

## CONSENSUS

*(Definition and Guidelines)*

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### CONSENSUS: DEFINITION

#### What It Is Not

- Is not agreement by vote, coin flip, or bargaining
- Is not a fast procedure
- Is not arguing for your ranking or changing your mind to avoid conflict
- Is not a win/lose

#### What It Is

- Is agreement by discussions, with everyone's views taken into account
- Is slow and time-consuming
- Is listening, responding, being open and seeking out differences
- Is a new way of thinking

**The final end product is  
potentially more complete  
than individual knowledge**

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### GUIDELINES FOR CONSENSUS

1. Avoid arguing for your own judgment. Approach the task on the basis of logic, and be willing to change your mind if other group members have persuasive reasons for change.
2. Avoid changing your mind only in order to reach agreement and avoid conflict. Support only answers with which you are able to agree somewhat, at least.
3. Avoid techniques such as majority vote, averaging, or trading in reaching a decision.
4. Understand that the differences in opinion are helpful rather than a hindrance in decisionmaking. From discussion of the differences will arise new and better ideas for solving a common problem.