



LIVING THE MISSION PRAYER

AWAKEN RISK BLESS

MAKING DECISIONS AS A TEAM

Living Our Identity and Calling as Communities of Christ

Materials Needed

A set of green, yellow, and red index cards for each member of the team

Introduction

The purpose of “Making Decisions as a Team” is to *truly hear one another* so the decisions of the team reflect the best thinking and creativity of the members. This practice offers steps for building consensus by using colored cards to indicate the level of support for a decision about a particular question or issue.

Green means “I support this.”

Yellow means “I need more information or time to think.”

Red means “I disagree with this.”

The benefit of using a colored card to represent a level of support for a decision or idea is that we hear from each member. This gives the team opportunity to truly listen and respond to all team members’ suggestions and concerns to reach the highest level of support possible for a particular decision.

Remember in traditional group conversation we often don’t hear from everyone present. Silence does not mean support. This approach engages everyone in the process.

Steps

1. Each team member has a red, green, and yellow card and understands what they represent.
2. The team decides what level of support must be reached to move forward with a decision. Members that hold up a yellow or red card have opportunity to express their views. In some cases, a member may disagree with a decision but still be willing to support the team if they are the only member that objects.

For a small team like a Pastor Leadership Team (PLT), 80% level of support may be a good place to start. For a PLT with five persons, four green cards represent



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80% (one member will either have a yellow or red card). Deciding up front what constitutes a decision creates transparency and helps everyone recognize when the team will move forward with a decision or when more time is needed for conversation.

3. **Optional:** The team agrees that a team member who wants to speak after the first person speaks must briefly (in a few sentences) restate the position or concern of the person who just spoke to her/his level of satisfaction. It is important that *what was said was both heard and understood*. Do not short-change this step. Slowing down the conversation by taking this step will compel team members to listen more carefully to one another rather than just formulating responses.
4. Identify someone to be the facilitator. The facilitator poses the question to be decided, ensures everyone has an opportunity to speak, and asks if an acceptable level of support is being reached.
5. After adequate conversation has occurred, the facilitator asks members of the team to hold up the color card that represents their level of support for the emerging decision. Once each person's level of support is revealed, any person holding a yellow or red card explains his or her level of support for the team's decision. *Note: After hearing from those who hold yellow or red cards, green card holders may want to change their level of support, and the decision may need to be modified.*
6. During step 5 it may become apparent that a modification to the question/proposal would result in a higher level of support. If so, test the modification by using the colored cards to show the team's level of support.
7. Continue until one of two outcomes occurs: 1) the team reaches the level of support required to move forward, or 2) the team does not reach the level of support required and more time is needed before a decision is made. *Both outcomes are acceptable* and represent the will of the team.

Note: The process is as important as the outcome. Build trust and make decisions as a team. *It is critical for persons holding yellow or red cards to feel valued and not pressured to switch to a green card just so the group can move on to other agenda items.* The process takes longer but the results will provide a greater level of ownership of decisions and a higher level of trust in one another.

Faithful Disagreement*



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Members may remain in disagreement to a decision and still abide by it and continue to support the overall direction of the PLT or congregation. This is perfectly acceptable. Attempts to force someone into consent will harm both the person and the decision-making process. There may be those who speak in disagreement, just so the discussion benefits from an alternative perspective. Members in “faithful disagreement,” when heard and respected, help the team make better decisions with greater support.

*See *Faithful Disagreement*, World Church Leadership Council March 2013