



Group Decision Tip

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

Objectives, Agenda, Ground Rules

In principle, when we are meeting as a group to make decisions it helps if everyone knows what we expect to achieve (meeting objectives) and how we expect to achieve it (agenda and ground rules).

Naming the objectives up front minimizes chances for mismatched expectations. The objectives also provide an anchor if things start to go adrift.

Agendas also help people know what to expect. And when the group agrees to a specific agenda it serves as a mandate to move from one item to the next in a deliberate and honorable way.

Ground rules also help us be efficient. And they remind us to be respectful of each other. Ground rules are shared expectations about how we will interact. All three—objectives, agenda, ground rules—combine to establish a safe structure within which creativity may flourish.

Practical Tip: At the start of every meeting review the meeting objectives, agenda, and ground rules, in that order, even if very briefly. It is helpful if group members agree to them (with revisions if necessary) and agree to implement them.

If it seems as if the group is straying from the agenda or if people are ignoring the ground rules, interrupt and point out the discrepancy. If wayward behavior persists, either ask for compliance or that the agenda or ground rules be changed to match the behavior.

When behavior gets out of sync with established expectations, safety fades, creativity suffers, and frustration results.

Group Decision Tips are written by Craig Freshley and distributed by e-mail to subscribers at no charge about every two weeks. Please visit www.GoodGroupDecisions.com to subscribe to the Tips and for a complete archive of all previously published Group Decision Tips. You can comment on any Tip and view comments of others. At the website you can also find useful handouts, links, and information about workshops. Group Decision Tips (tm) is the brand name for a specific set of beliefs and practices that help groups create new benefits and move toward peace in an efficient manner.

Providing Group Decision Tips to others in any format is strictly prohibited for commercial purposes and/or for any type of compensation but free distribution for non-commercial purposes is encouraged in this format with proper credit to Craig Freshley.

Good Group Decisions, Inc.

98 Maine Street, Brunswick, ME 04011
Phone: 207-729-5607

craig@goodgroupdecisions.com

www.GoodGroupDecisions.com
Fax: 207-725-8710

Helping groups make good decisions® and Good Group Decisions® are trademarks.

Copyright © .2009 All rights reserved.