

Common Decision Making Methods

1. Command and Decree

These are decisions that are made with no involvement of others. May be the most efficient approach when there is little time available or you have no choice, e.g. safety standards, legal requirements

2. Consult

This process involves decision makers inviting others to influence them before they make their choice. Groups who might be consulted with are experts, a specific population within the membership or the entire membership. This approach usually involves gathering ideas, evaluating the options available, making a choice and then informing the broader population.

3. Vote

Voting is best suited to situations where efficiency is the highest value - and you're selecting from a number of good options. Not advisable when those involved do not agree to support whatever decision is made.

4. Consensus

Best used when with high stakes and complex issues or when everyone absolutely must support the final choice. Consensus typically involves discussing the issue until everyone honestly agrees to one decision.

Four Important Questions

When choosing among the four methods of decision making, consider the following questions:

1. **Who cares?** (Who genuinely wants to be involved and who stands to be impacted by the decision.)
2. **Who knows?** (Who has the expertise that you need to make the best decision.)
3. **Who must agree?** (Whose cooperation do you need in the form of authority or influence. It's far better to include those people early on rather than later.)
4. **How many people is it worth involving?** (The goal should be to involve the fewest number of people while still considering the quality of the decision, along with the level of support that people will give it. Good question to ask: "Do we have enough people to make a good choice? Will others have to be involved to gain their commitment?")