

Multi-Voting

What is it? Multi-voting is a decision-making tool that enables a group to sort through a long list of ideas to identify priorities.

When to use it? To prioritize a long list of items would take far too long to sort using consensus. Multi-voting allows groups to discuss the items and then quickly identify which should be dealt with.

What does it do? Quickly establishes a clear set of priorities.

How to do multi-voting?

1. Clarify the items that are to be prioritized. This may be a list of barriers from a force-field analysis or a list of ideas from a brainstorming exercise. Have members discuss each item, what it means, its strengths and weaknesses, etc. to make sure people understand the choices they're making.

2. Identify some criteria to guide the vote so that people don't vote at cross purposes. Make sure that everyone votes with the same criteria in mind.

The criteria could be to vote for:

- **the lowest cost items**
- **the easiest items to complete**
- **the first items in a logical sequence**
- **the most important items**
- **the most innovative items**
- **the most important to the customer**
- ...and so forth

3. Once the criteria are clear, there are two methods for conducting a multi-vote:

- voting with stick-on dots
- distributing points

Voting with stick-on dots. Using colored, peel-off file folder dots, hand out a strip of 4-7 dots to each person. (Use slightly fewer dots than half the items to be sorted to force people to make choices, e.g., give out 4 dots to sort 10 items.) Ask members to mill at the flip chart where the items are listed and put their four stickers on their top four choices. When everyone has voted, the dots are tallied to arrive at the priorities.

Distributing points. Each person is given points (usually 10 or 100) to distribute among the items to be sorted. Members can place their points beside the items they favor. It is wise to not allow anyone to place more than 50% of their votes on a single item.

Members mill at the flip chart and assign their points to the various items. Points are then tallied to identify priorities.

What's the Outcome? Multi-voting is democratic and participative. Since most members will see at least one or more of the items that they voted for near the top of the priority list, this form of voting does not create the sense of winners and losers that regular voting does. In fact, it typically leaves participants feeling that they can live with the final outcome.

Decision Grids

What is it? A matrix of critical criteria used to assess a set of ideas to determine which one(s) are most likely to be the best solution(s).

When to use it? When you need to bring more objectivity and thoroughness to the decision-making process.

What does it do? Changes the decision-making process from members arguing for the solutions they feel are most suitable to one where each potential solution is more objectively judged against the same set of factors.

How to use a decision grid?

1. A decision grid is created after the idea-generating phase of a discussion to sort through the various options. There are two types of decision grids:

- a. criteria-based grids
- b. impact/effort grids

a. Criteria-based grids:

i. Members are asked to identify the factors that would make an idea worthy of consideration. Some examples of factors are:

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| - saves time | - supports the strategic plan |
| - saves money | - is something we can control |
| - reduces stress | - represents the right sequence |
| - is timely | - builds empowerment |
| - is doable | - will get management support |
| - is affordable | - satisfies customer needs |
| - is fast | - doesn't disrupt our operation |

ii. The top three to five criteria are chosen from this list and placed along the top of a grid. The ideas being considered are placed down one side.

iii. Each idea is then evaluated, on a one-to-three scale, to determine the extent it meets each criteria.

Decision grid example:

Decision grid for assessing solutions to the challenge of getting 60 people training in new software in 14 days.

Rate each solution against the criteria as follows:

- 1 = does not meet the criteria**
- 2 = somewhat meets the criteria**
- 3 = good at meeting the criteria**

	cost	disruption	speed	quality
Shut down to give each person 2 days of classroom training				
Have 10 experts on site for 2 weeks to give one-on-one support				
Have 10 people off at training each 2-day period				
Totals				

Note: If one of the factors is more important than the others, e.g. meets customer needs, it can be given a multiplier factor, e.g. x3. That means that the final scores in that category are worth 3 times the points in the other categories.

b. Impact/effort grids:

- i. When members need to sort through a variety of brainstormed ideas or options, the impact/effort grid is drawn on a sheet of flip chart paper:

I M P A C T	Major Improvement	1. Easy/Major	3. Difficult/Major
	Minor Improvement	2. Easy/Minor	4. Difficult/Minor
		Easy to Do	Difficult to Do

E F F O R T

ii. The potential solutions are individually discussed and placed in one of the four boxes. All items are eventually classified as being:

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Easy to do and yields a big improvement 2. Easy to do and yields a small improvement 3. Difficult to do but worth it since it will yield a big improvement 4. Difficult to do and yields a small improvement |
|--|

iii. Once all items have been analyzed and sorted they can be dealt with:

- Category 1 items become the priority for immediate action
- Category 2 items are also implemented immediately
- Category 3 items are the subject of detailed action planning
- Category 4 items are discarded

What's the outcome? Clearly sorted ideas emerge from a mass of random brainstormed thoughts. Grids also make the sorting process more systematic and consensual. Since everyone gets to cast votes or express opinions, the use of grids is participative and objective.