



Group Decision Tip

E-mailed every two weeks to help groups make good decisions

Facilitation

In principle, groups work best when a facilitator manages the process. When it is someone's job to look after the group's process, everyone else can focus on substance. When I know that someone is managing the order of speakers, I can pay full attention to what is being said.

When there is no objective facilitator and group members can manipulate the process, it tilts power toward a few, limits creativity, and clogs efficiency. It is typical for Congress, state legislatures, and town governments, for instance, to spend a lot of time debating process issues, agenda setting, committee membership, and rules...often in order to influence a particular outcome.

To maximize efficiency, equality, and creativity, high-functioning groups engage a facilitator who works for the group as a whole, manages the process, and does not try to influence the outcome.

Practical Tip: If you want good group decisions, invest in good group facilitation. Like any kind of professional expertise, group facilitation expertise is learned through study and experience. There is a body of knowledge and a proven set of techniques that can move a group forward by leaps and bounds.

Engaging a facilitation expert, whether a paid outsider or volunteer insider, brings knowledge, skill, and objectivity to your group process and substantially increases your chances of making good group decisions.

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