

Guidelines Teams Can Use in Achieving Consensus

- 1. Use a discussion leader to ensure all points of view are heard.**
- 2. Avoid arguing for your own position.**
Present it as lucidly and logically as possible, but listen to the other members' reactions and consider them carefully before you press your point.
- 3. Inquire of others**
See that you understand what they are saying. Ask for information, clarification and explanation.
- 4. Look for points of similarity.**
Most groups have more agreement than they realize.
- 5. Do not assume that someone must win and someone must lose.**
When discussion reaches a stalemate, examine the interests behind people's positions. Look for the next alternative for all parties.
- 6. When there are differences, look for good points in both positions.**
See if the two positions (or more) can be combined to take advantage of all. A new position might include ideas of each and might yield totally new ideas.
- 7. Do not change your mind simply to avoid conflict.**
When agreement seems to come too quickly and easily, be suspicious. Explore the reasons and be sure everyone accepts the solution for basically similar or complementary reasons. Yield only to positions that have objective and logically sound foundations.
- 8. Differences of opinion are natural and expected.**
Seek them out and try to involve everyone in the decision process. Disagreements can help the group's decision because with a range of information and opinions, there is a greater chance that the group will hit upon more adequate solutions.