



Consensus Based Decision-Making

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Learning Objectives

- ▶ Develop an understanding of and appreciation for consensus based decision-making
- ▶ Develop the skills to promote consensus-building processes
- ▶ Learn strategies for using conflict productively in decision-making processes



What is consensus?

The process of reaching an agreement on some decision by all members of a group resulting in:

- Good faith effort to consider all interests and ideas
- Mutually beneficial resolution



Why is consensus-building important?

- ▶ Considers all interests and ideas
- ▶ Cultivates agreement through discussion
- ▶ Enhances the likelihood of buy-in
- ▶ Results in agreement without compromising the integrity of the solution



Guiding Principles of Consensus Building Processes

- ▶ Consensus decision-making
- ▶ Inclusiveness
- ▶ Accountability
- ▶ Facilitation
- ▶ Shared control/ground rules
- ▶ Commitment to Implementation



Elements of a Consensus Based Decision

- ▶ All parties agree with the proposed decision and are willing to carry it out;
- ▶ No one will block or obstruct the decision or its implementation; and
- ▶ Everyone will support the decision and implement it



What does the process require?

- ▶ High level of trust among participants
 - Belief that everyone is doing their best to reach agreement
- ▶ Strong guidelines for discussion
 - Helps ensure that everyone is heard
- ▶ Active listening skills – the ability to
 - Listen to understand
 - Demonstrate flexibility and open-mindedness
 - Ask questions from a place of curiosity



What does the process require?

- ▶ Skilled facilitator who will:
 - Serve the group
 - Create a safe, productive environment
 - Enhance communication
 - Remain impartial
 - Draw out the best thinking of the group
 - Keep the group focused on the objectives
 - Allow conflict to emerge
 - Reality test proposals



Facilitation Techniques

- ▶ Focusing
 - Intentionally concentrating the energy of group members on a particular topic
- ▶ Linking
 - Seeing the relationships between perspectives of group members
- ▶ Pacing
 - Empathizing with each group member to build trust
 - Slowing down or speeding up process



Conflict



What is conflict?

“A struggle between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values or goals.”

The Foundation Coalition



When conflict is productive

- ▶ People are open to hearing other's ideas
- ▶ People listen and respond to ideas even if they don't agree with them
- ▶ Everyone tries to understand the views of the other person
- ▶ People stay objective and focus on the facts
- ▶ There is a systematic approach to analyzing the situation and looking for solutions

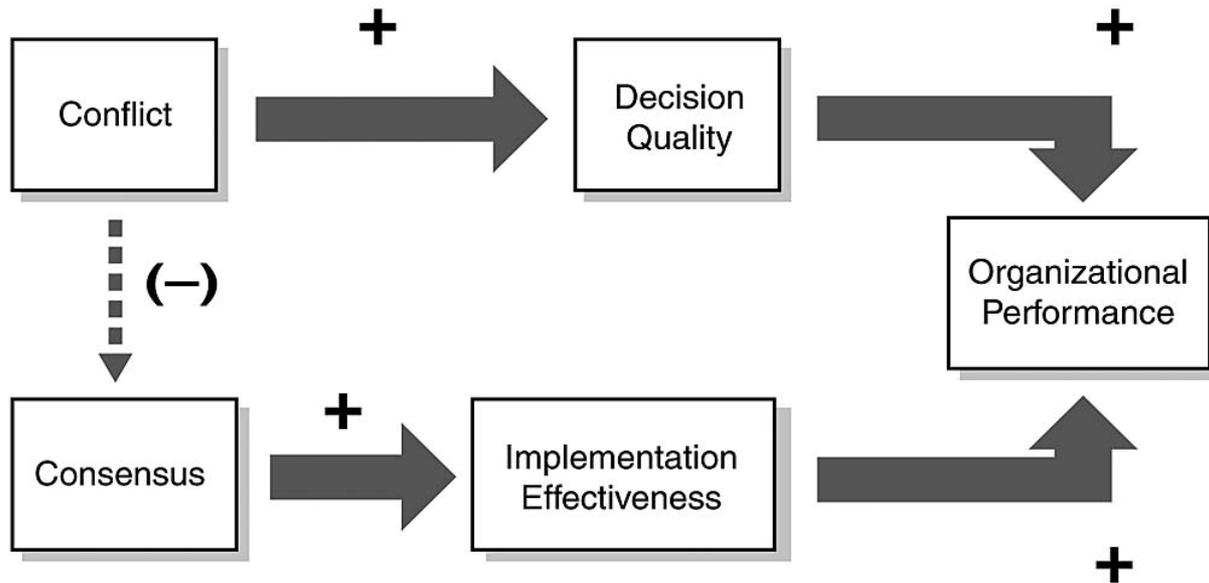


When conflict creates dysfunction

- ▶ People assume they're right
- ▶ People wait until others have finished talking and then state their ideas without responding to the ideas presented by the other person
- ▶ No one is interested in how others see the situation
- ▶ People get personally attacked or blamed
- ▶ Issues are discussed in an unstructured way



Productive use of Conflict



Using self-awareness to understand conflict

- ▶ Am I in conflict?
- ▶ What is the nature of the conflict?
- ▶ With whom am I in conflict?
- ▶ Am I motivated to resolve the conflict?
- ▶ What might motivate others to resolve the conflict?
- ▶ What can I do to manage the conflict?



Approaches to managing conflict

- ▶ Avoid
- ▶ Accommodate
- ▶ Compromise
- ▶ Compete
- ▶ Collaborate



Questions?



References

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