TheOwnersProject.com**, we use the **Decision Master Log** as the definitive record of every project pivot, from **Early Project Planning** through **Project Closeout**.*

This document serves as your project's "Black Box," capturing the institutional memory of why a project moved in a certain direction long after the original conversations have ended. It isn't just a list of outcomes; it is a rigorous tracking system designed to protect the Owner's interests and maintain absolute transparency.

Core Components of the Log:

- *The Rationale (The "Why"): We don't just record that a change happened; we document the logic and specific circumstances that necessitated the decision.*

- *Impact Analysis: Every entry includes an assessment of how the decision affects the **Project Budget (Cost)** and the **Project Schedule (Time)**.*

- *Accountability & Authority: The log identifies exactly **who approved the decision**, ensuring that every choice is backed by the appropriate level of authority.*

- *Strategic Categorization: Decisions are organized by project phase—such as **Design, Procurement,** or **Construction**—allowing you to analyze where the most significant shifts in scope or cost are occurring.*

- *Importance Leveling: We rank decisions by their critical nature, helping the Owner focus on high-stakes issues while maintaining a record of minor procedural choices.*

Why This Matters for the Owner:

*By using this log, we eliminate the "I thought we agreed to that" ambiguity that often leads to "pencil req" revisions and unexpected claims. It creates a bulletproof audit trail, ensuring that when a project reaches **Financial Closeout**, every dollar spent is tied to a documented, rationalized, and approved decision.*

Decision Log Template

DECISION MASTER LOG

Company Name:
DATE

Project Name:
Project Description:

ID NO.	Date Logged	Entered By	DECISION REQUIRED	THE DECISION MADE	RATIONALE (The "Why")	Approved By	IMPACT (Cost)	IMPACT (Time)	IMPORTANCE LEVEL
1.00			**Early Project Planning & Programming**						
1.01									
1.02									
1.03									
1.04									
1.05									
1.06									
1.07									
1.08									
1.09									
1.10									
2.00			**Design Phase**						
2.01									
2.02									
2.03									
2.04									
2.05									
2.06									
2.07									
2.08									
2.09									
2.10									
3.00			**Procurement & Pre-Construction Phase**						
3.01									
3.02									
3.03									
3.04									
3.05									
3.06									
3.07									
3.08									
3.09									
3.10									
4.00			**Construction Phase**						
4.01									
4.02									
4.03									
4.04									
4.05									
4.06									
4.07									
4.08									
4.09									
4.10									
5.00			**Project Closeout**						
5.01									
5.02									
5.03									
5.04									
5.05									
5.06									
5.07									
5.08									
5.09									
5.10									
6.00			**Big Picture / Process and Procedures**						
6.01									
6.02									
6.03									
6.04									
6.05									
6.06									
6.07									
6.08									
6.09									
6.10									