

Managing Teams

“Making Decisions”

How To Use This Toolkit

Different team leaders are at different stages and this toolkit provides a basic guide from which team leaders can pick and choose topics they need support on.

Working successfully in teams does not necessarily come naturally to many of us; it is an acquired skill in need of guidance and support.

This toolkit provides practical hints and tips on areas such as team leadership, performance and communication.

It aims to aid managers when they are looking for practical ideas on how to address issues raised in everyday situations.

Each section covers the following areas:

1. Using this section
2. Practical hints and tips
3. Comments from top scoring managers
4. Questions for you

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Using This Section

An important task for teams is to make decisions.

For Example:

- What goals to tackle.
- How to improve a process.
- What data to collect.
- Which options to implement.

“A fallacy of teams is that everyone should be involved in every decision.”

This tool outlines a range of styles that can be used and gives some tips on when each is appropriate.

Used appropriately it will improve the decision-making within the team.

Practical Hints And Tips

- Clarify the decision to be made.
- Review the spectrum of styles available to the team leader (see next page).
- As leader decide which style is most appropriate in this case and brief the team.
- Make decisions.
- Review the success of your decision and the style used with the team in order to agree how to improve upon it next time.

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Decision Making Styles

Directive Style

- An individual with low tolerance for ambiguity and is efficient, rational, and logical in their way of thinking.
- Focus on the short term and make decisions quickly, usually resulting in a decision that has been made with minimal information and no careful analyses of other alternatives.

Analytic Style

- As opposed to the directive style, an analytic decision-making style has greater tolerance to ambiguity.
- The individual makes decisions carefully and likes to be well informed before thoroughly assessing their options.
- Individuals usually have the ability to adapt or cope with unique and challenging situations.

Conceptual Style

- Conceptual decision makers are generally very broad in their approach and all available alternatives are considered.
- They are long-term oriented and are usually capable of formulating creative solutions to problems.

Behavioural Style

- Individuals with a behavioural decision-making style tend to work well with others, they are open to suggestions, and are always concerned about the achievements of their team.
- They generally try to avoid conflict and their acceptance by others is usually a priority.

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The Following Factors Should Be Taken Into Account When Choosing Your Decision-making Style:

- Who has relevant experience/knowledge to contribute?
- How much time is available?
- The importance of gaining real commitment
- How creative does the decision need to be?
- The significance of the decision - routine or strategic
- The development need of the team to improve its decision-making
- The value of widening the perspectives/understanding of individuals
- The need to build trust and confidence with the team
- How much control are you prepared to relinquish?

Irrespective of the decision-making style, it is important to achieve a feeling of commitment to the decision. The strongest commitment is achieved through reaching consensus.

In Order To Reach Consensus You Need To:

- Listen to what others are saying.
- Build on others' ideas, not knock them down.
- Periodically summarise where you are.
- Ensure quieter members have a say.
- Look for tension points and state feelings.
- Check what people think/how they feel about ideas.
- Don't take silence for consent.
- Make proposals and seek either agreement or objections.
- Look for common ground and build on it until differences are marginalized.

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"Every decision is different, it is therefore necessary to use a different style every time one makes one"

"As much as possible I try to get everyone on board when making a decision, however this is not always possible, the important thing is committing to it once it has been made"

Questions For You

1. Do you really listen to all ideas and opinions before making decisions?
2. How much trust and confidence is there in your team?
3. Do you try to gain a consensus from your team when decision making?
4. What style do you adopt when making decisions?

Hint

Avoiding decisions can be tempting, but doing so will make life harder further down the line!

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