

Decision Making in Groups 1

DECISION MAKING IN GROUPS

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Abstract

Group decision-making might have proactive members or members needing facilitators' force. However, group decision-making ensures effective handling of larger amounts of information, hence providing the opportunity of information sharing, synergy and buy-in phenomenon.

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### Experience of Using Group Decision-Making.

There are no groups that function in the same way during decision-making process as some groups have proactive members, while others have members needing a driving force of facilitators for process facilitation. As an effect, there are various methods employed in group decision-making. Some of them include authoritarian method, where the final decision rests in the hands of one individual in a group; brainstorming which offers complete creative freedom to all participants, though requires a facilitator; and voting based methods, which is much convenient when the decision-making group has already set options. When we were making either inciting University students to go on strike or not after a the University Directors increased tuition fee without consultation the student organization used voting based method to decide on which way to follow. The best method amongst the three is none, but all depends on various factors like the type of decision, the environment created by the group, availability of time and other resources, the required buy-in, and the nature of task that is being worked on (Cohen, Etner & Jeleva 2008). As an effect, the voting based method was the best by the time because the organization had little time, and lots of idea buy-in was required.

### Advantages and Disadvantages of Group Decision-Making

The amount of information one can process is limited, and this ends up limiting the amount of perspectives an individual can see. As an effect, lots of decisions in the student organization require group decision-making process, where everyone is required to participate in exploring situations, providing inputs, and making final choices. Based on my experience, groups' decision-making process yields better decisions, and this explains of including many and multidisciplinary individuals in their executive boards.

According to Mind Tools (2010b), group decision-making provides the opportunity of buy-in phenomena from the affected people to ensure successful implementation of the

selected alternative. This is because getting buy-in if affected people are not involved in the decision-making process is very hard. However, the best skill required in group decision-making understands ways through which one can organize various decisions presented by group members (Mind Tools (2010a). This is based on the fact that group members generate lots of ideas, along with different participation and agreement levels. This results to variations in the degree of agreements that are important in finalizing group decisions. As an effect, the facilitator should be in a position of ensuring proper group deliberations, which contain five main elements, namely; inclusive, participatory, collaborative, agreement seeking, and cooperation.

As compared to Nominal group technique, Delphi method uses structured communication process, which is of great importance in helping the groups' discussions especially when looking for a consensus. However, it lacks the ability of helping group members to not only justify, but also clarify their perspectives. This can be achieved through nominal group technical, which helps members make informed decisions (Mind Tools 2010a).

#### Comparing the Two Approaches

According to Hastie & Dawes (2009), decisions made in groups can significantly vary from decisions made at the individual levels. The main difference emanates from social differences bearing group decision-making and not found in individual decision-making. Generally, collaboration synergies in group decision-making results to a robust and complete decision making process, as it factors all influences that are excluded in individual decision-making. This is based on the fact that there are outcomes that can only be attained by bringing diverse minds together in a decision-making process. As stated by Mann (2005), group-decision-making process has the ability of likening synergy in group

decision making process, hence achieving social economies of scope hence improving the quality of any decision.

In addition, group decision-making process enhances information sharing amongst team members. This ensures proper execution of leading to an informed decision. The basic concept in this fact is that groups contain individuals of different uniqueness, resulting to availability of diverse information during decision-making process, as compared to individual decision-making process containing only one individual with limited knowledge, experience, skills and information. According to Kim (2001), the point of capturing unique and diverse information in group decision-making, results to more complete information landscape. The natural benefit of involving in a group decision-making is information sharing, implying, and implying that unlocking the unshared information enhances the quality of decisions selected.

However, there are various conditions that can lower group decision quality. For instance individual decision-making might lack unequal commitments and infoldments, mostly experienced in group decision-making. According to Goncalo, & Duguid (2008), the method of ensuring that all group members are putting same amounts of commitments and energy in a group decision is absent. As an effect, the difference in participation and involvement might reach extreme, where active members starts dominating the contributions, hence intimidating other group members. As an effect attaining a workable balance in group decision-making is much more difficult as compared to striking a workable environment of an individual. This is because precise condition recipe of an individual is much simpler as compared to groups, as group decision-making requires consensus between and amongst members before becoming effective (Ahmad, O'Regan, & Ghobadian 2005).

### Conclusions

Different decision-making groups produce varying results depending on whether the group is made up of proactive members or members requiring facilitators' services. The most commonly used group-making techniques nominal group technique, and Delphi method. The two techniques are effective in different circumstances; hence no one is better than the other in all circumstances. As compared to individual decision-making, group decisions only produces good results if all conditions resulting to negative impacts are effectively controlled, otherwise they might reduce the quality of the decision reached at.

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