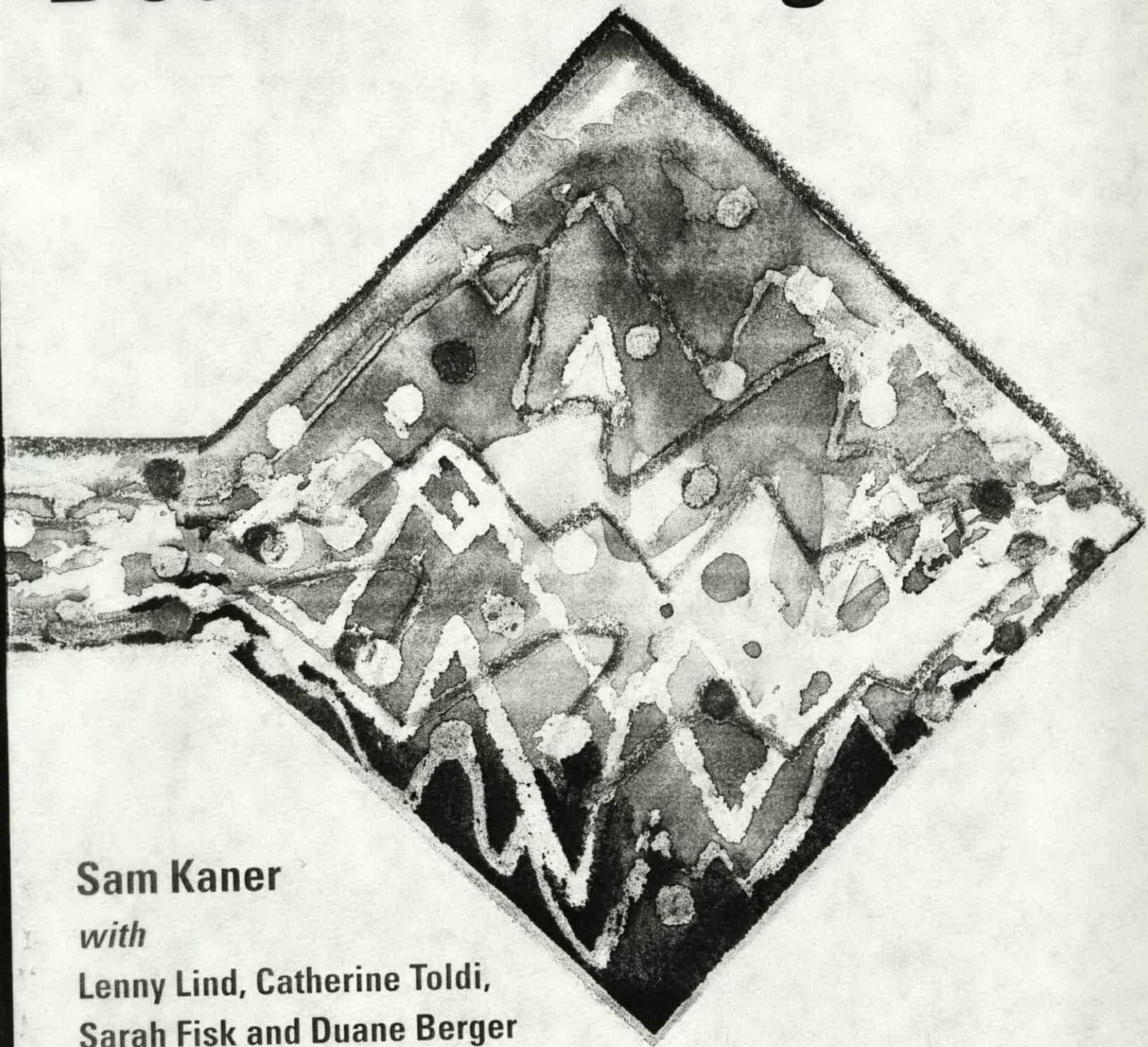


Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making



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with

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Foreword by Michael Doyle

INTRODUCTION TO THE ROLE OF FACILITATOR

THE EXPERTISE THAT SUPPORTS
A GROUP TO DO ITS BEST THINKING

- ◆ **When is a Facilitator Needed?**
- ◆ **First Function:**
Encourage Full Participation
- ◆ **Second Function:**
Promote Mutual Understanding
- ◆ **Third Function:**
Foster Inclusive Solutions
- ◆ **Fourth Function:**
Teach New Thinking Skills

THE ROLE OF FACILITATOR

WHAT IS A FACILITATOR AND WHY HAVE ONE?

The facilitator's job is to *support everyone to do their best thinking*. To do this, the facilitator encourages full participation, promotes mutual understanding and cultivates shared responsibility. By supporting everyone to do their best thinking, a facilitator enables group members to search for inclusive solutions and build sustainable agreements.

How much value does this have to a group? The answer depends on the group's goals. Suppose a group holds meetings specifically for the purpose of trading information through announcements and reports. Do the members of that group need much help to do their best thinking? Not really. Likewise, suppose another group has monthly business-as-usual meetings to make routine decisions about standard problems, like task assignments or scheduling. Those kinds of issues could be handled for years without any facilitation whatsoever.

But what about more difficult challenges? For example, suppose a group's goal is to reduce violence on a high school campus. The participants are parents, teachers, administrators, church leaders and union officials. This group will quickly find out how difficult it is to conduct a sustained, thoughtful discussion. Despite a common goal, their frames of reference are very different. What seems to a parent like an obvious solution may seem simple-minded to an administrator. What seems reasonable to an administrator may seem cowardly to a teacher. What seems responsible to a teacher may place too many demands on a parent. What is the chance that this group will survive the Groan Zone?

Groups face difficult challenges all the time. Long-term planning is hard for an organization to do well. So is restructuring or reengineering. Here are some other tough issues groups face: clarifying roles and responsibilities for projects that have not been done before, resolving high-stakes conflicts or introducing new technology into a workplace. In situations like these, a group is likely to make wiser, more lasting decisions if they join forces with someone who knows how to support them to do their best thinking.

Most groups *do not know how* to solve tough problems on their own. They do not know how to build a shared framework of understanding – they seldom even recognize its significance. They dread conflict and discomfort and they try hard to avoid it. Yet, by avoiding the struggle to integrate one another's perspectives, the members of such a group greatly diminish their own potential to be effective. They *need* a facilitator.

THE ROLE OF FACILITATOR

FIRST
FUNCTION

THE FACILITATOR ENCOURAGES FULL PARTICIPATION

A Fundamental Problem: Self-Censorship

Inherent in group decision-making is the basic problem that people don't say what they are really thinking. It's hard to take risks, and it's particularly hard to do so when the group's response is likely to be hostile or dismissive. Yet in so many groups, the norms are oppressive. Consider these comments:

- "Haven't we already covered that point?"
- "Let's keep it simple, please."
- "Hurry up – we're running out of time."
- "What does *that* have to do with anything?"
- "Impossible. Won't work. No way."

Statements like these are injunctions against thinking out loud in a group. They discourage people from saying what they're thinking. The message is: if you want to speak, be simple and polished, and be able to say something familiar enough or entertaining enough for the group to accept.

The injunctions against thinking in public run like an underground stream below the surface of a group's discussion. Without realizing it, most people constantly edit their thinking before they speak. Who wants his/her ideas criticised before they are fully formed? Who wants to be told, "We've already answered that question." Who wants to make an effort to express a complex thought while others in the room are doodling or whispering? This type of treatment leaves many people feeling embarrassed or inadequate. *To protect themselves, people censor themselves.*

The Facilitator's Contribution

Imagine now that someone in the group understands this inherent difficulty, and that s/he has taken responsibility for helping people overcome it. Imagine that this person has the skills and the temperament to draw people out and help everyone feel heard. Imagine s/he knows how to make room for quiet members; how to reduce the incidence of premature criticism; how to support everyone to keep thinking instead of shutting down. If such a person is actually permitted to perform this role in a group, the quality of the group's participation will vastly improve.

THE ROLE OF FACILITATOR

**SECOND
FUNCTION**

THE FACILITATOR PROMOTES MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

A Fundamental Problem: Fixed Positions

A group cannot do its best thinking if the members don't understand one another. But most people find it quite difficult to detach from their fixed positions. Instead, they get caught up in amplifying and defending their own perspectives.

Here's an example. A group of friends began exploring the possibility of forming a new business together. When the topic of money came up, biases emerged. One person wanted the profits divided equally. Another thought everyone should be paid on the basis of how much revenue they would generate. A third person believed the two visionaries should be paid more, to make sure they would not leave. And so on. None of them could change their minds easily. Nor would it have been realistic to expect them to do so – their opinions had been forming and developing for years.

And it gets worse! When people try to discuss their differences, they often misunderstand one another. Each person's life experiences are so individual, so singular; everyone has remarkably different views of the world. What people expect, what they assume, how they use language and how they behave – all these are likely sources of mutual misunderstanding. What's more, when people attempt to clear up a misunderstanding, they usually want their *own* ideas understood *first*. They may not say so directly, but their behavior indicates, "I can't really focus on what you are saying until I feel that you have understood *my* point of view." This easily becomes a vicious cycle. No wonder it's hard for people to let go of fixed positions!

The Facilitator's Contribution

A facilitator helps the group realize that sustainable agreements are built on a foundation of mutual understanding. S/he helps members see that thinking from each other's points of view is invaluable.

Moreover, the facilitator accepts the *inevitability of misunderstanding*. S/he recognizes that misunderstandings are stressful for everyone involved. The facilitator knows that people in distress need support; they need to be treated respectfully. S/he knows it is essential to stay impartial, to honor all points of view and to keep listening, so that each and every group member has confidence that *someone* understands them.

THE ROLE OF FACILITATOR

THIRD
FUNCTION

THE FACILITATOR FOSTERS INCLUSIVE SOLUTIONS

A Fundamental Problem: The Win/Lose Mentality

It's hard for most people to imagine that stakeholders with apparently irreconcilable differences might actually reach an agreement that benefits all parties. Most people are entrenched in a conventional mindset for solving problems and resolving conflicts – namely: "It's either my way or your way." As a result, most problem-solving discussions degenerate into critiques, rationalizations and sales jobs, as participants remain attached to their fixed positions and work to defend their own interests.

The Facilitator's Contribution

An experienced facilitator knows how to help a group search for innovative ideas that incorporate everyone's points of view. This can be a challenging task – the facilitator is often the only person in the room who has even considered the possibility that inclusive alternatives may exist.

To accomplish this goal, a facilitator draws from the knowledge s/he has acquired by studying the theory and practice of collaborative problem solving. Thus s/he knows the steps it takes to build sustainable agreements.

- S/he knows how to help groups break free from restrictive business-as-usual discussions and engage in divergent thinking (see chapter 13).
- S/he can help a group survive the Groan Zone as the members struggle to build a shared framework of understanding (see chapter 14).
- S/he knows how to help a group formulate creative proposals that reflect the weaving-together of several perspectives (see chapter 15).
- S/he knows how to bring agreements to closure (see chapters 16 – 17).

In short, s/he understands the mechanics of building sustainable agreements.

When a facilitator introduces a group to the values and methods that foster inclusive solutions, the impact is profound. Many people scoff at the very suggestion that a group can find meaningful solutions to difficult problems. As they discover the validity of this new way of thinking, they often become more hopeful about their group's potential effectiveness.

THE ROLE OF FACILITATOR

FOURTH
FUNCTION

THE FACILITATOR TEACHES NEW THINKING SKILLS

A Fundamental Problem: Inept Meeting Management

Why are most meetings run so poorly? Many people would answer, "It's my boss. S/he doesn't know what s/he is doing." But this is a misattribution – blaming an individual for what is actually a culture-wide problem. The fact is that *neither* leaders *nor* other members are skilled in collaborative methods. *Very few* people understand the mechanics of group decision-making well enough to organize a group into a productive team of thinkers.

The Facilitator's Contribution

A facilitator has both the opportunity and the responsibility to teach group members how to design and manage an effective decision-making process. Here are four sets of skills a group can learn from a competent facilitator:

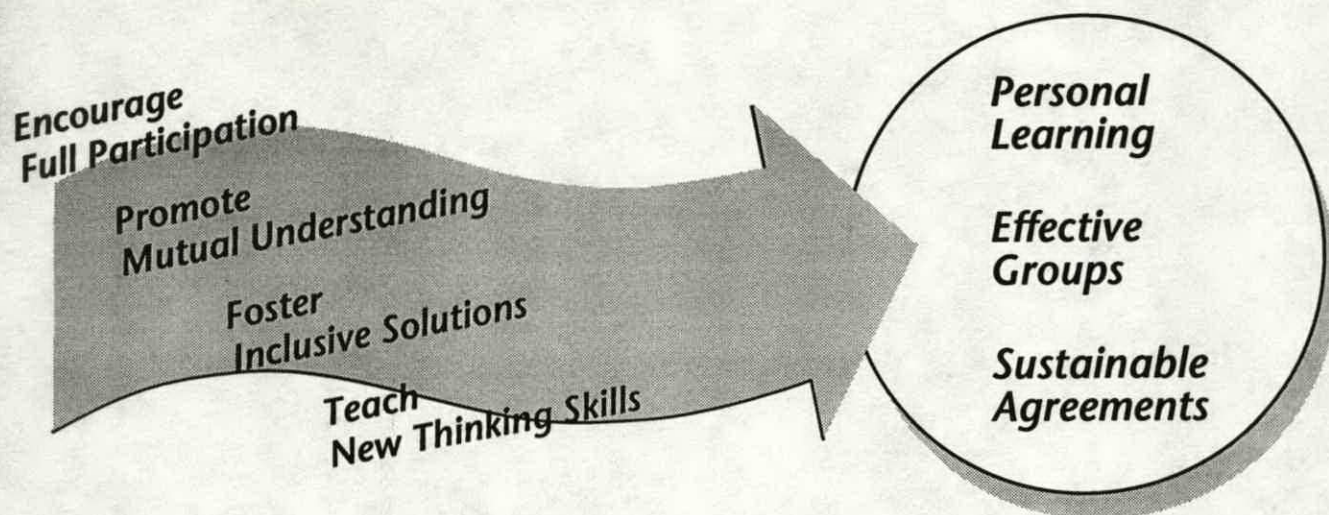
Principles for Finding Inclusive Solutions Most groups need help learning how to turn Either/Or problems into Both/And solutions. A facilitator can teach people to develop innovative ideas that take everyone's needs into account.

Well-Designed Procedures for Running Meetings Clear, explicit procedures are among the most important thinking skills a group can learn. For example, consider the impact of a badly designed agenda: how can a group be effective when people don't know what they're trying to accomplish? A facilitator can teach an array of procedures for running successful meetings.

Structured Thinking Activities Sometimes a group needs help focusing on the same thing at the same time. At those times, a structured thinking activity – *formal brainstorming*, for example – can be very helpful. Seasoned facilitators develop a repertoire of structured thinking activities that can be offered to groups at appropriate times.

Clear Language to Describe Group Dynamics When a facilitator teaches a model like the Diamond of Participatory Decision-Making, s/he provides group members with shared points of reference and shared language. This enables a group to step back from the *content* of their discussion and talk about their *process*, so they can improve the dynamics of their meeting.

FACILITATOR SKILLS FOR PARTICIPATORY DECISION MAKING



The facilitator's mission is to support everyone to do their best thinking. Participatory values support intelligent thinking – serious, creative thinking by engaged, committed individuals who can work together to make wise decisions.

For the first three chapters of this book, the focus has been on the *what* and the *why* of supporting groups to do their best thinking. The *how* has not been discussed. Beginning with the next chapter, the focus shifts to methods, skills and tools.

Facilitation skills can be grouped into two sets: those which are useful in virtually every stage of a thinking process, and those which are useful primarily at a specific stage. This distinction is the key to the organization of the rest of the book.

The skills that are useful *throughout* a process are presented in the next eight chapters, which comprise *Part Two: Facilitator Fundamentals*. The skills that are useful primarily in a specific stage are presented in the final eight chapters, *Part Three: Building Sustainable Agreements*.

PARTICIPATORY DECISION-MAKING CORE VALUES

FULL PARTICIPATION

In a participatory group, all members are encouraged to speak up and say what's on their minds. This strengthens a group in several ways. Members become more courageous in raising difficult issues. They learn how to share their "first-draft" ideas. And they become more adept at discovering and acknowledging the diversity of opinions and backgrounds inherent in their group.

MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

In order for a group to reach a sustainable agreement, the members need to understand and accept the legitimacy of one another's needs and goals. This basic sense of acceptance and understanding is what allows people to develop innovative ideas that incorporate everyone's point of view.

INCLUSIVE SOLUTIONS

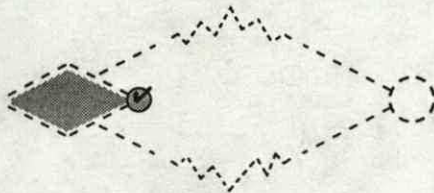
Inclusive solutions are wise solutions. Their wisdom emerges from the integration of everybody's perspectives and needs. These are solutions whose range and vision is expanded to take advantage of the truth held not only by the quick, the articulate, the most powerful and influential, but also of the truth held by the slower thinkers, the shy, the disenfranchised and the weak. As the Quakers say, "Everybody has a piece of the truth."

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

In participatory groups, members feel a strong sense of responsibility for creating and developing sustainable agreements. They recognize that they must be willing and able to implement the proposals they endorse, so they make every effort to give and receive input before final decisions are made. This contrasts sharply with the conventional assumption that everyone will be held accountable for the consequences of decisions made by a few key people.

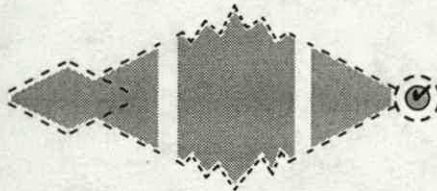
HOW PARTICIPATORY VALUES CAN AFFECT GROUP DECISION-MAKING

**FULL
PARTICIPATION**



FULL PARTICIPATION DURING A BUSINESS-AS-USUAL DISCUSSION

In a typical business-as-usual discussion, self-expression is highly constrained. People tend to keep risky opinions to themselves. The most highly-regarded comments are those which are the clearest, the smartest, the most well-polished. In business-as-usual discussions, thinking out loud is treated with impatience; people get annoyed if the speaker's remarks are vague or poorly stated. This induces self-censorship, and reduces the quantity and quality of participation overall. A few people end up doing almost all the talking – and in many groups, those few people just keep repeating themselves and repeating themselves.

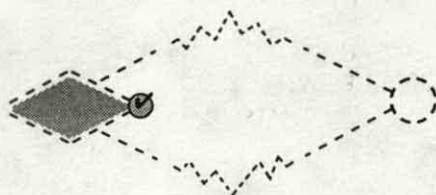


FULL PARTICIPATION DURING A PARTICIPATORY DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Participatory decision-making groups go through a business-as-usual phase, too. If familiar opinions lead to a workable solution, then the group can reach a decision quickly. But when a business-as-usual discussion does *not* produce a workable solution, a participatory group will open up the process and encourage more divergent thinking. What does this look like in action? It looks like people making off-the-wall suggestions that stimulate their peers to think new thoughts. It looks like people permitting themselves to state half-formed thoughts that express unconventional – but perhaps valuable – perspectives. It looks like people taking risks to surface controversial issues. And it also looks like a roomful of people encouraging each other to *do* all these things.

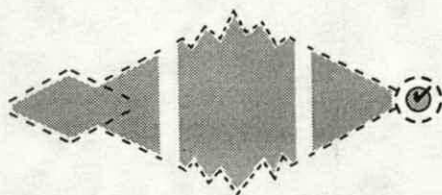
HOW PARTICIPATORY VALUES CAN AFFECT GROUP DECISION-MAKING

MUTUAL
UNDERSTANDING



MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING DURING A BUSINESS-AS-USUAL DISCUSSION

In a business-as-usual discussion, persuasion is much more common than mutual understanding. The views of the "other side" are dissected point by point for the purpose of refuting them. Little effort, if any, is put into discovering the deeper reasons people believe what they do. Even when it appears unlikely that persuasion will change anyone's mind, participants continue to press home their points – making it appear as though the pleasures of rhetoric were the true purpose of continuing the discussion. Most participants tend to stop listening to each other, except to prepare for a rebuttal.

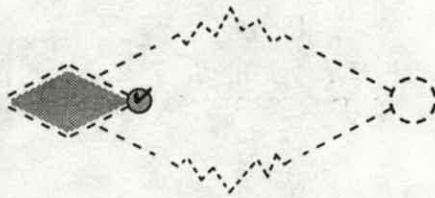


MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING DURING A PARTICIPATORY DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Building a shared framework of understanding means taking the time to understand everyone's perspective in order to find the best idea. To build that framework, participants spend time and effort questioning each other, getting to know one another, learning from each other. They put themselves in each other's shoes. The process is laced with intermittent discomfort: some periods are tense, some are stifling. But participants keep plugging away. Over time, many people gain insight into their own positions. They may discover that their own thinking is out-of-date or misinformed or driven by inaccurate stereotypes. And, by struggling to acquire such insights, members may discover something else about one another: that they truly do care about achieving a mutual goal.

HOW PARTICIPATORY VALUES CAN AFFECT GROUP DECISION-MAKING

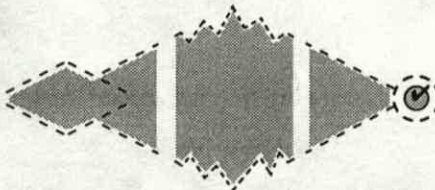
**INCLUSIVE
SOLUTIONS**



SOLUTIONS RESULTING FROM A BUSINESS-AS-USUAL DISCUSSION

Business-as-usual discussions seldom result in inclusive solutions. More commonly, people quickly form opinions and take sides. Everyone expects that one side will get what they want and the other side won't.

Disagreements, they assume, will be resolved by the person who has the most authority. Some groups settle their differences by majority vote, but the effect is just the same. In either case, the final decision often excludes the views, needs and goals of the minority.

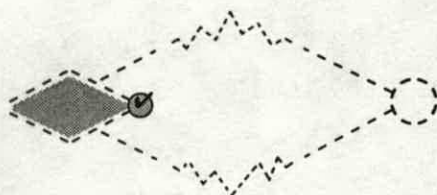


SOLUTIONS RESULTING FROM A PARTICIPATORY DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Inclusive solutions are not compromises; they work for everyone who holds a stake in the outcome. Typically, an inclusive solution involves the discovery of an entirely new option. For instance, an unexpected partnership might be forged between former competitors. Or a group may invent a nontraditional alternative to a procedure that had previously "always been done that way." Several real-life case examples of inclusive solutions are presented in chapter 15. Inclusive solutions are usually not obvious – they *emerge* in the course of the group's persistence. As participants learn more about each other's perspectives, they become progressively more able to integrate their own goals and needs with those of the other participants. This leads to innovative, original thinking.

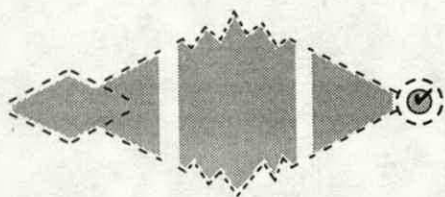
HOW PARTICIPATORY VALUES CAN AFFECT GROUP DECISION-MAKING

**SHARED
RESPONSIBILITY**



SHARED RESPONSIBILITY DURING A BUSINESS-AS-USUAL DISCUSSION

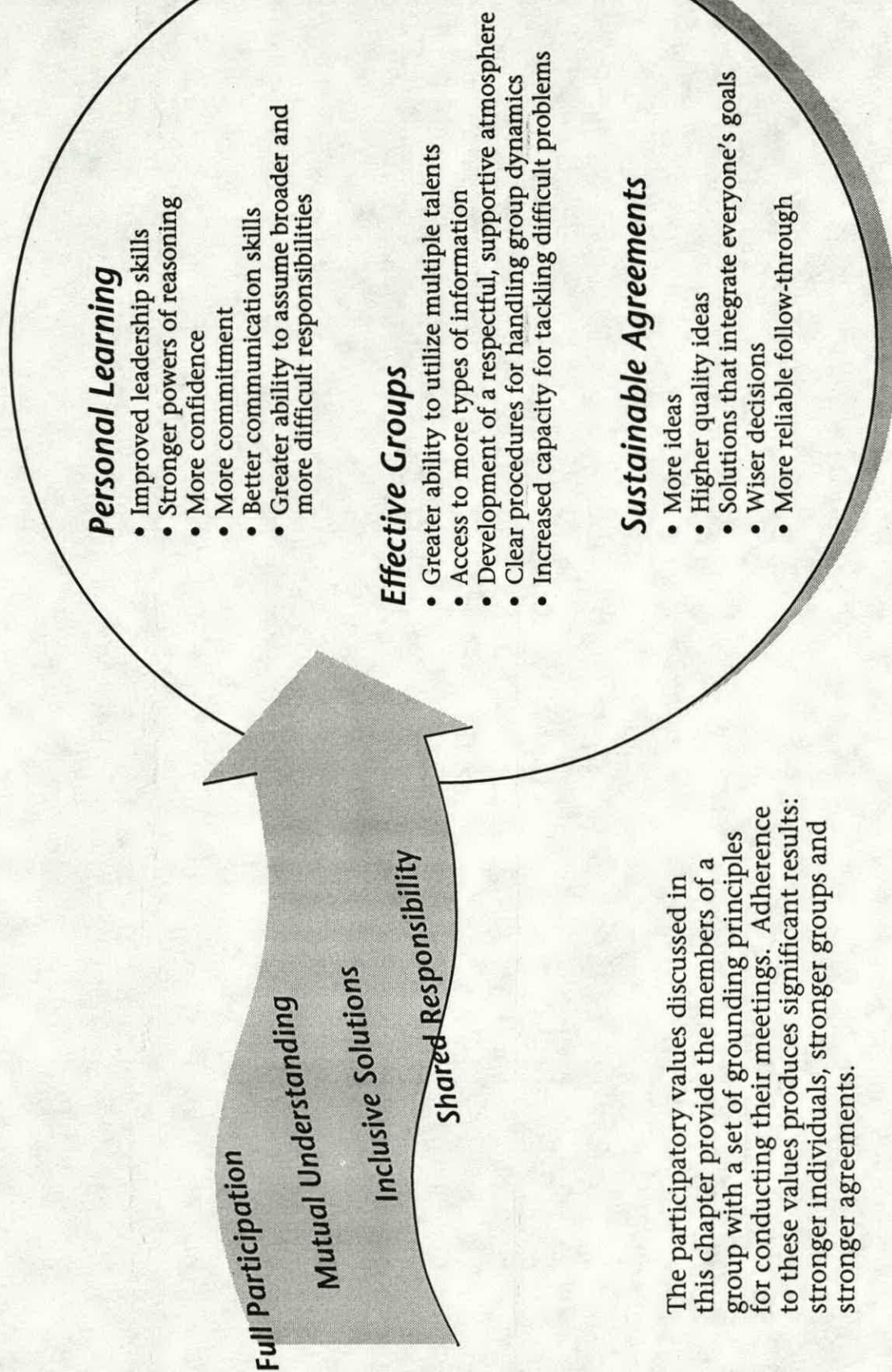
The operational value in a business-as-usual discussion is dependency on leadership, not shared responsibility. The person-in-charge is expected to run the meeting, monitor the progress of each topic, referee disputes, set ground rules, enforce time boundaries, and generally take full responsibility for all aspects of process management. To bring a discussion to closure, someone puts forward a proposal and says, "Is this okay with everyone?" or "Does anyone have any serious objections?" After a silence of about three seconds, the person-in-charge says, "Okay, it's decided." In this context, shared responsibility means being a (so-called) team-player. In other words, everyone is now expected to put aside their questions or doubts, and pull together to implement the decision.



SHARED RESPONSIBILITY DURING A PARTICIPATORY DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

In order for an agreement to be sustainable, it needs everyone's support. Understanding this principle leads everyone to take personal responsibility for making sure they are satisfied with the proposed course of action. Every member of the group, in other words, recognizes that s/he is an owner of the outcome. Thus, members voice objections even when doing so will delay the group from reaching a decision. Moreover, the commitment to share responsibility is evident throughout the process: in the design of the agenda, in the willingness to discuss and co-create the procedures they will follow and in the overall expectation that everyone will accept and take responsibility for making their meetings work.

THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATORY VALUES



The participatory values discussed in this chapter provide the members of a group with a set of grounding principles for conducting their meetings. Adherence to these values produces significant results: stronger individuals, stronger groups and stronger agreements.

CATEGORIZING IN THE REAL WORLD

INSIGHTS

THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Why is categorizing harder than people expect it to be? First of all, many people tend to assume that crucial terms mean the same thing to everyone. ("Why are we wasting time over the meaning of *Workshops*? Let's just use common sense.") But, in fact, people *don't* share common meanings for the terms they're using, and this causes group members to feel pulled in two opposing directions: should we slow down and make an effort to define our terms or would that just be a waste of precious time? This tension between the desire to clarify meaning and the desire to complete the task creates an uncomfortable undercurrent of ambiguity.

In addition, individuals vary greatly in the *number* of categories they use to organize their perceptions. Some people are detail-oriented. Their minds make a lot of distinctions between things, and as a result they tend to subdivide a list into many categories. Others are global thinkers; they make fewer distinctions because their minds operate at a more general, more abstract level of analysis. Accordingly, they tend to subdivide a list into fewer categories. Neither approach is right or wrong. But when people with both types of cognitive styles try to create categories together, they are destined to disagree on such issues as whether *Workshops* is a separate category from *Go Back to School*.

USING PREDEFINED CATEGORIES

In the case study, it would have been much easier for the group if they had used predefined categories to sort their list. For example, suppose the group sorted their items by *Cost*. Some items would be *Expensive*. Some would be *Mid-range*. And some would be *Cheap*. The sorting would have proceeded more smoothly and produced useful results. After identifying some inexpensive training opportunities and some expensive ones, the group would have been able to discuss next steps.

Sorting the list into predefined categories can usually be done quite adequately by two or three people. When done, they show their work to everyone else for revision. While the small group sorts the list, the large group can take a break. Or the large group could divide into teams that sort the same list into additional predefined categories. For example, one team could sort the list by *Desirability* while another team sorted by *Urgency*.

CATEGORIZING IN THE REAL WORLD

OPTIONS

CREATING CATEGORIES FROM SCRATCH

Creating categories together means having a philosophical discussion. This is both the value and the cost of creating categories from scratch. A philosophical discussion puts a group into the Groan Zone, where they will have to struggle to integrate one another's beliefs and definitions. The process is uncomfortable and frustrating, and people will resist it. Sometimes the result is worth the struggle; often it is not.

When people present and define their own categories, they are essentially presenting their own worldview. Sometimes this is worth doing – such as when group members have not yet discussed their values or goals. Consider, for example, a community planning group made up of teachers, parents and elected officials. The members of this type of group have diverse frames of reference. It may be well worth their time to use a discussion of categories as a way to develop mutual understanding. A similar example in a business setting would be a product-development group consisting of members from marketing, manufacturing, and research and development. In cases like these, the opportunity to define categories can prove very useful.

SUMMARY

Creating categories is a difficult task. It takes a lot of time and can produce a lot of frustration. It should be done when people want to gain a deeper understanding of one another's values and goals. *Sorting items into predefined categories* is a fairly simple task. It should be done whenever the primary reason for categorizing a list is to reduce the list to a mentally manageable number of items. A list of thirty or forty items can be sorted in roughly ten minutes by two or three people. The results can then be reviewed by the whole group and revised as needed.

Because the opportunity to categorize a list arises so frequently in meetings, facilitators must understand the differences between *creating categories* and *sorting*. Those who do can make a real contribution to the development of a group's thinking skills.

TWO METHODS OF CATEGORIZING

CREATING CATEGORIES FROM A LIST OF IDEAS

1. Each person, in turn, proposes his/her own set of categories. It is acceptable to propose one category or many, on each turn.
2. Everyone takes as many turns as they want. Combinations and variations are encouraged.
3. After all sets of categories have been listed, discuss them.
4. Sometimes the group's thinking converges easily into one set of categories. If so, the task is done. If not, be prepared for a lengthy discussion.

SORTING A LIST INTO PREDEFINED CATEGORIES

1. As a group, select one or more predefined categories. Example: "How urgent is each item – high, medium or low?" (See next page.)
2. Recruit two or three people to sort the list.
3. The sorters should review the list item by item, making sure to place every item in a category.
4. Tell the sorters that it is perfectly fine to place one item in more than one category – especially if they disagree about the "right" category.
5. When the list has been sorted, bring it back to the large group.

COMMON PREDEFINED CATEGORIES

CATEGORIES	SUBCATEGORIES			
URGENCY	High	Medium	Low	Unknown
TIME NEEDED	A lot	Some	Not much	Unknown
COST	Expensive	Mid-range	Cheap	Unknown
FEASIBILITY	Probably will work	Fifty-fifty chance	Probably won't work	Uncertain
DESIRABILITY	Highly desirable	Worth a try	Undesirable	Unknown
USEFULNESS	Highly useful	Useful	Not very useful	Unknown
NEXT STEPS	Collect more info	Talk to boss	Meet with someone	Analyze further

There is nothing sacred about these categories; they are simply useful in many situations. Some situations may call for a category that is not listed on this page. For example, at times it might be useful to sort a list by "likelihood of generating intense emotions." Everyone should feel free to create a category to fit the circumstances.

SELECTING HIGH PRIORITY ITEMS FROM A LONG LIST

METHODS

CAST FIVE STRAWS

1. Each member gets five straw votes. S/he can distribute these straw votes any way s/he wants.
2. It's okay to cast all five for the same item. It's also okay to cast straws for five different items.
3. Half-votes are permitted, but not encouraged.
4. The top five items become the group's high priority list.

GREATEST HITS

1. Divide the number of items on the brainstormed list by three.
2. Each person receives that number of choices to indicate his or her favorite items.
3. Everyone may distribute his or her choices any way s/he wants.
4. The top third of the list – i.e., the items chosen most often – becomes the group's list of greatest hits.

CHOOSE AS MANY AS YOU LIKE

1. Each person votes as many times as s/he wants.
2. Each person casts one vote for every item s/he wants the group to treat as a high priority.
3. All items that receive unanimous or nearly unanimous support become the group's high priority list. (Note: Most groups define near-unanimity as "unanimity minus one" or "unanimity minus two.")

SELECTING HIGH PRIORITY ITEMS FROM A LONG LIST

FORMATS

METHOD	HOW TO DO IT	MAJOR ADVANTAGE	MAJOR DRAWBACK
ITEM BY ITEM	The facilitator reads down the list one item at a time, noting how many people raise their hands for each item. Example: "Okay, how many people like item #3? How many like item #4?" and so on.	Reduces awareness of the preferences of influential members.	With lengthy lists of options, this is usually a tedious, draining experience.
PERSON BY PERSON	Each person takes a turn to state his/her preferences. Often a go-around is the simplest way to get this done.	Gives people permission to be assertive.	Those who go last have an unfair advantage – they can revise their preferences based on what others have said.
EVERYONE AT THE WALL	Everyone stands up, takes a colored marker, and puts dots beside his/her preferences.	People get out of their chair and move around. This often has a positive, energizing affect on the group's mood.	With short lists, this method is often overkill.
SECRET BALLOT	All items on the list are numbered. Participants indicate their preference by writing their chosen numbers privately on paper. Results are tabulated by two or more people.	Useful in highly controversial situations, especially when someone might make a different choice if his/her vote were going to be made public.	Reinforces the perception that it is not safe for people to reveal their preferences openly.

TEN COMMON TACTICS FOR MISHANDLING A LENGTHY LIST



- ☐ 1. Roll up the flipcharts and put them under your desk.
- ☐ 2. Take a break and never come back.
- ☐ 3. Say, "Let's categorize these quickly, then move on."
And then, two hours later . . .
- ☐ 4. Publish the list in the next newsletter, to show everyone
that your group is making progress.
- ☐ 5. Vaguely recall a similar list that was generated at a
meeting last year, then postpone further consideration of
the current list until the old one can be found. "After all,
we don't want to do the same work all over again."
- ☐ 6. Have someone go away and sort the list – then at the
next meeting forget to put that person on the agenda.
- ☐ 7. Give the flipcharts to the secretary to type up.
- ☐ 8. Assume that every item is now taking care of itself. Later,
complain bitterly about the problems that still exist.
"I thought we decided . . ."
- ☐ 9. Try to shorten the list by combining items, then argue
over the meaning of each new item.
- ☐ 10. Congratulate yourself on a very productive meeting.

GOOD AGENDA PLANNING TWO CRITICAL COMPONENTS

**Clarify
the desired
outcome for
each topic**

**Design a
process to
reach each
outcome**

TOPIC		OUTCOME
• _____	➔	• _____
• _____	➔	• _____
• _____	➔	• _____
• _____	➔	• _____

When discussion of a new topic begins, participants need to know what they are expected to achieve during the meeting.

OUTCOME		PROCESS
• _____	➔	• _____
• _____	➔	• _____
• _____	➔	• _____
• _____	➔	• _____

Many topics would be handled more effectively if the process were subdivided into two or three different participation formats.

TWO MINDSETS FOR SOLVING PROBLEMS

Why did the results of the department store staff meeting turn out so poorly, compared to the results of the property tax task force? Part of the answer to this question is obvious: *they organized themselves differently*. The people at the department store held a single meeting: business as usual. They gave themselves a chance to air familiar opinions, then they brought the issue to closure. In contrast, the members of the property tax task force designed a participatory process that allowed their problem solving process to unfold in stages. They, too, began by airing familiar opinions – but they created a structure that supported people to move beyond their starting positions and build a shared framework of understanding.

But this tells us *what* they did, not *why* they did it. Why, in other words, did the two groups organize themselves so differently? The answer is that each group was operating from a different *mindset* for solving problems: one group had an *Either/Or Mindset*; the other group had a *Both/And Mindset*.

From the perspective of an *Either/Or Mindset*, solving a problem is a matter of making a choice among competing alternatives. Either you choose option "A" or you choose option "B" – someone wins and someone loses, and that's how it goes. From the perspective of a *Both/And Mindset*, solving a problem is a matter of finding an inclusive solution – one that encompasses everyone's point of view. Rather than choosing between options "A" and "B," you search for a brand new alternative that is satisfactory to everyone.

Groups that operate from an *Either/Or Mindset* are in a hurry. They want to get the decision over with. Naturally – what's the point of going over and over the same territory? Once the range of options has been clarified, further discussion becomes irrelevant. But groups that operate from a *Both/And Mindset* place a higher value on effectiveness than on expedience. If the original range of options can provide the group with a workable solution, then great! Decisions that can be made quickly *should* be made quickly. But if the original range of options does not provide a workable solution, then more work lies ahead. The goal in such groups is not merely to reach a decision, but to reach a *sustainable agreement* – that is, to find a solution that works.

Several characteristics of these two mindsets are contrasted on the next page.

TWO MINDSETS FOR SOLVING PROBLEMS

	EITHER / OR	BOTH / AND
VALUE SYSTEM	Competitive	Collaborative
TYPE OF OUTCOME EXPECTED	Win / Lose	Win / Win
ATTITUDE TOWARD "WINNING"	To the victor goes the spoils.	Your success is my success.
ATTITUDE TOWARD "LOSING"	Someone has to lose.	If someone loses everyone loses.
ATTITUDE TOWARD MINORITY OPINIONS	Get with the program.	Everyone has a piece of the truth.
WHY EXPLORE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COMPETING POSITIONS?	To search for bargaining chips, in preparation for horsetrading and compromise.	To build a shared framework of understanding, in preparation for mutual creative thinking.
ESSENTIAL MENTAL ACTIVITY	Analyze: break wholes into parts	Synthesize: integrate parts into wholes
HOW LONG IT TAKES	It's usually faster in the short run.	It's usually faster in the long run.
WHEN TO USE IT	When expedience is more important than durability, <i>Either/Or thinking</i> will usually produce satisfactory results.	When all parties have the power to block any decision, and the issue is for high stakes, <i>Both/And thinking</i> is usually the only hope for resolution.
UNDERLYING PHILOSOPHY	Survival of the fittest	Interdependence of all things



Opportunity Analysis

When you are presented with many opportunities, it can be difficult to decide what to do first. The Opportunity Analysis lets you quickly evaluate a long list of options against your purpose and against the resources available.

Upon completion, you will know what you are able to accomplish and what will provide the greatest benefit to your objective. This tool can be applied by an individual or by a group. When working in groups, remember to make decisions by consensus.

Application

- Write your Purpose Statement at the top.
- List all of your opportunities down the left.
- Create two columns. The first for importance and the second for your ability to complete or doability.
- Rank the importance of each opportunity as **high, medium, or low**, by asking,
 - How important is this to achieving our purpose?
- Next rank the doability of each opportunity as **high, medium, or low**, by asking these questions,
 - Is this item within our ability to accomplish?
 - Is it in our span of control?
 - Do we have the resources?

- As an option you may add another column and also rank the effort required to complete the opportunity as **high, medium, or low**.

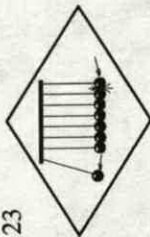
Purpose: Satisfy the Customer

OPPORTUNITY	Importance			Doability		
	H	M	L	H	M	L
Provide timely order status	X					X
Meet request date	X				X	
Match delivery and order documentation	X			X		
Update and reprint information			X			X
Ship correct order	X			X		
Ship complete order		X			X	
Comedy pack products		X			X	

Do these first

Hints

Those items of high importance and high doability, should be done first. Those items with a low doability rating should be deferred until last.



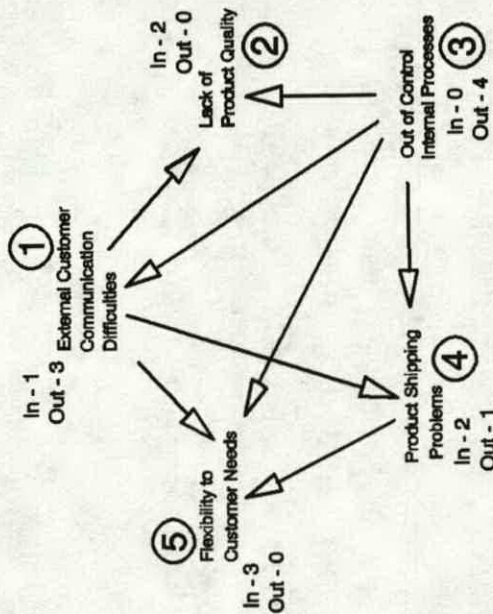
Cause & Effect Map

This tool examines cause and effect relationships using an intuitive or right brain methodology. It can be used with any group of options, ideas, or headers to identify relationships, key drivers and bottlenecks.

Application

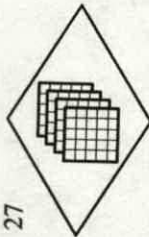
- Write the options in a circle. Number them for clarity.
- Compare each option once with each of the other options as follows. This is a pairwise comparison.
 - Begin with the first option,
 - Ask, "Is there a cause and effect relationship between option 1 and option 2."
 - If the answer is yes, draw a line with an arrow pointing to the effect and continue.
 - If the answer is no compare option 1 with option 3 by asking, "Is there a relationship between option 1 and option 3."
- Continue until you have compared option 1 just once with each of the other options.
- Now compare option 2 to each of the other options except those which have already been done.
- Continue in this manner until every option has been compared just once with every other option.

- Analyze the map by counting all of the arrows pointing into and out of each option.
- The options with the most outbound arrows are the key drivers.
- The options with the most incoming arrows are the key bottlenecks.



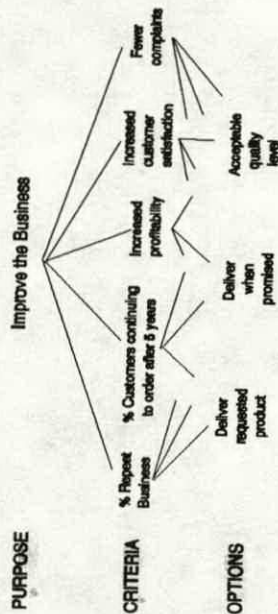
Hints

Always move in a consistent pattern so each relationship gets examined just once. Each time around becomes faster since there is one less pair to compare. Be consistent or the results will be muddy. Focus only on cause and effect and no other relationship.



Priority Matrix

This tool provides a framework for setting priorities in complex situations with many factors. It integrates feelings, intuition, and logic over multiple levels of decision making. You must know your purpose, potential criteria for success, and options for accomplishing the purpose.



Then you can use the Priority Matrix to determine which options most contribute to achieving the purpose.

Application

- Construct a **criteria matrix** as shown on page 28.
- List your potential success criteria on the left.
- Duplicate the list in exact order across the top.
- Blank out the intersecting boxes of like items.

CRITERIA MATRIX
Which is more important to "improve the Business?"

	% Repeat Business	% Customers continuing to order after 5 years	Increased profitability	Increased customer satisfaction	Fewer complaints	Row Total	Row Total / TOTAL x 100 = %
% Repeat Business	1	1	1	1/5	5	7.2	14%
% Customers continuing to order after 5 years	1	1	1/5	1/5	5	6.4	12%
Increased profitability	1	5	1	1	10	17	33%
Increased customer satisfaction	5	5	1	1	10	21	40%
Fewer complaints	1/5	1/5	1/10	1/10	1	.6	01%
TOTAL						52.2	

- Compare each criteria against each of the other criteria one at a time.
- For each pairwise comparison ask, "Which is more important to our purpose?"
- Write your answer in the each box using this scale:
 - 1/10 much less important
 - 1/5 less important
 - 1 equally important
 - 5 more important
 - 10 much more important
- Now total all of the horizontal rows to get a row total.
- Add the row totals to get a **total**.
- Normalize each row by dividing the **row total** by the **total** and multiplying by 100. You will use these percentages later as you continue your analysis.

OPTION MATRIX

	Deliver when promised	Deliver requested product	Acceptable quality level	Row Total	Row Total x 100 = %
Increased Customer Satisfaction	1	1	1	3	33%
Deliver when promised	1	1	1	3	33%
Deliver requested product	1	1	1	3	33%
Acceptable quality level	1	1	1	3	33%
TOTAL				9.2	

- Construct an **option matrix** like the one above and place the options along the left and across the top.
- Evaluate each option against the highest criteria just as you did before, and enter the score. Ask, "Which option is more important to the criteria?"
- Total and normalize as you did before.
- Now make more **option matrices** to evaluate the options against the remaining key criteria.

OPTION MATRIX

	Deliver when promised	Deliver requested product	Acceptable quality level	Row Total	Row Total x 100 = %
Increased Customer Satisfaction	1	1	1	3	33%
Deliver when promised	1	1	1	3	33%
Deliver requested product	1	1	1	3	33%
Acceptable quality level	1	1	1	3	33%
TOTAL				12.4	

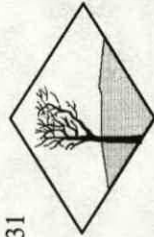
COMPILE MATRIX

	Deliver when promised	Deliver requested product	Acceptable quality level	Row Total	Row Total x 100 = %
Increased Customer Satisfaction	1	1	1	3	33%
Deliver when promised	1	1	1	3	33%
Deliver requested product	1	1	1	3	33%
Acceptable quality level	1	1	1	3	33%
TOTAL				12.4	

- Finally, construct a **compilation matrix**.
- All options are listed on the left side of the matrix.
- All considered criteria are listed on the top.
- The percentages from each option matrix are entered in the top of the proper intersecting boxes.
- The percentages from each criteria are entered into the top boxes.
- The option value is multiplied by the criteria value and the total is entered into the bottom of the box.
- Now total the horizontal row values.
- Use these total values to prioritize the options against all the considered criteria.

Hints

This process initially appears complex, but don't let it scare you. It has a great deal of power, and will get easier with practice. Don't vote. Come to a consensus on each item. Fill in the horizontal and vertical numbers at the same time since they are reciprocals. Don't change your thought processes in the middle of a matrix; always focus on the criteria.



Tree Diagram

The Tree Diagram enables you or your group to graphically view the full range of details required to accomplish your objective. A Tree Diagram shows tasks broken down by complexity. Tasks with the same level of complexity are grouped together. Tasks at every level are linked back to the overall objective. The Tree can provide you with a checklist of things to do.

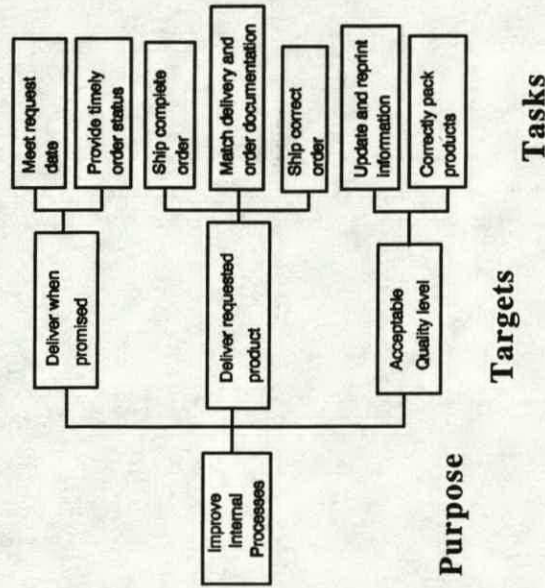
Application

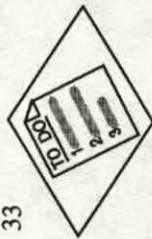
- Select an purpose to be accomplished.
- Generate all of the high level things that must be done to accomplish the purpose. These are targets.
- Consider Mind Mapping and/or Brainstorming to generate targets.
- Card Sort headers can be a good source of targets.
- Use cards or Post-it's® to capture targets.
- When you have identified all targets, put them to the right of the purpose and draw connecting lines.
- For each target, generate subordinate tasks and put them on the Tree.
- Only draw the connecting lines when each level of complexity is completed.
- Continue this process until you have defined tasks which are implementable.

- The number of levels of task complexity may vary between different branches of your Tree.

Hints

Do not let the simplicity of the Tree fool you. It is not as easy as it first appears. The structure of building the Tree will help break existing paradigms. The graphic nature of the result will expand understanding of the tasks required to accomplish your purpose.





S.M.A.R.T. Plan

This matrix uses information at the task or Specific level to begin to develop a working plan. Tasks can be generated for this tool or taken from another such as the lowest level of the Tree Diagram. It provides the structure to define task details such as Measurables, Assignments, Resources, Times, and Predecessors.

Application

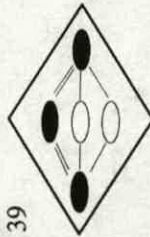
- List and number each **Specific**. The numbering will be used later when you define task predecessors.
- Define the **Measure** of completion for each specific. The measure should be a clearly defined date, quantity, level of performance or other quantitative value. There must be no doubt when the measure has been reached.
- **Assign** responsibility for completion of each specific. To assure accountability this should be one individual, but never more than a single group.
- Define the **Resources** required for each specific. Consider people, tools, time, money and places.
- Enter the **Time** when each specific will be completed. Generally a date is sufficient, but if a time of day is critical it should be shown here.
- Identify by number the **Predecessor(s)** for each specific.

Improve Internal Processes

Specific	Measurable	Assignment	Resource	Time	Predecessor
1 Meet request date					
2 Provide timely order status					
3 Ship complete order					
4 Match delivery and order documentation	100% doc match	Jim B.	Group, Computer	6 months	none
5 Ship correct order					
6 Update, reprint information					
7 Correctly pack products	zero defects	Jack D.	Materials, computer	9 months	Item 4

Hints

- The more focused each task is, the easier it is to fill in the rest of the matrix.
- **Do not** assign specifics to individuals without getting their buy-in. At best you will get a surprised and unprepared participant. In the worst case you may actually sabotage the project.
- If working in a group, insure consensus. It will make the implementation move faster and easier.



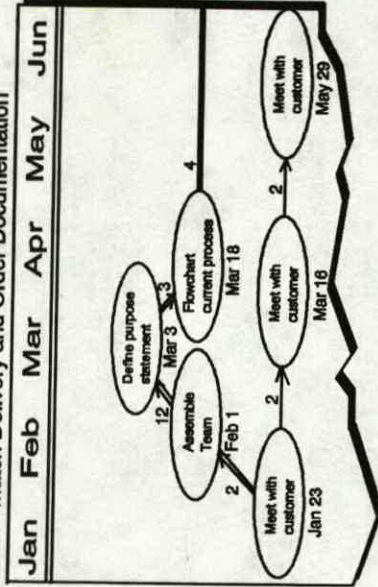
PERT Chart

The Program Evaluation and Review Technique is a well established planning tool for complex, multi-phase projects. It is based on a backwards planning method which identifies for each activity, the activities which must precede it. By working in this manner, it is possible to establish the **critical path**, or minimum timeline which must be followed to complete the project. There are many texts which expand on the PERT Planning Method.

Application

- Define the purpose to be accomplished.
- Establish the tasks which must be performed to accomplish the purpose from a Tree Diagram, Card Sort, or directly from the S.M.A.R.T. Matrix.
- For each task, define the predecessor tasks which must be completed first from a SMART Plan or Forced Choice.
- Working backwards from the purpose, write a task in a circle, and mark its required completion date below.
- Write the tasks which precede it in circles to its left. Mark each of their required completion dates too.
- Draw an arrow from the predecessor task to the current task, and label it with the time required for its completion.

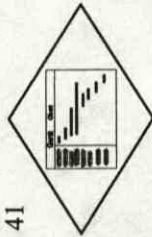
Match Delivery and Order Documentation



- Continue to write and label tasks until all of them have been placed on the chart.
- Now review your chart and find the path which requires the greatest amount of time. This is your **critical path** and it defines the time required to complete the project.
- Mark the **critical path** with a double line or a unique color to make it visible to everyone.

Hints

- Placing a calendar timeline across the top of the chart at the beginning can simplify the problem of placing tasks on the chart.
- There are a number of software products which create PERT Charts as part of their planning tools.



Gantt Chart

Gantt Charts show the time-phasing and scheduling of tasks necessary to accomplish a purpose. This is a good tool to use for tracking the progress of a project. By examining the relationship between the triangles and the current date line, you can tell at a glance if you are on schedule, ahead, or behind. If all triangles to the left of the line are filled and those to the right are not you are on schedule. If there is a mixture of filled and unfilled triangles on one side of the line it is time for further investigation.

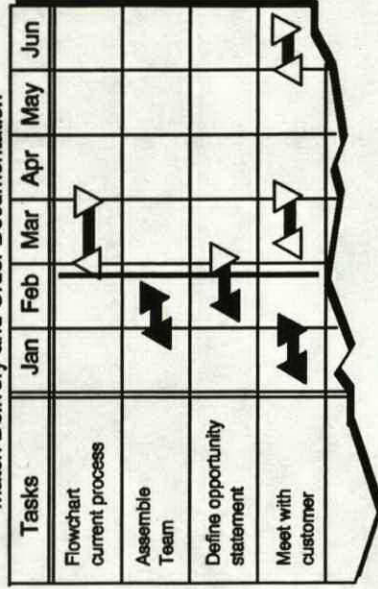
Cautions

- There is nothing inherent in the Gantt chart creation process that assures the completion of one task will necessarily allow the initiation of the next.
- Furthermore it does not test whether all necessary tasks have been identified.

Application

- Write the purpose to be accomplished at the top.
- List the necessary tasks or specifics down the left side of the chart.
- Draw a calendar scale across the top.

Match Delivery and Order Documentation



- Mark the duration of each task with a bold line.
- A triangle is used to represent the start of a task, and an inverted triangle represents task completion.
- As tasks are started and completed, the triangles are filled in to indicate status.
- Draw a vertical line to indicate the current date.
- Now analyze the chart and take action.

Hints

- Use a PERT Chart or S.M.A.R.T. Plan before doing your Gantt chart to ensure plan completeness.
- There are many software products which automate the creation and maintenance of Gantt charts.