



Group Decision Tip

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

Take a break

In principle, activities that contribute to good group decisions are not always best done by the group as a whole. Often times information, ideas, and potential solutions are all put on the table in such a tangled web that the group as a whole can't make sense of them. Other times, emotions run high in the heat of debate and cloud our ability to see clearly. Third, in the midst of lively discussion it's often hard to discern our own thoughts and feelings. When things are confusing and the group is in disarray, we are likely to be hugely inefficient. We repeat ourselves, spin our wheels, and make clumsy progress in wrong directions.

Practical Tip: Take a break. When a group breaks for ten minutes, or overnight, or puts an issue to rest until the next meeting it gives time for things to settle out and become clear. People chat informally in small groups and develop new understanding. Someone in a facilitation role has time to organize information and proposals so that others can make sense of it all. Emotions cool and personal views become clear. Time heals.

Taking a break is often the most efficient way to proceed.

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