

# Co-operantics

## People skills for co-operatives

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### Different decision-making styles

It helps to be able to identify the different styles used in decision-making, in order to clarify which style is most appropriate for different situations.

style	description	advantages	disadvantages
<b>Command</b> – or centralised decision making	individuals are directly responsible for every decision within a specified area	enables quick, coordinated action, particularly when a deadline is imminent	deprives others of the responsibility, learning and personal rewards of making decisions themselves. Can also result in inefficiency or bottlenecks if review needed before others will take action.
<b>Delegation</b> - or distributed decision making	decision-making is delegated to sub-groups or individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ improves efficiency by reducing the number of people required for each decision</li> <li>★ enhances responsibility for consequences by those who take decisions</li> </ul>	will not of itself ensure effective decision-making without clear authority and lines of accountability
<b>Democratic</b> – or majority vote decision making	everyone has a vote and proposals receiving more than 50% of the vote are carried	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ involves large numbers of people in decision-making</li> <li>★ can initiate debate between people with comparable power and strong views</li> <li>★ decision guaranteed, as long as there's a tie-breaker process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ not ideal when the co-op needs everyone to implement a decision enthusiastically</li> <li>★ voters may be swayed by apathy, inaccurate information, or the influence of charismatic individuals</li> <li>★ nearly half the participants can end up on the losing side, and be expected to implement the decision</li> </ul>

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<b>Consensus</b> decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ consensus decision making is a style that reflects the ideas and thought of all team members.</li> <li>★ reaching consensus ensures that decisions are explored thoroughly and strong disagreements resolved.</li> <li>★ it is a decision that is acceptable to everyone. It is <b>not</b> unanimity (the outcome may not be everyone's first choice) nor a majority vote. It requires:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ time</li> <li>○ communication skills including listening, probing, conflict management</li> <li>○ viewing disagreements and conflicts as part of the process</li> <li>○ keeping an open mind and thinking creatively</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ maximizes commitment and "buy-in" during decision making and implementation</li> <li>★ fosters a sense of goodwill that increases patience, flexibility, and willingness to participate in damage control</li> <li>★ encourages discussion of potential obstacles, facilitating development of alternatives</li> <li>★ can be very efficient from a cost per decision standpoint</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ compared to delegation or command, consensus can take longer</li> <li>★ consensus process may not result in support for any specific course of action, which could be frustrating for someone who wants to see immediate action</li> <li>★ can lead to "groupthink" (a mode of thought whereby individuals intentionally conform to what they perceive to be the consensus of the group) Wikipedia – see below.</li> </ul>

Tools for consensus: <http://www.innatenonviolence.org/old/workshops/consensus4.htm>

Groupthink: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Groupthink>

Symptoms of groupthink: <http://www.cedu.niu.edu/~fulmer/groupthink.htm>