Practical Management for Career Readiness

Effective Problem Solving and Decision Making
Module 3

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Consensus

A group decision-making process that seeks a resolution acceptable to all participants.

Why Use Consensus?

Everyone has an equal stake

It is collaborative

Fair

Reinforces "no rank in the room"

Power is distributed throughout the group

Human Factors in Project Management, Zachary Wong, 2007, pg 53-54

Consensus May Not Work

Not defined

Assume people understand how to do it

No specific method to reach it

Opposition is not voiced

No process to resolve stalemates

Group members falsely agree

Human Factors in Project Management, Zachary Wong, 2007, pg 53-54

Seven Steps to Consensus

1. Start with agreement

2. Clarify the sources of disagreement

3. Delineate the alternatives

4. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternatives

5. If appropriate, attempt to merge the alternatives

6. Attempt to converge on a solution

7. If you cannot reach consensus, you may decide to move on and come back to the issue later.

Three Reasons People Disagree

1. They have **not HEARD** or **UNDERSTOOD** each other

2. They hold different **VALUES** and **BELIEFS**

3. Disagreement is due to **EMOTION** or **PAST HISTORY**

When Emotions Run High

Take a break

Take the issue to a higher authority

Don't attempt to reach consensus to resolve the issue

Ethical Decisions

Acceptable cultural ethics

Involve the individuals who will be impacted by the decisions

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