



DECISION-MAKING Control and Responsibility

Decision-making can be seen to have five levels of control:

Authoritative: The person or small group in charge makes all the decisions. Positive aspects: Decisions can usually be made quickly. Negative aspects: The person or small group making the decision might not have all information and viewpoints, which could slow things down in the longer run.

Consultative: The person or small group in charge makes the decisions after obtaining input from those who will likely be affected and/or from those who have needed expertise and/or from those who are in charge. Positive aspects: More information is available on which to base a decision. Negative aspects: The people most likely affected have little sense of control.

Democratic: Everyone involved makes the decision together, usually by voting. Positive aspect: Everyone participates, has opportunity for input and influences the decision. Negative aspect: The majority rules and some people might feel like they have lost, creating a win-lose mentality.

Consensual: Everyone involved makes the decision together, usually by a guided process in which all viewpoints are heard. Positive aspects: People have much greater opportunity for input and less likelihood of feeling they have lost. Negative aspects: This can be a slow process that requires more time than might be warranted by the decision to be made.

Delegated: Individuals or small groups are given the right to make the decisions unilaterally. Positive aspects: When many things need to be accomplished, more people are involved taking ownership and responsibility for the decisions made. Negative aspect: Others can feel left out and too many people making too many independent decisions can lead to things being overlooked.

There are no right or wrong types of decision-making. The type chosen must be weighed against the need for: control, expediency, involvement and responsibility. The more control, the less involvement and shared responsibility. And control does not necessarily equal expediency.

