VOTING WITH STICKY DOTS

This is a very simple way of voting to show the group's preferences and can be a quick and easy way of gathering viewpoints. Following an ideas generation session, it can be a helpful shortcut to selecting which ideas people are most interested in pursuing further.

Key benefits of voting with sticky dots

Very simple and easy, it gives a broad view of people's preferences.

Sticky dots can be used as part of a brainstorming or feedback session.

The technique can be tailored to your specific needs – for example, you might want to know people's favourite ideas, or a combination of their favourite and most disliked ideas.

Implementation

Prerequisite

• A number of ideas or actions put up either on a list or as post it notes around the room – this is usually the result of a brainstorming or feedback session.

• Issue a number of sticky dots in one or more colours, depending on how you wish to use the voting system.

How to use the sticky dots

1. Give each individual a number of votes, represented by coloured dots. You might give everyone three votes, meaning each would have three red dots. Or you might choose to give everyone a red dot for favourite, green for 2nd, blue for 3rd and black dot to signify disapproval. Anonymous voting is normally preferable, but if you were running a company-wide voting you might choose to give different interest groups different coloured dots – for example, blue to customer service, yellow to development, red to operations etc.

2. Make sure everyone has had a chance to read all the ideas and plan how they wish to vote. Where votes are of equal weighting (i.e. dots of the same colour), people can choose to vote for different ideas, or put all their votes on one idea if they feel very strongly about it.

3. Ask everyone to vote at once. This should avoid people being overly influenced by each other's votes.

4. Pull out the ideas with the largest number of votes and discuss how to create a shortlist of ideas. This is important because a minority idea might be supported very heavily by one or two people – often for very good or specialist reasons that the rest of the group should consider a second time.

Example of Voting with Sticky Dots in action
(Source - http://benchun.net/)

Potential pitfalls

- Despite all voting at once, people are influenced by the behaviour of others, and often pay more attention to an idea which already has a number of dots on it.

- Voting with Sticky Dots does not provide a deeply thought-out or reasoned analysis, it provides a good picture of group feelings and gut feel. This can be useful, but it should not be the sole input into making big decisions.

- If a later decision then goes against the group's voting, this can sometimes prove demotivating, unless the thinking is shared openly and honestly with those who took part in the initial voting.