

Decision rights and decision making

On a scale of 1 – 5, how efficient is the team at making decisions?

1 Highly inefficient	2	3	4	5 Highly efficient
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When feedback is needed on a decision or to move forward on an issue, we tend to have circular conversations that often don't lead to decisions or make clear progress towards an outcome, resulting in high levels of frustration and wasted time and energy

We have a clear process for capturing feedback and input into decision-making. Effort expended almost always moves us towards clarity and confidence in how to move forward. Meetings where we are solving issues / workshoping opportunities as a group are high energy and empowering.

Defining clear decisions rights is one way to eliminate drama, and wasted time and energy. No decision right is fundamentally better than another. Being clear about which decision right will most serve the situation, circumstance and team ensures everyone understands their role in the decision-making conversations, and the trade-offs that inevitably happen when we achieve clarity and conviction.

Step 1: Identify if there is a decision to be made

This should be as easy as yes / no. Asking the question, prompts clarity around the next step.

Yes No

Step 2: Clearly articulate the decision to be made

Step 3: Agree who needs to be involved in the decision and the role they play

Who needs to be involved in the decision and what role do they play?

Leader

Sub-group

Team members

Subject matter experts

Others

Step 3: Determine trade-offs

Assess the importance of time and buy-in by answering these questions:

How much time do you have?

How important is the issue?

How much stakeholder buy-in do you need?

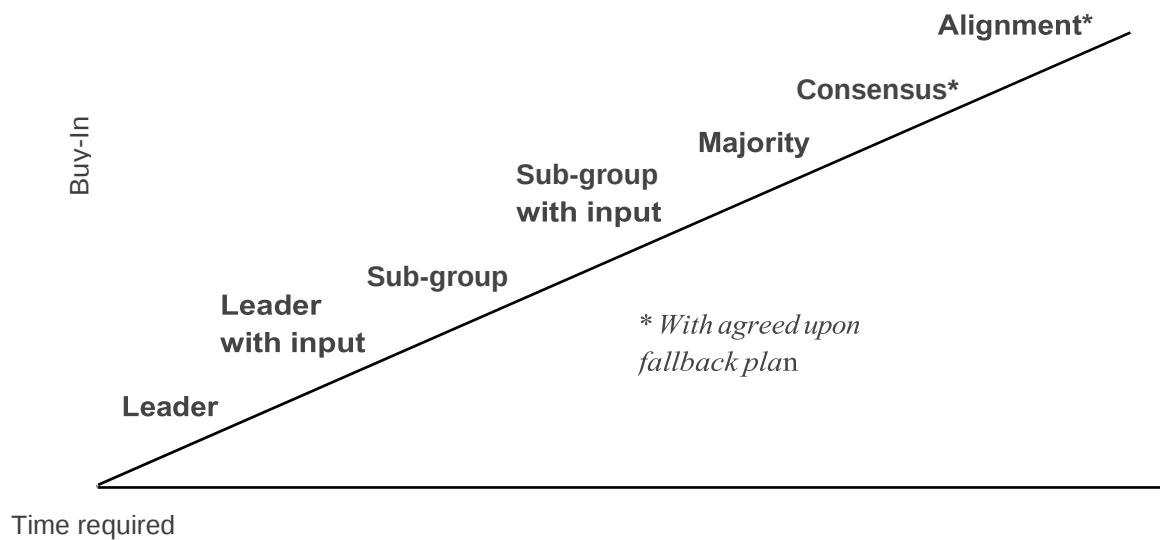
Who has the information and expertise needed?

How capable and experienced are the decision-makers?

What is the decision right that could strengthen the team?

Step 4: Choose a decision right

Based on answers from step 3. See below for descriptions of each decision right.



Step 5: Execute the decision right

Describe how you'll engage the relevant stakeholders to address the issue.

Step 6: Be complete with your decision

Once you've reached your decision, everyone agrees that it is final/complete. That means no side conversations about what anyone didn't share during the process, no back door attempts to influence the decision maker(s), and clarity around an agreed upon process for revisiting the decision if needed.

Descriptions: 7 Types of Decision Rights

Leader decides

The leader and leader alone makes the decision without seeking any input. This method is fast but doesn't always create buy-in.

Leader decides with input

The leader makes the decision while seeking input from others. The leader decides the amount of input and the time allotted.

Subgroup decides

Some decisions are best made by a subgroup of the whole. This subgroup can be made up of subject matter experts or representatives of stakeholder constituencies. When this decision right is chosen the subgroup makes the decision and no one else gives input.

Subgroup decides with input

The subgroup makes the decision while seeking input from others.

Majority vote

Leader decides how much time to allot for group discussion and what type of majority will be used for the vote (simple majority, two-thirds, etc.). Everyone has the opportunity to voice their thoughts and enter their vote.

Consensus

Consensus is achieved when no one is opposed to the decision. People can be neutral or have various levels of agreement with the decision, but no one can be opposed. Consensus demands that everyone is heard and that everyone stands for what is best for the whole.

*When a leader chooses consensus as the decision right, they must also choose a fallback decision right. Sometimes consensus is not achieved, and when it isn't, the group needs to know how the decision will be made. The leader can select any one of the previous 5 decision rights as the fallback method for making the decision.

Alignment

Alignment is a form of consensus where every individual is not only unopposed, but is in complete agreement with the decision. Alignment usually takes the longest time, but delivers the greatest buy-in.

*Like consensus, alignment requires choosing a fallback decision right in case alignment isn't achieved.