

## Consensus Decision-Making: Dot-mocracy

by Jeanette Romkema

Often when you are faced with a number of good ideas in a meeting, it is impossible or even undesirable to choose just one from a list of brainstormed options. Multi-voting is one way to poll the support that group members have for multiple options. To facilitate it, do the following:



1. List the various choices on separate wall charts.
2. Ask people to express their relative preferences by placing stickers or dots (hence “Dot-mocracy”) next to their preferred choices. Each person can choose to put all of their votes on one option or spread their votes over several options.
3. Tally the number of dots that each option received to get a sense of the group’s combined preferences.

Multi-voting is good for taking a “quick read” of where the group is, but take care to provide enough time for discussion in situations where understanding differences of opinion is important. Two further cautions:

- *Pay careful attention to how many votes each person gets.* Generally, the number of votes per person can be calculated by dividing the number of choices by 3 ( $n/3$ ).
- *Be careful not to assume that the “winning” option is automatically the group’s preference* since the difference between two competing options may not be statistically significant. For example, if Option A received 39 votes, and Option B received 37, for all intents and purposes, it is a tie and the group would do well to acknowledge that choosing one over the other is really only meeting the preference of about half of the group.

### Where/when may this tool be helpful?

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