Decision Making

Have you ever had to choose between two items for your organization and had trouble making a decision? If so, these steps may be useful to you and your organization.

Steps for Effective Group Decision Making

1. Determine the problem.
2. Generate possible solutions.
3. Evaluate and test the solutions, plans, or decisions.
4. Decide on a mutually acceptable solution.
5. Implement the solution.
6. Evaluate the plan/solution/decision.

Keys to Successful Decision Making for Teams

- Members must agree on process/HOW decisions are made.
- Establishment of norms for the process of decision making.
- Ability of members to be open-minded & to explore a topic.
- Ability of members to listen to the points of view of others.
- Members’ thinking more in questions than in statements.

Negative Behaviors

- Withdrawing from group
- Not participating
- Getting angry
- Showing off
- Disrupting the team
- Criticizing others

Positive Behaviors

- Suggest procedures
- Share Leadership
- Show enthusiasm
- Encourage others to participate
- Help the team assess performance
- Praise and support others publicly

Group Consensus Guidelines

DO:
- Listen to the words AND the rationale being offered.
- Pursue your point—be persistent if you have good information.
- Manage time relative to the number of decisions being made.
- Involve all team members.
- Strive for the best answer.

DON’T:
- Argue for the sake or winning your point.
- Give up on your conclusion simply to avoid conflict.
- Allow the group to get hung up on one item.
- Compete by assuming that someone must win.
- Resort to voting. This tends to split the group.

A Few Good Rules

- Think through your own ideas.
- Express options & explain ideas fully.
- Listen to the feelings & opinions of all others.
- Find the best collective judgment of a group as a whole.
- View the disagreements/conflicts as helping to clarify the issue, and work toward resolution.
- Tension reducing behavior like laughing and kidding can sometimes be very useful.
- Refrain from conflict reducing techniques such as voting, averaging, or compromising.
- Monitor interactions among members, and challenge them in appropriate ways.
- Do not assume an answer is correct automatically.
- Discuss reasons and explore all possibilities.

Consensus Decision Making

Method of reaching agreement in problem solving & decision making where everyone:
- Actively discusses issues surrounding the decision.
- Shares & incorporates knowledge and experiences.
- Expresses their ideas & feelings about the decision and works toward a mutually acceptable solution.

Books on Group Decision Making