

## Three Types of Voices in a Meeting

Voices of Meeting Members	Preparation Tips
<p><b>RESPONSIVE VOICE</b></p> <p>When information is presented at meetings, we want people to do something with it whether we are explicit about that or not. For example, if you share your team’s plans with another team, you may want them to look for synergies or potential conflicts. Plan ways for people to respond to information they receive. It may be in an open dialogue or in the form of a silent opportunity to think through any implications of what they just heard.</p>	<p>For “Responsive” voice, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Why is it important that they get this particular information now?</i></li> <li>• <i>What kind of response might they have?</i></li> <li>• <i>What will they need to do with this information, and what will help them do it?</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>CONSULTATIVE VOICE</b></p> <p>At times, we want more than a simple response to an issue – we actually welcome suggestions. People have a consultative voice when they are invited to influence or modify the outcome of a decision, but not to have the final say on it. As facilitator, clarify in advance who will be asked for suggestions and how the decision will be made. Prepare terrain by making this clear to the group early on.</p>	<p>For “Consultative” voice, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How can we make sure people leave satisfied and confident about how decisions will be made?</i></li> <li>• <i>How can we avoid people taking on decisive voice inappropriately?</i></li> <li>• <i>Could members have some decisive voice around some aspect of this issue? If so, how?</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>DECISIVE VOICE</b></p> <p>Sometimes meeting members have the opportunity to make some or all decisions around an issue collectively. It is extremely helpful for all the attendees of the meeting to understand what their level of decision-making will be for each issue. Work with planners so that the objectives reflect the level of decision-making. Make sure that people have the right information (relevant &amp; complete) to make a decision, and that they do it at the right time (no rush but with immediacy).</p>	<p>For “Decisive” voice, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What method(s) should we use to arrive at the decision?</i></li> <li>• <i>What time will be given at the meeting for people to plan the implementation of the decision?</i></li> <li>• <i>If no, how/when will this happen?</i></li> </ul>