

Team Decision Making

The Technique	Testing for Consensus
What is it?	Consensus is finding a proposal acceptable enough so that all members can support it It is not a unanimous vote. It is not everyone perfectly satisfied.
When to Use it	Consensus is a more effective method than a team voting itself out of disagreement. Agreement reached by consensus creates stronger group cohesion. Individuals are more committed to making the decision work and often the decision will be superior to the outcome of a compromise or majority vote. While initially time consuming, the <i>total time</i> for decision-making and implementation is usually far less than other decision making methods.
What you need	Time A facilitator and recorder Active Participation Communication Skills Creative Thinking Open minds

The Method

1. It is useful to orient the group by briefly revisiting the definition of consensus first
2. Round the group one at a time so that each member briefly addresses the question or issue
3. Identify the current opinion and why you believe or chose this
4. Allow questions for clarification only
5. Continue around the group one by one until everyone has said what they wanted to say
6. Summarise: "We seem to agree on _____ but we still disagree on _____"
7. Continue the discussion until it seems useful to do another opinion check
8. Do another round the group check with each member stating their opinion on the issue
9. When there is disagreement
 - It is the responsibility of the minority opinion people to clarify their concerns, reservations or fears for the majority opinion people
 - It is the responsibility of the majority opinion people to listen carefully for new perspectives of potential problems
 - It is the responsibility of everyone to integrate the group's range of viewpoints and data to make the decision more robust.
 - An individual may pass on their turn but it should not be presumed that they will pass on every round