

Levels of Participation in Decision Making

Generally speaking, the greater the need for the decision to be implemented by others (rather than by the leader alone), and the more obstacles to implementation, the greater the need for the participation of others in the decision making process.

Method	Description	Pro	Con	When to Use	When Not to Use
Unilateral Management Decision	Leader decides alone	Quick	Support for the decision may be lacking	Speed is essential; Confidentiality is required	When support to implement is needed
Consultative Decision Making	Leader gets input from others, then decides	Wider range of ideas	Time consuming	Time is available; Outside ideas are needed	Group lacks expertise or experience
Voting	Majority rules – Leader gets same vote as everyone else	Democratic; Familiar process	Creates winners and losers	Issue relatively unimportant; No one has strongly held positions	Organization cannot afford to have implementation obstructed
Consensus Decision Making	Group agreement based on discussion – Leader is part of group	Wider range of ideas; Breeds commitment	Time consuming; Leader needs group facilitation expertise	Support to implement is critical; Issue of major concern to group; Time is available	Group lacks expertise or experience
Delegated Decision Making	Leader turns over entire decision making process to others – Leader not involved	Strengthens morale; Helps develop people; Ultimate sign of trust	Outcome uncertain	Support to implement is critical; Issue of major concern to group	Group lacks expertise or experience