

Formal Consensus Highlights

What is Consensus?

A process for group decision making. It is a democratic method by which an entire group of people can come to an agreement. The input and ideas of all participants are gathered and synthesized to arrive at a final decision acceptable to all. Through consensus, we are not only working to achieve better solutions but also to promote the growth of the community and trust.

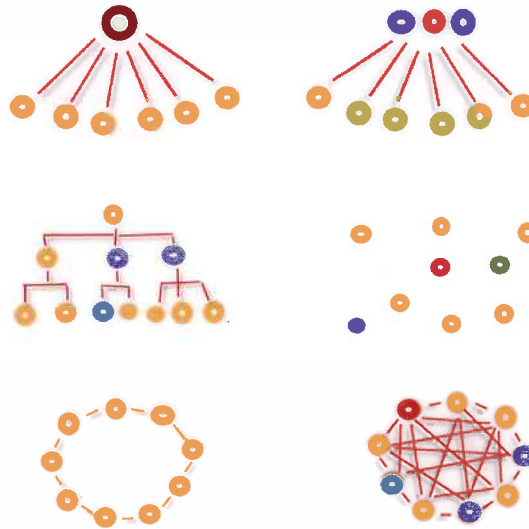
Why Consensus?

- Allows people to collectively explore solutions until the best one for the group emerges
- Ensures that everyone has a voice in the decision making, allowing for minority opinions to be considered
- Synthesizes ideas into one
- Brings conflicts into the open
- Creates space for decisions to be thoroughly thought out
- Encourages cooperation, not domination
- Promotes commitment to carry out decisions.

Effective Meetings

- Clear agenda prepared ahead of time.
- For each agenda item:
 - Adequate time
 - Presenter
 - Type of item (discussion/decision)
- Meeting roles:
 - Agenda planner(s)
 - Facilitator(s)
 - Note taker
 - Public Scribe
 - Peacekeeper
 - Advocate
 - Timekeeper
 - Doorkeeper
- Meeting agreements (agenda review, consensus review)

Decision making structures



Meeting Tools

- Stacking or Listing (popcorn)
- Listening exercises (check in)
- Go around (good to assure everyone speaks)
- Small Groups
- Brain storming
- Fish bowl (example conversation in the middle)
- Straw poll (Fist of five)
- Dot voting (stickers on paper)
- Parking lot (put off for later)
- Take a break
- Caucus

Addressing Concerns

- Listen, maybe person just wants to be heard
 - Echo to assure you understood
 - Scribe writes concerns down
- Find easy solution
 - Adjust proposal language
 - Ask them what they want
- Run out of time (ask for more time or)
 - Put off to next meeting
 - Send to committee
 - Ask to stand aside
 - Declare blocked

Resources

- On Conflict and Consensus consensus.net
- www.seedsforchange.org.us/resources
- TreeBressen treegroup.info/topics/#co

Fist to Five, number of fingers up:

0. I would block this proposal. I require changes for it to pass.
1. I do not agree with the proposal. I still need to discuss certain issues and suggest changes.
2. I do not fully agree with the proposal and would like to discuss some minor issues
3. I can live with the proposal but am not enthusiastic about it. I feel comfortable to let this decision pass without further discussion
4. I agree with the proposal and will work with it.
5. I can say an unqualified "yes" to the proposal.