



Group Decision Tip

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

Measure to Manage

In principle, to manage any activity—to know what to do more of, less of, and what to do differently—we need to be able to measure it. We ask, “How is it going?” And to measure any activity we need a measuring stick, something against which to compare.

Some call it “benchmarking,” where progress is compared to:

1. A reference group of similar activities or organizations (like an average or median),
2. One’s own past performance (like how you did last year, or over the past several years), or,
3. A quantifiable goal (like a fundraising thermometer/sign posted in front of the building).

Without anything to compare against, we cannot actually say anything about the success of an activity or how to manage it for greater success.

Practical Tip: When your group decides on a new activity or policy, decide also how you will know if it is successful. Set a goal. Be specific. Write it in such a way that you will be able to know if you achieved it. If possible, state the goal relative to the performance of other similar groups or activities, or relative to your own group’s past performance.

Measuring progress not only helps you manage future activities, it encourages better performance.

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