Multi-voting

Multi-voting is a simple way to evaluate ideas and identify the most important items on a list. Multi-voting is also an effective technique for teams that find it difficult to reach consensus. Multi-voting starts with a brainstorming session and ends in a series of votes to narrow down the list of items to a manageable number.

A facilitator guides the team through this process and acts as mediator and scribe as needed. Here are the basic steps for multi-voting. First, you conduct a brainstorming session to generate a list of ideas. Here is the brainstormed list of reasons for late shipments that you saw in the previous video. Then you review the list and combine items if the group agrees that they are the same. Note that it's easy to go overboard with this step and combine items that don't quite represent the same idea. So, if there are any doubts or disagreements on whether to combine items, it's best to keep the items separate.

Next, the items are numbered. Then each team member writes down the numbers of the items that they think are most important. Each team member can vote for up to one-third of the total number of items. With this list of 15 items, each team member can vote for five items. The individual lists are reviewed to tally votes. Then the original list is reduced by eliminating items with no votes or items with only a few votes. Steps 4, 5, and 6 are repeated until only a few items remain.

In this scenario, the team is identifying potential causes of late shipments. They will need to investigate each of these causes. By narrowing the list using multi-voting, the team has a good place to start! Note that an alternative to multi-voting is the Nominal Group Technique, or NGT. This technique can be used if the team wants to prioritize the ideas rather than just voting for them. For more information about multi-voting and to learn about the Nominal Group Technique, see the Read About It for this module.

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