

Consensus CARDS™

What is Consensus?

Consensus is a cooperative process in which a group crafts a decision that all members can live with (i.e., each member believes that the decision best meets the group's needs, even if it was not his or her first choice).

When to Use Consensus

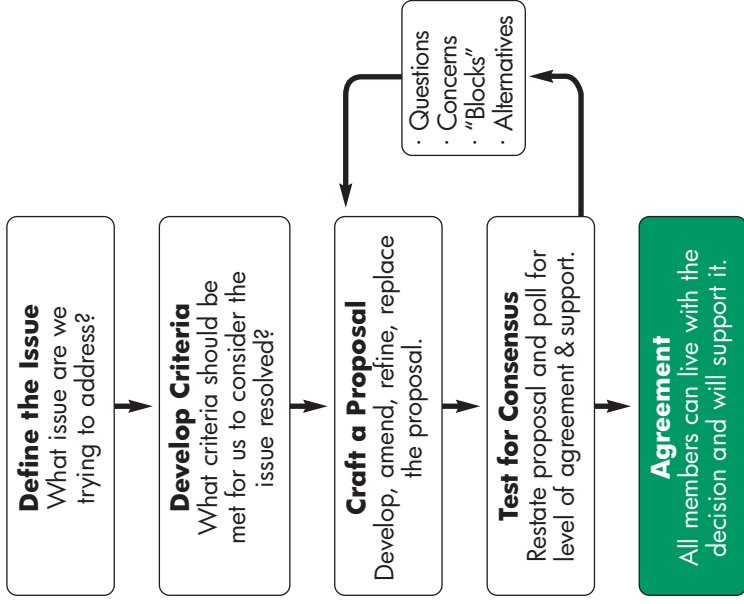
- To build support, ownership, and commitment to a decision.
- To enhance the capacity for collaboration and cooperation in a group.
- To increase the likelihood that people are willing to bear the cost of change.
- To give people influence over decisions that impact them.

Tips for Consensus

- Avoid arguing a position that meets only your needs.
- Treat differences of opinion as your most valuable resource.
- Synthesize, don't compromise — look for ways to combine ideas.
- Do not "go green" simply to avoid conflict.
- Remember that you can "go green" and still have reservations.
- Avoid win-lose techniques like majority voting, coin flips, etc.
- Encourage thorough discussion and dissent.

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The Consensus Process



How to Use Consensus Cards

- 1 Once there is a clear proposal that seems to meet the basic decision criteria, poll the group using **Consensus Cards**.
- 2 State the proposal and ask members to hold up the card that represents their view.
- 3 If you are holding a **green** card, remain silent and listen to others.
- 4 If you are holding a **yellow** card, ask your question or state your concern.
- 5 If you are holding a **red** card, state your reason for the "block." You may also offer an alternative proposal.
- 6 Once **yellow** card and **red** card holders have finished speaking, refine the proposal based on what you heard.
- 7 As the proposal is refined or replaced with an alternative, repeat the card polling procedure.

When everyone is holding a GREEN card, consensus has been reached.