Phases of Group Decision-Making

- Multisequence Model (M. Scott Poole)
  - Task activities
  - Relational activities
  - Topic activities
- Paths group take in reaching decisions
  - Unitary sequence - step-by-step toward decision
  - Complex cyclic - repeated cycles
  - Solution-oriented - focus on solutions

Functional Perspective of Group Decision-Making

- Need to analyze and understand the problem before searching for solutions
- Need to engage in creative problem solving during initial discussions
- Assess:
  - the problem
  - the requirements for an acceptable solution
  - the positive qualities of alternative choices
  - the negative qualities of alternative choices

Traditional Problem-Solving

- Based on John Dewey’s Reflective Thinking Model
- 6 steps:
  - Define the problem
  - Research and analyze the problem
  - Establish criteria for solutions
  - List possible alternatives/solutions
  - Evaluate each alternative
  - Select the best alternative
Problem-Solving Sequence

Define (and analyze) the problem
Establish criteria for evaluating solutions
Identify possible solutions
Evaluate solutions
Select best solution(s)
Test selected solutions
Try Again

Standard Agenda
I. Problem identification
II. Problem analysis
III. Solution criteria
IV. Solution suggestions
V. Solution evaluation and selection
VI. Solution implementation

NOTE:
- This mimics Dewey’s reflective thinking model.
- Considered to be the most complete, flexible, and time-tested group problem-solving method

Multiple tools for problem-solving

Problem Identification Methods
- Journalist’s Six Questions (Is/Is Not Analysis)
- Pareto Charts

Problem Analysis Methods
- Force field Analysis
- Fishbone Diagram (cause & effect)
Problem Identification:
Pareto Charts

Problem Analysis:
Force Field Analysis (Kurt Lewin)

Problem Analysis (Cause & Effect):
Fishbone Diagram (Kaoru Ishikawa)
**WARNING:**
If your group gets bogged down by analyzing the problem too much, probably suffering from *Analysis Paralysis*

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**SWOT Analysis**

- **Strengths**
- **Weaknesses**
- **Opportunities**
- **Threats**

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**Why do people resist change?**

- Change = Risk (unfamiliarity and uncertainty)
- What can reduce our resistance to change?
  - If we've had a part in the planning and decision-making
  - If the change does not threaten the security of the group members
  - When the need for change affects members directly
  - When change is open to revision and modification
Methods of Decision-Making

- Decision by Authority
  - Without group discussion
  - After group discussion
- Decision by Expert
  - Inside the group
  - Outside the group
- Decision by Averaging Individual's Opinions
- Decision by Minority
- Decision by Majority Vote / Supermajority
- Decision by Random Choice
- Decision by Consensus
- Decision by Unanimity

Five Criteria for Consensus

- Members agree with the group decision
- Members exhibit a commitment to the group's decision
- Members are satisfied with the group decision
- Members are satisfied with their participation in the decision making
- Members are satisfied with the group decision-making process

CAS³

Rules for Discussion When Trying to Achieve Consensus

- Avoid stubbornly arguing for your own position
- Avoid win-lose stalemates
- Avoid switching positions simply to prevent conflict
- Avoid conflict-reducing techniques
- Seek out differences of opinion
- Be suspicious of initial agreement
- Discuss underlying assumptions
PERT
Program Evaluation & Review Technique

- Describe the final step
- Identify any events that must occur before the final goal is realized
- Order these events chronologically
- Develop a flow diagram of the process & all the steps in it
- Generate a list of all the activities, resources, and materials needed to accomplish each task
- Estimate the time for each task, then add up all the estimates for the total implementation time
- Compare total time with deadlines; modify if necessary
- Determine who will be responsible for each step