

C-TIP #2 Choosing the Right Decision-Making Approach

Consensus is a great tool in the right situation. Too often a group will decide to use consensus for their decision-making process when it isn't the right tool for the job.

As a facilitator it is your job to evaluate whether the situation you are facilitating will benefit from using a consensus-based approach.

Consensus makes sense when...

- ▶ A high-stakes decision, if made poorly, has the potential to fragment your team, project, department, organization, or community.
- ▶ A solution will be impossible to implement without strong support and cooperation from those who must implement it.
- ▶ No single individual in your organization or group possesses the authority to make the decision.
- ▶ No single individual in your organization or group possesses the knowledge required to make the decision.
- ▶ A unilateral decision process has failed to produce a decision that could actually be implemented.
- ▶ Constituents with a stake in the decision have very different perspectives that need to be brought together.
- ▶ A creative, multi-disciplinary solution is needed to address a complex problem.

Consensus DOES NOT makes sense when...

- ▶ The decision is a fait accompli (i.e. it has already been made but there is a desire to create the appearance of participation).
- ▶ Making the decision quickly is more important than including broad-based information and mobilizing support for implementation.
- ▶ Individuals or groups who are essential to the quality of the decision or the credibility of the decision-making process are not available or refuse to participate.
- ▶ The decision is simply not important enough to warrant the time and energy that a consensus process involves.