

A Quick Guide to Integrated Decision Making

Common types of decision-making

- Decisions provided without involvement of those affected – boss decides
- Decisions are made by each individual or group independently – each decides on his/her own- autonomous individuals
- Majority rules by vote, often includes a form of debate – a few sway the many
- Standard process is applied without considering changing present behaviour –SOP applied, no role for debate
- Consensus is used to get agreement from each participant – continues until agreement is reached by all parties
- Consent is based on eliminating any major objections to a proposal – divergent opinions are integrated and “good enough to try” allows the group to move forward

Integrated decision making makes an organisation more agile and able to respond quickly by **Avoiding Consensus** This can feel uncomfortable at first as many organisations are used to a consensus approach. Often those new to next stage ways of working think that all decisions must be made using Consensus. Consensus often takes too long to reach full agreement and can draw people into debate in areas where they have little expertise or interest. Consensus often stalls or results in stalemate.


Consent Rounds

Consent is different to Consensus. Consent is a well-documented process in agile approaches and is also found in approaches such as Kline’s Time to Think. Consent is based on conversations and seeking advice that generates lots of quick feedback that is in turn integrated into the proposal on the table until no major objections remain. Often the facilitator of the meeting makes suggests changes, rereads the proposal, and asks for objections again. The quick rounds bring up lots of useful details that round out the proposal and create buy-in from the participants.

The basic process

1. One person presents a peer-reviewed proposed solution that was sent out in advance. That person sponsors the proposal and describes it to the group making the decision.
2. The group asks clarifying questions. This is not a discussion or debate. The point is to understand the proposal.
3. A mood check determines how the group views the proposal.
4. The facilitator calls for Consent . Consent is about **Acceptance not Approval-** Good enough to try NOT that’s exactly how I would do it.
5. During the Consent round, the facilitator asks each person, “Do you have any paramount objections to the proposal?” Any objections are heard. The only discussion is clarifying questions on the objections rather than a debate or rebuttal. The proposal sponsor offers details rather than arguments, while the facilitator keeps the focus on the proposal and not on the people involved. All input is valued and the proposal is altered to **“integrate”** the new information and resolve raised concerns until the objection is removed and another Consent round occurs.
6. This loop of updating the proposal and asking for objections continues until there are no unresolved objections. If after several rounds the group cannot agree to live with the proposal as stated, the proposal is tabled and a small group is designated to work on it and bring it back when the objections have been resolved.

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1. Prepare proposal seeking advice and input from those with knowledge and who will be impacted.
2. Send out the proposal to meeting attendees
3. At the meeting present the proposal and answer any clarifying questions
4. Meeting facilitator asks for mood check.
5. Meeting facilitator asks for consent. 
6. If objections are raised, then questions can be asked to clarify the objection.
7. The proposer can offer more detail about the proposal which may mean the objection is satisfied or amend the proposal to satisfy the objection.
8. Once the objection is removed another consent round occurs.
9. If objections cannot be resolved in a few rounds the meeting can task a small group to work on this and bring it back to another meeting

The proposal is adopted and enacted.