



Decision Hack

#workhack

Decisions are something special in everyday company life. They are often liked by executives. But a person in a leadership role does not always know best what course of action to take. So sometimes it can be good to make a team decision. Unfortunately, very few teams and departments know about alternative decision-making mechanisms. Most of them are quite familiar with democratic decisions – which have the distinct disadvantage that in the worst case, almost half of the group is dissatisfied with the decision. That's why we developed a decision hack that encourages teams and departments to make decisions together, without falling into endless discussions.

It is possible that a need for a decision only arises from a discussion – i.e. it is not clear from the beginning that there is something to be decided. Long discussions with many arguments that go back and forth indicate a need for a decision, and should be moderated at an early stage.

The sequence

Before there is a decision-making process, opinions are usually exchanged. Such a discussion process is not always efficient: some repeat what others have said, some talk very long, others not at all, etc. To improve this discussion process, speaking times of one to three minutes per person can be agreed (please with timeboxing). Not everyone has to take this time. For very controversial or important topics, you can do two or three rounds in order to be able to respond to the arguments of the previous speaker.

Then the need for a decision is formulated and visualized. We recommend using advocates, at least at the beginning, who pay particular attention to the fact that the need for decision-making is clearly formulated in lengthy discussions – if possible, in writing on a flipchart, whiteboard or similar.

HELPS WITH

- deadlocked decision-making processes that cause dissatisfaction in the team.
- drawn out, lengthy decision-making processes.

TO BE CONSIDERED

- At first it might feel like this #workhack takes a long time to complete. In fact, the initial effort will ultimately bear a lot of fruit and lead to good jointly supported decisions. And by practicing you will get faster over time.
- If the discussion does not end, and/or the discussion becomes unclear, a time-out sign can be arranged.
- It is not a veto on what has been said, but is intended to structure the conversation more strongly in the next meeting.

TOOLS

- Flipchart, whiteboard, etc.
- if necessary, a “time timer” or stopwatch for timeboxing us even without a throne”, one of which is available throughout the company in each meeting room.
- Bell, horn, etc. if you want to use audible signals.

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When the suggestion(s) have been made, everyone present is asked if they have any questions, in order to clarify any misunderstandings. In an opinion-forming discussion, reactions, opinions and feelings about the proposals are expressed. If necessary, there is a final round of election campaigning in a clockwise direction, everyone can speak one after the other without being interrupted.

Afterwards, each team member signals their level of agreement with the solution by showing their hands.



5 fingers = approval
“I fully and completely agree.”



4 fingers = largely clarified
“I’ve heard enough – it’s ok.”



3 fingers = abstention
“I join the majority.”



2 fingers = open questions
“I can’t decide yet – I still need information about ...”



1 fingers = veto
“I have a serious objection.
We can only make the decision when ...”

A veto is intended to prevent serious and possibly existential damage to the organization or the team. The blocking member is obliged to explain and justify their objection. The blocking member is obliged to help remove their objection, i.e. to develop suggestions and ideas as to how the objection can be minimized or lifted.