

Consensus Building

OSBA
Board Leadership Institute
2011

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Consensus: *Feel Together*

Consensus
General agreement
Group solidarity of belief or sentiment

Consensus Decision-Making
The process for getting to agreement

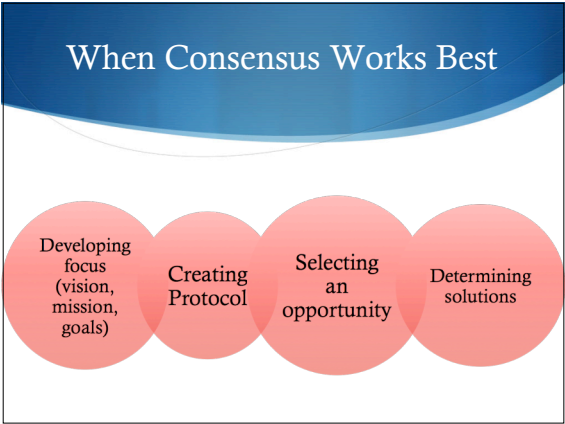
Consensus is a group's very best effort to achieve its brightest outcome.

- Judy Mares-Dixon, mediator and designer of dispute resolution

$$1 + 1 = 3$$

Consensus is about putting together all the different ideas to come up with something better than what we would have identified on our own.

The ethics of consensus decision-making encourage participants to place the good of the whole above their individual preferences.

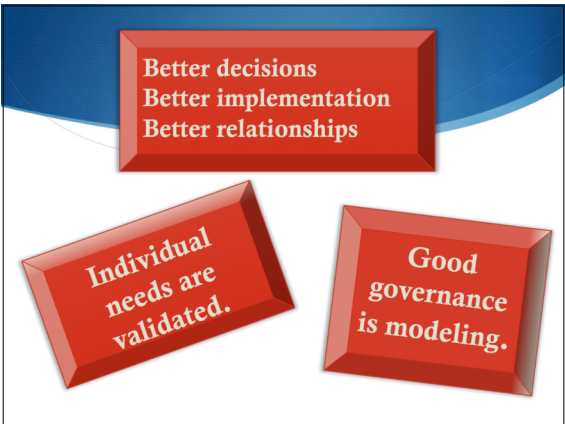


In the end, majority rules. However...

Once a society loses the capacity to dialogue, all that is left is a cacophony of voices battling it out to see who wins and who loses.

There is no capacity to go deeper, to find a deeper meaning that transcends individual views and self-interest.

- Peter Sange



Consensus vs. Compromise

- ◆ With consensus all parties involved “buy in”.
- ◆ Compromise is about giving things up.
- ◆ Consensus is about getting the best of everyone’s ideas.
- ◆ The tough part of both is staying in the conversation.

Consensus = collaboration = third alternative
Compromise = concession = finding middle ground

“I have my way of thinking about something but I could be wrong. So I am going to listen to you and allow my mind to be influenced by you. I may not fully agree but hopefully by sharing and listening we can agree to a new solution that is ours.”

Consensus Objectives

- ◆ Agreement Seeking
- ◆ Collaborative
- ◆ Cooperative
- ◆ Egalitarian
- ◆ Inclusive
- ◆ Participatory



Important Aspects of the Process

- ★ Multiple concerns and information shared
- ★ Active listening and sharing
- ★ Norms for engagement
- ★ Group ownership of ideas and solutions
- ★ Differences resolved by discussion
- ★ Group ownership of decision
- ★ All perspectives are embraced

The goal is **unity**, not unanimity!

The Ground Rules

- 🔥 Agree on rules of Engagement.
- 🔥 Begin each conversation with reminders and commitments.
- 🔥 Model and self-monitor.

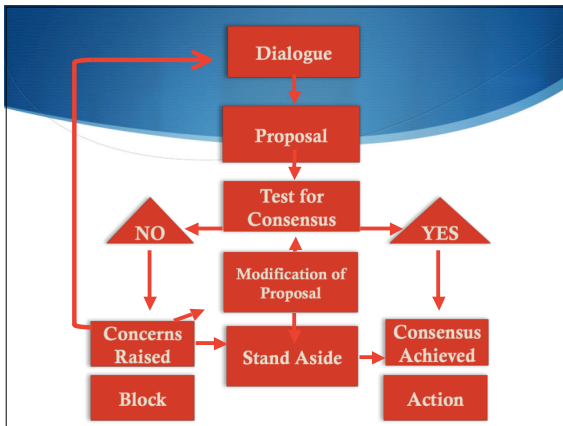
Unity of Purpose

- 🔥 For what purpose are we having the conversation?
- 🔥 At the end of the day, what do we want?
- 🔥 What is our vision for this issue, situation or problem?

A model process

1. Identify the **issue**
2. Discuss **interests**
3. Establish criteria (**values**)
4. Generate **options**
5. Agree on **solutions**

Unity of Purpose

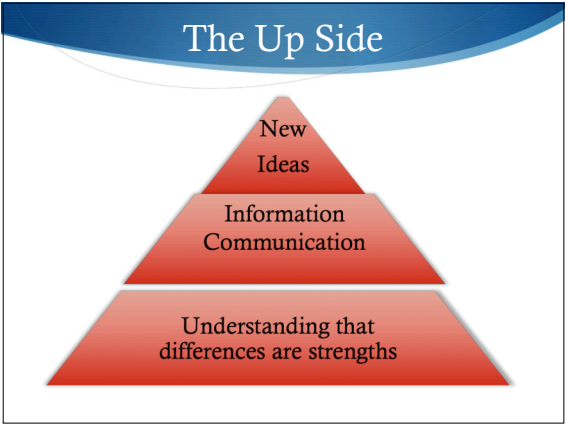


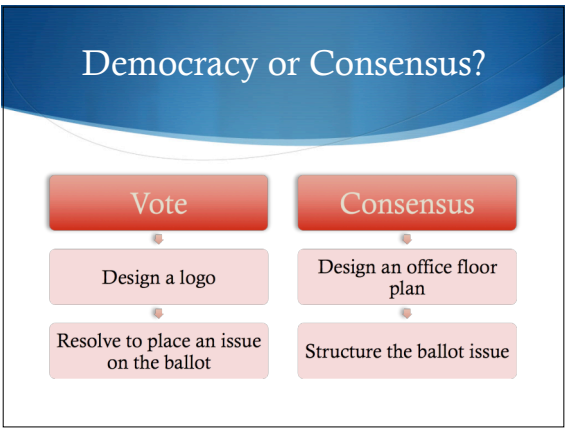
The Down Sides

Mavericks can dominate.

Diluted responsibility for follow-through

Time





Practice – Real Life Scenarios

- ◆ What squares with you? ■
- ◆ What is still rolling around in your head? ●
- ◆ What three points can you take away and use? ▲
- ◆ What decisions facing your district could fit the consensus-building model? ➔

Thank you and Good Luck!