



# Tools for Leading Teams

## *Deciding How to Decide*

### Introduction

It seems like an odd paradox at first, but teams sometimes need to *decide how to decide*, especially when there is a lot at stake. While it may seem *indecisive* to need such conversations, this intervention can actually save time in the long run by preventing misunderstanding, hard feelings, and lack of support for implementation.

Authority without Input	Authority with Input	Majority Rule	Sub Committee	Consensus	Delegation
Decision is made by a knowledgeable leader, completely independent of others	Decision is made by knowledgeable leaders with input from a select few	Decision is put to a vote and majority rules	Decision is given to a smaller group for study, recommendation, or execution with	Decision is made unanimously such that every member supports the outcome	Decisions is made by an expert
Quality depends on expertise of the leaders	Quality depends on expertise of a few	Quality depends on expertise of voters, politics, chance	Quality depends on expertise of committee members participating, group dynamics,	Quality depends on expertise present and participating, group dynamics	Quality depends on individual expertise
Implementation by others is least likely without strong hierarchy and control	Implementation by others is slightly improved over authority without input	Implementation by others is highly variable	Implementation by others depends upon group process and approval process	Implementation by others is high for group involved	Implementation by others is high for select individual

Begin by sharing the Decision-Making Continuum (above) and discussing the various pros and cons of various decision-making alternatives. Explain that there are situations when each one of these decision types might be the best alternative, and ask for examples from the team. Discuss the factors below that comprise a “good decision,” noting that these factors can be accomplished with any of the decision-making alternatives. Discuss the fact that team members sometimes need clarification on what decision-making alternative is being used so that they are not surprised or alienated, and use examples from your own experience to illustrate.

### A “Good Decision” is one where...

- Group members’ resources are well used
- Time is used wisely
- The decision is correct or high quality
- Commitment to implement is maximized
- The group’s effectiveness is improved for the future