



**EFFECTIVE
DECISION MAKING**

Session T11

**SYMPTOMS, CAUSES AND
CURES OF POOR
DECISION MAKING**

#1: AIMLESS DRIFTING AND RANDOM DISCUSSIONS

- ◉ Cause: No plan or process for approaching the decision

- ◉ Cure:
 - Need a structured approach
 - Right decision making too
 - Assertive facilitation

#2: GROUP USES VOTING ON IMPORTANT ITEMS, WHERE TOTAL BUY-IN IS IMPORTANT, THEN USES CONSENSUS TO DECIDE TRIVIAL ISSUES

- ◉ Cause: A lack of understanding of decision-making options.

- ◉ Cure: The group needs to be familiar with the six main decision-making options and decide which is best to use in the decision making situation

#3: THE GROUP ALWAYS SEEMS TO RUN OUT OF TIME JUST WHEN THE IMPORTANT DECISIONS GET ONTO THE TABLE.

- ◉ Cause: Poor time management
- ◉ Cure: Need to create a detailed agenda that sets time aside to deal with important items. Need to be assertive.

4: WHEN AN IMPORTANT ISSUE IS ON THE TABLE, PEOPLE GET HEATED AND ARGUMENTATIVE. PUSH, PULL AND SHOVE

- ◉ Cause: Poorly developed group interaction skills.
- ◉ Cure: The members need training in group effectiveness skills so that they can exhibit more listening, supporting and idea building.

#5: AFTER A LENGTHY DISCUSSION, IT BECOMES CLEAR THAT EVERYONE IS OPERATING ON SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT WHAT THE PROBLEM IS AND WHAT THE CONSTRAINTS OR POSSIBILITIES ARE.

- ◉ Cause: Failure to check assumptions.
- ◉ Cure: Use probing questions to uncover the assumptions underlying statements made by the members.

#6: IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT THE DISCUSSION HAS BEEN GOING IN CIRCLES FOR SOME TIME, NO ONE TAKES ACTION TO GET THINGS BACK ON TRACK.

- ◉ Cause: No process checking.
- ◉ Cure: Stopping the discussion periodically and take the pulse of the group.

THE SIX DECISION- MAKING OPTIONS

OPTION #6: SPONTANEOUS AGREEMENT

- ◉ Pros: it's fast, easy, everyone is happy, it unites the group.
- ◉ Cons: may be too fast; perhaps the issue actually needed discussion.
- ◉ Uses: when lack of discussion isn't vital or issues are not complex.

OPTION #5: ONE PERSON DECIDES

- ◉ Pros: it's fast and accountability is clear.
- ◉ Cons: it can divide the group if the person deciding doesn't consult, or makes a decision that others can't live with.
- ◉ Uses: when the issue is unimportant or small or there is a clear expert in the group or one person is solely accountable for the outcome.

OPTION #4: COMPROMISE

- ◉ Pros: it generates lots of discussion and does create a solution.
- ◉ Cons: this approach divides the group. Everyone wins and everyone loses.
- ◉ Uses: when two opposing solutions are proposed, neither of which are acceptable to everyone.

OPTION #3: MULTI-VOTING

- ◉ Pros: it's systematic, objective, democratic, non-competitive, and participative.
- ◉ Cons: often associated with limited discussion, hence, limited understanding of the options.
- ◉ Uses: when there is a long list of alternatives or items from which to chose.

OPTION #2: MAJORITY VOTING

- ◉ Pros: it's fast and decisions can be of a higher quality if the vote is preceded by a thorough analysis.
- ◉ Cons: can be too fast and low in quality if people vote on personal feelings; creates winners and losers; show of hands makes people conform.
- ◉ Uses: when there are two distinct options, when division in the group is acceptable, when consensus can't be reached.

OPTION #1: CONSENSUS BUILDING

- Pros: a collaborative effort that unites the group. Demands high involvement. Systematic, objective and fact driven. Builds buy-in and high commitment.
- Cons: it's time consuming and can produce low-quality decisions if done without proper data collection.
- Uses: when decisions will impact the entire group; when the importance of the decision being made is worth the time it will take to complete the process

UNDERSTANDING
CONSENSUS

CONSENSUS ACTIVITIES

- ◉ Summarizing a complex set of ideas to the satisfaction of group members.
- ◉ Getting everyone's input into a clear goal and objectives for the group's activities.
- ◉ Gaining buy-in from all members as to the purpose of the session.
- ◉ Linking people's ideas together so they feel they're saying the same thing.

CONSENSUS ACTIVITIES CONT'D

- ◉ Making notes on flip charts in such a way that at the end of the discussion each member sees where and how they've contributed and is satisfied with what has been recorded.
- ◉ Discussing and agreeing on which decision mode to use in a formal decision making process.

HALLMARKS OF THE PROCESS

- ◉ Lots of ideas being shared
- ◉ People's feelings are openly explored
- ◉ Everyone's heard
- ◉ Active listening and paraphrasing and ideas are built on by other members
- ◉ No one's trying to push a pre-determined solution

HALLMARKS OF THE PROCESS CONT'D

- ◉ Final solution is based on sound information
- ◉ When the final solution is reached, people feel satisfied they were part of the decision
- ◉ Everyone feels consulted and involved, they can "easily live with it".

“HAVE WE GOT A WELL-THOUGHT-THROUGH OUTCOME THAT WE CAN ALL FEEL COMMITTED TO IMPLEMENTING, AND THAT EVERYONE CAN LIVE WITH?”

THINGS TO WATCH FOR
IN DECISION MAKING

- ◉ Be clear on the process to be used right up-front.
- ◉ Check assumptions on issues.
- ◉ Conflict is a natural part of many decision making discussions.
- ◉ Urge the people not to fold or just give in.

- ◉ If consensus is the chosen path, stick with it even if the going gets tough.
- ◉ Be very particular about achieving closure.
- ◉ Stop the action if things start “spinning” or behaviors get ineffective.

I'm Done



You've Just Started