

Co-operantics

Co-operative skills for everyone

Different decision-making styles

It helps to be able to identify the different styles used in decision-making, in order to identify the best approach in different situations.

Decision making style	description	advantages	disadvantages
Command – or centralised	individuals are directly responsible for every decision within a specified area	enables quick, co-ordinated action, particularly when a deadline is imminent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> deprives others of the responsibility, learning and personal rewards of making decisions themselves can result in inefficiency or bottle-necks if review needed before others will take action
Delegation - or distributed	decision-making is delegated to subgroups or individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improves efficiency by reducing the number of people required for each decision enhances responsibility for consequences by those who take decisions 	will not of itself ensure effective decision-making without clear authority and lines of accountability
Democratic – or majority vote	everyone has a vote and proposals receiving more than 50% of the vote are carried	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> involves large numbers of people in decision-making can initiate debate between people with comparable power and strong views decision guaranteed, as long as there's a tie-breaker process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> not ideal when the co-op needs everyone to implement a decision enthusiastically voters may be swayed by apathy, inaccurate information, or the influence of charismatic individuals nearly half the participants can end up on the losing side, and be expected to implement the decision
Consensus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> decisions taken reflect the ideas and thought of all team members ensures that decisions are explored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> maximizes commitment and 'buy-in' during decision making and implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> compared to delegation or command, consensus can take longer consensus process may not result in support

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	<p>thoroughly and strong disagreements resolved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• an agreement acceptable to everyone• it is not unanimity (the outcome may not be everyone's first choice) nor a majority vote• It requires:<ul style="list-style-type: none">* time* communication skills including listening, probing, conflict management* viewing disagreements and conflicts as part of the process* keeping an open mind and thinking creatively	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• fosters a sense of goodwill that increases patience, flexibility, and willingness to participate in damage control• encourages discussion of potential obstacles, facilitating development of alternatives• can be very efficient from a cost per decision standpoint	<p>for any specific course of action, which could be frustrating for someone who wants to see immediate action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• can lead to 'groupthink' (a mode of thought whereby individuals intentionally conform to what they perceive to be the consensus of the group - Wikipedia & see links below)
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Tools for consensus: <http://www.innatenonviolence.org/old/workshops/consensus4.htm>

Groupthink: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Groupthink>

Symptoms of groupthink: http://www.psyr.org/about/pubs_resources/groupthink%20overview.htm