

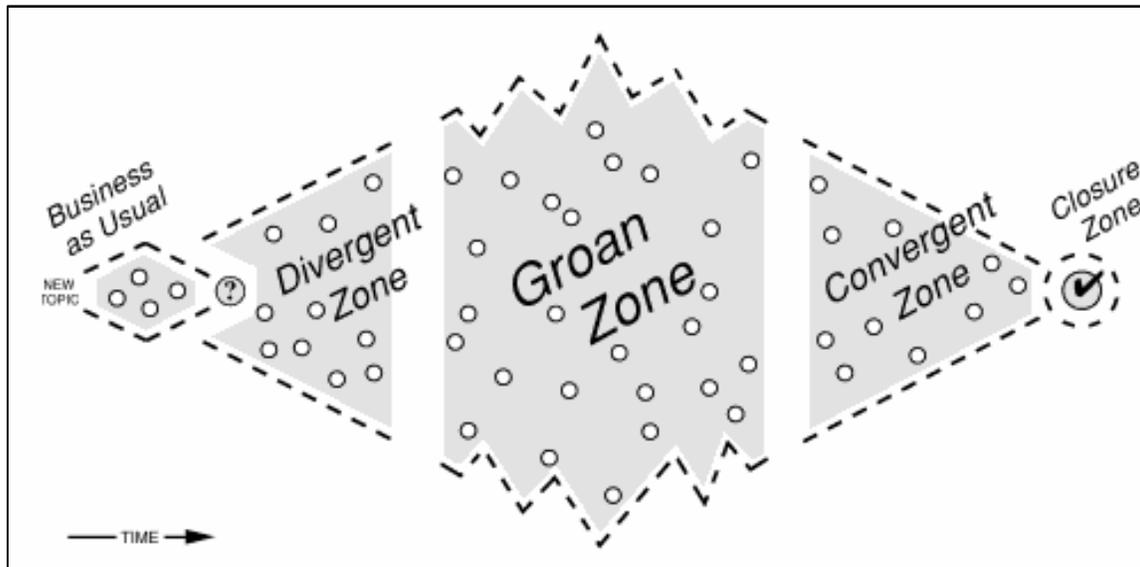
10 Tips for Making Decisions in the Workplace

by Valerie Uccellani

Through our years of teaching *SURE-Fire Meetings*, we've discovered how valuable it is for organizations to have a thoughtful approach to making decisions. Here are ten tips:

1. **Get perspective on how important and urgent a decision it is.** Most of us live in a rushed work world. Every decision has got to get made as soon as possible. Really? Step away and check out how important, and how urgent, a decision really is.
2. **Consider a range of possible decision-making options.** Any of the following options are perfectly valid, depending on the nature of the decision and people involved. For example: single-person decides, subgroup decides, vote is used, consensus is sought.
3. **When seeking consensus, define what you mean up front.** For example, you might continue to explore and debate until everyone is fully supportive of the final decision, regardless of the time spent on the process. Or, you might seek consensus for a defined period of time after which another decision-making option gets used.
4. **Get clear on the current situation that calls for a decision.** For example, if you're going to decide on a new client survey form, make sure everyone involved is clear about the current form, how its been used, the challenges with it, etc.
5. **Include the right people in the process.** It's a problem when the only people charged with making a decision are doing so for political reason, or by default. Think through who would be the best people to involve in the decision.
6. **Explain whether people have consultative or decisive voice.** When you get people involved, let them know if you want them to be part of the final decision (decisive voice), or if you are inviting their consultative voice (i.e. their opinion, their suggestions, their perspective).
7. **Make all the data available and know that's never all of it.** Get all the data at hand to help inform a decision. If you're stuck, you need more. And, remember data includes people's fears, wishes, sense of security etc. It is all data and all plays into a decision.
8. **Estimate when a decision will be made and let people know that in advance.** If a decision gets delayed for whatever reason, give people an update. When the decision is made, make sure everyone knows.

9. **Expect and embrace struggle.** Sam Kaner offers a great model for participatory decision-making, recognizing the inevitable “groan zone” of the process. We prefer to call it the “growth” zone but, either way, it ain’t easy but it is valuable.



10. **Check out some great resources** on the topic including the Heath brothers’ book *Decisive: How to Make Better Choices in Life and Work*, 2013.