



Definition of Consensus: A general agreement among several people where each one can support a decision without compromising their own important needs or values, or those of the group.

Describe the Decision to be Made

- Provide background on the issue.
- Address root causes, not symptoms.
- Pose the decision in the form of a strategic question which will address the issue at its core.
- Explain why we must decide.
- Explain when we must decide.

Explain Why Consensus is Needed and Desired

- People can only execute what they know and what they understand.
- Effective decisions come from taking input from others who understand the problem, and then leaving the decision maker to execute in a timely fashion.
- “We need an effective decision that will hold up over time.”

Determine Guidelines for the Decision

- Outline the priorities or desired outcomes.
- Confirm boundaries, constraints and specifications for the decision.
- Develop viable alternatives.

Making the Decision

- Help the team to sort through their options.
- Use “agreement in concept” approach if needed
- Secure each team member’s commitment to the decision, after it has been made.

Plan Action Steps and Follow Up

- Involve team members in execution.
- Agree on communication strategy to the rest of the organization.
- Agree on how to check and evaluate progress.

Notes on Getting to Consensus

- “I have heard your position.”
- “I believe you have heard my position.”
- “This decision does not compromise my values.”
- “I will support the proposed decision.”
- “I will support you in the responsibility that you have to execute this decision.”

Adapted from: Helping Your Team Reach Consensus, Zenger-Miller International, July 1995.