

Decision - Making Models

| <i>Model</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Advantages/Disadvantages</i> |
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| Consensus | Everyone gets to voice their opinion, a facilitator assures that all voices are heard and respected, facilitates discussion until all parties agree on a decision. The facilitator can call for a "voice of consensus" periodically to assess when consensus is possible. Everyone doesn't have to think the decision is the best choice; everyone just needs to be willing to go along with the decision and feel their opinion has been heard. | <p>Advantages: everyone gets an equal voice; all possible decisions are thoroughly explored; creates ownership and collaboration; allows for changes of opinion and additional decisions to be generated during a discussion.</p> <p>Disadvantages: can be extremely time-consuming; has the potential for "hung" decisions if someone is unwilling to go along with a decision; can allow for decisions already made to be revisited and slow a planning progress; can allow for multiple decisions to be on the table at the same time, possibly creating confusion and frustration.</p> |
| Discussion/vote | Everyone gets to voice their opinion, a facilitator assures that all who want to voice an opinion are heard and respected, facilitator calls for a vote when (s)he feels opinions have been heard and it's time for a decision to be made. | <p>Advantages: everyone gets their opinion heard; keeps a planning process moving; moves to decisions in a timely manner; keeps a planning process/discussion on track; decisions made previously are revisited only when important additional information that was not available when the decision was made is introduced; most people are familiar and comfortable with this method.</p> <p>Disadvantages: everyone may not agree with the decision; an especially eager facilitator can "rush" the decision.</p> |
| Blended Model | Use discussion/vote when consensus fails to produce a decision. | <p>Advantages: prevents a "hung" decision; moves a planning process forward when it is stalled in indecision.</p> <p>Disadvantages: this model is still very time consuming, as consensus needs to be given a fair trial before voting is initiated; this model needs to be agreed upon with the group from the beginning so members are less likely to feel discounted if a move from consensus to vote is made, although this can still happen.</p> |

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| <p>Special Consideration</p> | <p>Can be used with any of the models above with group members agreeing to give special consideration in their decisions to issues of priority to members or outside influences (e.g. issues of diversity, preferential opportunity, key feedback from members or others, issues of special populations, issues of conflicting priorities, etc.)</p> | <p>Advantages: allows for appropriate special considerations that may be outside the experience of group members but which may be important; allows for inclusivity and quality.</p> <p>Disadvantages: again, this model needs to be agreed upon with the group from the beginning so members are less likely to feel that their opinions are not honored.</p> |
| <p>Weighted Opinion</p> | <p>Can be used with any of the models above with group members acknowledging that some opinions may carry more influence on decisions than others and can "push" the group toward a particular decision or override a group's decision (e.g. influence can be political, social, hierarchical, organizational, legal, etc.)</p> | <p>Advantages: allows for the acknowledgment that weighted opinions do exist and the reality that they do sometimes influence our decisions; prevents offending an influential party; prevents reversal of group decisions by those in authority positions.</p> <p>Disadvantages: may be perceived as unequal or unfair.</p> |
| <p>Fist-to-Five Consensus-Building</p> | <p>When a group comes to consensus on a matter, it means that everyone in the group can support the decision; they don't all have to think it's the best decision, but they all agree they can live with it. This tool is an easy-to-use way to build consensus among diverse groups. Whenever a group is discussing a possible solution or coming to a decision on any matter, Fist-to-Five is a good tool to</p> | <p>How To Use:</p> <p>The facilitator restates a decision the group may make and asks everyone to show their level of support. Each person responds by showing a fist or a number of fingers that corresponds to their opinion as follows:</p> <p>Fist - A no vote – a way to block consensus. I need to talk more on the proposal and require changes for it to pass.</p> <p>1 Finger - I still need to discuss certain issues and suggest changes that should be made.</p> <p>2 Fingers - I am more comfortable with the proposal but would like to discuss some minor issues.</p> <p>3 Fingers - I'm not in total agreement but feel comfortable to let this decision or a proposal pass without further discussion.</p> <p>4 Fingers - I think it's a good idea/decision and will work for it.</p> |

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| | determine what each person's opinion is at any given time. | <p>5 Fingers - It's a great idea and I will be one of the leaders in implementing it.</p> <p>If anyone holds up fewer than three fingers, they should be given the opportunity to state their objections and the team should address their concerns. Teams continue the Fist-to-Five process until they achieve consensus (a minimum of three fingers or higher) or determine they must move on to the next issue.</p> |
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| <p>Six-step interest-based problem-solving cycle</p> | <p>This six-step problem-solving cycle is repeated for each issue the group is negotiating. All steps are accomplished jointly.</p> | <p>1. Select The Issue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jointly select the issue. • State the issue clearly. <p>2. Discuss All Interests Behind The Issue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post and review your lists of interests around the issue. • Discuss and clarify each interest. • Identify mutual interests: circle the interests appearing on both lists. • Recognize the legitimacy of the interests, mutual as well as separate, and the full scope of the issue. • Restate the issue if appropriate. <p>3. Generate Options</p> <p>Use brainstorming to develop as many options as you can; use a flipchart to record every idea. (Rules: no judging, aim for quantity not quality, try to break set, piggyback on the ideas of others, and work through a pause)</p> <p>Generate options that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfy one or more interests • Satisfy interests other than your own <p>Remember: options are not commitments.</p> <p>Clarify and ready the options for evaluation. Eliminate duplicates; combine pieces of options to form complete options.</p> <p>4. Establish Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propose qualities of the best possible solution. • Clarify the meaning of each standard, eliminate redundancies, combine overlapping standards. • Reach consensus on the standards. |
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| | | <p><i>Examples of Standards:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simple• Equitable• Flexible• Ethical• Practical• Ratifiable• Efficient• Affordable• Legal• Workable• Industry practice• Cost effective <p>5. Evaluate Each Option Against the Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss each option.• Negotiators may amend options, combine them, or think of new ones as the evaluation proceeds. Add revised or new options to the end of the list to be evaluated in turn.• Apply each standard to all of the options.• By consensus, eliminate options that meet few or more of the standards. <p>6. Develop The Solution and Write It!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reach consensus on the best solution.• Draft the solution.• Check for consensus on the writing. |
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