



Tools for Leading Teams

Prioritizing Options

Introduction

Multi-voting is used to prioritize and/or narrow down a list of options (i.e., divergent thinking). It is most often used in conjunction with brainstorming. However, it can be applied to any list that needs to be reduced to a critical few. It helps a group refine a list into something workable, focus on what is most important, or pick from what would be most impactful.

Steps for Success

1. After brainstorming or generating a list of topics, review and clarify the ideas. With the consent of the group, similar ideas should be combined.
2. Establish and agree upon a shared list of criteria or decision-making parameters that the raters will be using to give their opinions (e.g., relative cost, bang for the buck, ease of execution, impact on multiple stakeholders). Write these down and post them where they can be easily seen and referred to during the rating process.
3. Give each member 10 points (e.g., votes, dots, marks, Post-Its, etc.).
4. Instruct each member to distribute their 10 points among one or more ideas (e.g., give all 10 points to one idea, five points each to two ideas, one point to 10 different ideas, or any other combination).
5. Give group members a mechanism for recording their ratings for each idea on separate Post-It notes or by using the appropriate number of sticky dots (i.e. Avery Label file dots), and then place their Post-It notes or dots on the flipchart next to the ideas being evaluated. Another way is simply to have members call out their votes in turn and while a facilitator records the votes on a flip chart or white board.
6. Tally the votes for each idea and place them in order from highest number of ratings to least number. This will give the group a visual way of observing their group-rating.
7. This gives the group a sense of the “top choices,” but they will still need to decide how many of the top-rated ideas are do-able (i.e., top 1, top 3 or top 5).
8. Once a reasonable number of top options are chosen, consider these the “what,” and ask the group for advice or ideas about “how” they might be accomplished. The action plans for the chosen items can then be developed by individuals, task forces or sub-committees depending upon nature of the problem, culture of the organization, and urgency for action.