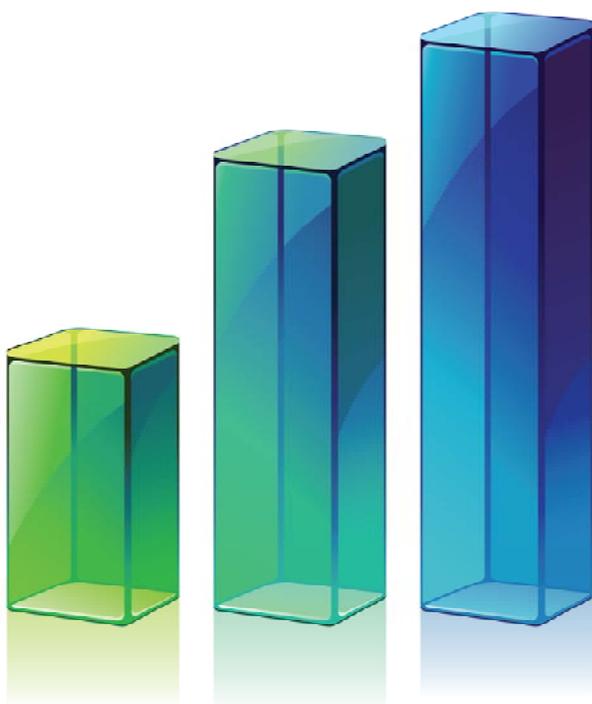


Step 5: Setting Challenging and Achievable Goals





What is Helping Teams Set Challenging and Achievable Goals?

Setting challenging and achievable goals uses a model for building agreements that will help teams reach decisions, solve problems, and improve communication in order to clarify focus. This model (Explore-Focus-Decide) includes process management tools for moving a team through decision making and problem solving, and methods for communicating that decision to all stakeholders.

Why is Helping Teams Set Challenging and Achievable Goals important?

Process tools help teams meet target outcomes by keeping focus on the tasks that allow teams to reach their goals. This process allows all points of view to be heard and considered before a decision is reached. The importance of communicating the results of the meeting enhances buy-in of all stakeholders.

How does a coach help the team develop the skills and competencies to function independently?

The coach explains and models the three stages of the decision making process (Explore-Focus-Decide) that assists the team in setting challenging and achievable goals. The coach provides support and feedback as the team takes on responsibility for applying the model. The coaching support continues until the team can work independently.

Job Aids

Key Vocabulary with Definitions

- Common words used in the process of making a decision/solving a problem in the Explore-Focus-Decide Model

Visual Model of the Explore-Focus-Decide Process

- A flowchart that contains process tools for the Explore-Focus-Decide Model

Observable Skills Checklist

- Verbal and behavioral skills that allows a coach to self-assess their competence in facilitating a meeting.



Something a Coach Might Say...

- Examples of opening phrases or guiding questions that a coach may use to move a team through the decision making/problem solving process

Facilitation Skills Rubric for Building Agreement

- This rubric assesses the skill level of the facilitator in each stage of the decision making/problem solving meeting. The rubric can be used for self-assessment or for feedback by the coach.

Resources and References

The Team-Building Tool Kit, Deborah Mackin, (2007) Amacom

- This book provides practical advice to guide team coaches, leaders, and members. It covers both the structure and process details that can derail teams.



Helping Teams Set Challenging and Achievable Goals

Key Vocabulary

Advocacy: Speaking in favor or arguing in defense of something, such as a cause, idea, or policy; provide active support.

Agenda: A road map outlining the meeting topics with specific outcomes; how they will be addressed, who will address them and the timelines.

Both/And: A process tool used to avoid either/or decisions e.g., “We can do Both A and B, and we can do C as well”.

Brainstorming: A process tool that encourages the unrestrained offering of ideas, perceptions or suggestions by members of a group to create new alternatives and/or seek solutions to problems.

Collaborative Problem Solving: The synergetic process created by people working together to productively address issues or creates opportunities.

Combine Duplicates: Eliminating statements that are exact replicas or mirror-like statements.

Consensus: A decision-making method that results in a collective agreement where all persons involved are willing to support and implement the decision.

Decide Stage: The final stage where the group identifies the final agreement(s) that all members have agreed to support.

Decision-Maker: The person or group who has the power or responsibility to make the final choice on an issue.

Explore Stage: The initial stage in the decision-making process where all ideas, suggestions and thoughts are accepted and honored in order to create a comprehensive base for the group’s discussion.

Facilitator: A person whose meeting role is to make the group’s work easier by leading the group through the agenda systematically and encourages full participation by all members. This individual helps the group decide what it wants to do and how to proceed.

Feedback: Providing data or information concerning performance given in a timely and non-evaluative manner so that adjustments can be made.

Focus Stage: The stage where group members narrow the scope of suggestions under consideration and identify where they share common ground and agreement.



Outcome (or Desired Outcome): A clear and concise description of the specific purpose or desired end results of a meeting. A desired outcome describes what participants hope to have when they walk out of a meeting.

Prioritize: Determine the order for dealing with a series of items or tasks according to their relative importance.

Rank Order: A process tool used to narrow down or reorganize a number of items on a list in order to make selections.

Recorder: A specific role in meetings: remains neutral, does not contribute own ideas, and writes down key ideas from group members on large sheets of paper displayed in front of the group to create group memory.

Stakeholder: An individual who has a vested interest in a given situation and whose vote or opinion will impact the outcome; could block or support decisions.

Timekeeper: A member of the group who agrees to keep track of time and notifies the group when the allotted time for an agenda item has expired.



	Basic	Emerging	Proficient	Comments
Providing Background Information	Provides no explanation of the situation, context and/or target outcomes. Provides no explanation of the decision making process and/or does not check for understanding	Provides limited explanation of the target outcomes for the meeting. Provides some information about the process that will be used.	Provides thorough explanation of the situation, context, and target outcomes for the meeting. Clearly articulates and explains the process that will be used for reaching agreement, and checks for understanding.	
Explore	Provides no explanation of the decision making process and/or does not demonstrate the ability to apply facilitation tools to the Explore stage of the meeting.	Provides limited explanation of the process that will be used during the Explore stage of the meeting and/or demonstrates limited ability to apply some of the facilitation tools to the Explore stage of the meeting.	Provides thorough explanation of the process that will be used during the Explore stage of the meeting. Demonstrates the ability to apply all the facilitation tools to the Explore stage of the meeting.	
Focus	Provides no explanation of the process that will be used in the Focus stage and/or does not demonstrate the ability to apply facilitation tools to the Focus stage of the meeting.	Provides limited explanation of the process that will be used during the Focus stage of the meeting and/or demonstrates limited ability to apply some of the facilitation tools to the Focus stage of the meeting.	Provides thorough explanation of the process that will be used during the Focus stage of the meeting. Demonstrates the ability to apply all the facilitation tools to the Focus stage of the meeting.	
Decide	Provides no explanation about the process that takes place during the Decide stage of the meeting and/or does not apply needed tools to reach agreement.	Provides limited explanation about the process that takes place during the Decide stage of the meeting and/or demonstrates limited ability to apply needed tools to reach agreement.	Clearly articulates the process that takes place during the Decide stage of the meeting, Demonstrates the ability to apply all the needed tools to reach agreement	
Transitions	Does not apply transitional language to any stage of the decision making process.	Demonstrates limited ability to apply transitional language to all stages of the decision making process or applies transitional language to less than all three stages of the decision making process.	Demonstrates the ability to apply transitional language to each stage of the decision making process.	



Helping Teams Set Challenging and Achievable Goals

EXPLORE – FOCUS – DECIDE

Decision Making Model

EXPLORE

Begin Discussion of Agenda Item

Tools: Brainstorm Ideas, Gather Opinions, Solicit Thoughts, List Possibilities

FOCUS

Condense/Refine Ideas Based on Common Ground

Tools: Combine Duplicates, Rank Order, Prioritize, Advocacy

Develop Proposal for Consideration

Discuss Proposal

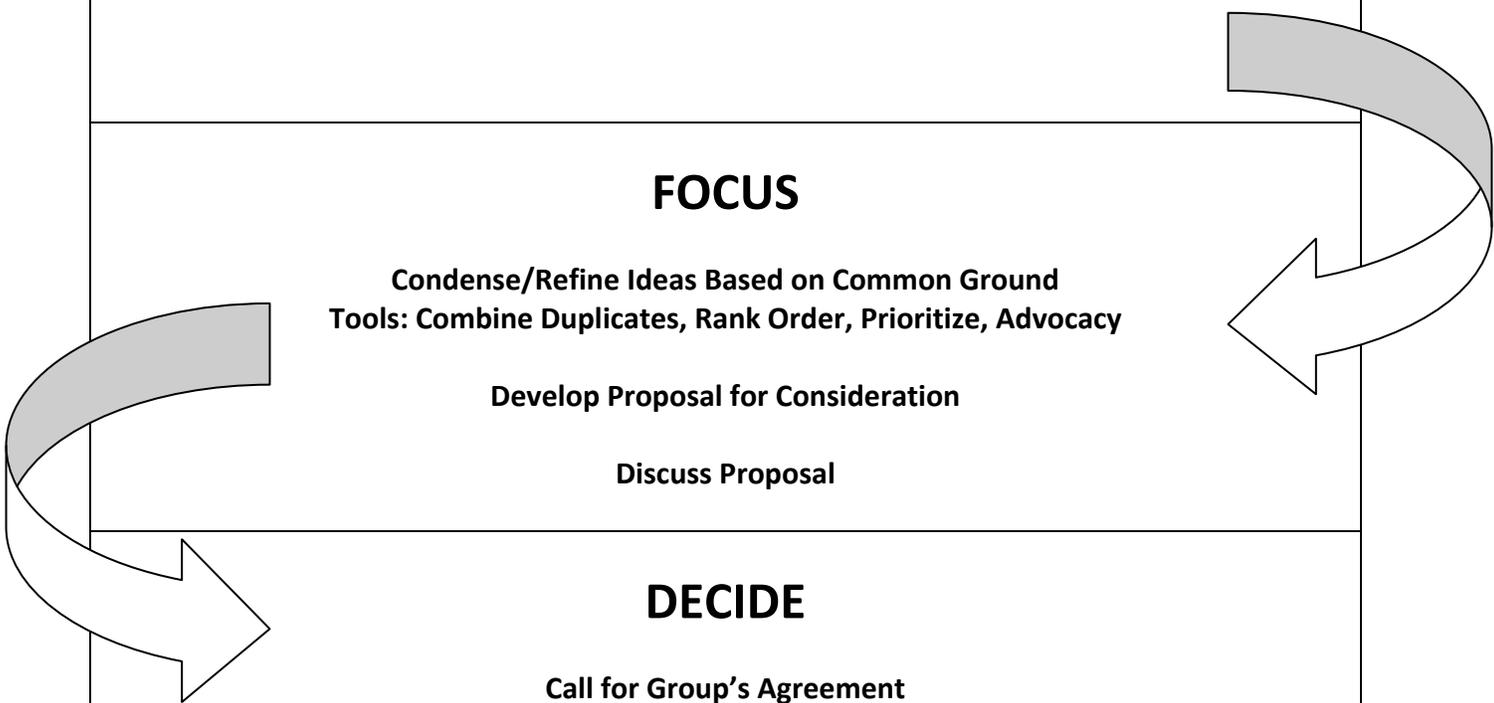
DECIDE

Call for Group's Agreement

Tools: Build-Up and/or Eliminate, What Would it Take, Both/And, Straw Poll, Negative Poll

Identify Action Items for Decision Reached

Summarize



Coaching for Capacity Building



OBSERVABLE SKILLS CHECKLIST: SETTING CHALLENGING AND ACHIEVABLE GOALS

DIRECTIONS: To be completed by the coach at intervals throughout the meeting process to self-assess meeting facilitation skills

PHASE 1: PROVIDING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	Steps of EXPLORE Stage	Steps in FOCUS Stage	Steps in DECIDE Stage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Explains the Explore-Focus-Decide model for decision-making/problem solving model. <input type="checkbox"/> Explains the authority level of the team. <input type="checkbox"/> Sets the context of decision-making task <input type="checkbox"/> Reviews the target outcomes for the meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Checks for Understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Uses transitional language to move to the next stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Explains the purpose and steps used in the EXPLORE stage <input type="checkbox"/> Explains brainstorming Guidelines <input type="checkbox"/> Explains recording guidelines <input type="checkbox"/> Contracts with recorder and timekeeper <input type="checkbox"/> Provides participants with an opportunity to clarify ideas in brainstorming <input type="checkbox"/> Uses transitional language to move to the next stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Explains the purpose and steps in the FOCUS stage <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitates the combination of duplicate ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitates the group's ability to identify ideas of highest interest (i.e., N/3, rank order, prioritizing) <input type="checkbox"/> Allows participant to advocate <input type="checkbox"/> Uses transitional language to move to the next stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Explains the purpose and steps in the DECIDE stage <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitates building "small agreements" that may lead to bigger agreements using appropriate tools (both/and, "what would it take?") <input type="checkbox"/> Revisit target outcomes and assessing progress toward reaching decision <input type="checkbox"/> Moves group toward a final decision <input type="checkbox"/> Obtains each member's commitment to support the decision of the team. <p>Follow-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Moves the team toward development of an action plan which identified persons responsible and timelines. <input type="checkbox"/> Communicates the decisions of the team to all stakeholders.

DISTRICT/SCHOOL:	TEAM LEADER:
DATE:	TEAM COACH:



Helping Team Set Challenging and Achievable Goals

“Something a Coach Might Say....”

Explore Stage:

Brainstorming

- “In the brainstorming phase, we want to get as many ideas as possible, and allow everyone to contribute. In order to do this, I’d like to suggest some guidelines that will make this a valuable use of our time.
 - One voice at a time
 - Please keep your ideas short and to the point – like a bumper sticker
 - This is not the time to comment, ask questions, or critique any of the ideas; there will be an opportunity for that as we move through the process

Is there anyone who cannot live with those guidelines?”

- “In order to get everyone’s input, let’s go around the room and get one idea from each person just to get started.”
- “Let’s take a few minutes to each think about and jot down the three most effective ways we can... and then we’ll capture your thoughts on the flip chart.”
- “We haven’t heard from everyone yet; _____, how do you feel about this topic?”
- “Let’s use the ‘popcorn’ method to generate some discussion; one voice at a time, please.”

Listing Possibilities

- “Looking at our target outcomes, I have three possibilities which would fit the criteria for our task; let’s hear your reactions to each of these proposals. _____, let’s start with you and we’ll keep moving clockwise.”
- “Now that we have a representative list of ideas here, are there any items on this list that anyone would like to have clarified before we proceed to the next phase of making our decision?”

Transitional Language

- “Now that all ideas have been generated and clarified, let’s move on to the next phase of the process, by focusing our choices to a manageable number.”



Focus Stage:

- “Let’s take a look at the list of our ideas, and see if there are any that convey the exact same message.”
(Note: It is more effective to get agreement from the “authors” of both ideas that they are the same.)
- “Are there any ideas here that, given our current situation, could not be successfully implemented?”
- “Let’s take some time to identify the top # _____ (one-third) items on the list that are of most interest to you in this moment in time. Remember, we are not making any final choices here, just sharing our interests.”
- “Looking at this list, please place a sticky dot next to your top three choices.”
- “Now that we’ve taken a close look at the ideas that are of most interest, is there anyone who would like to advocate for any of the ideas on the list regardless of how much interest was shown?”

Transitional Language

- “We have combined those ideas that reflect the same idea, we’ve eliminated those that are not feasible at this time, and we’ve shown our preferences. We’ve made significant progress in meeting our Target Outcome. Let’s move on to the next stage and make some final decisions.”

Decide Stage:

- “Now let’s take a closer look and see if there are any ideas that are similar enough that they could be combined in some way”
- “_____, you shared that idea B is not acceptable to you because_____. What would it take for you to be able to live with that idea as one that is on our final list?”

Summarize

- “Looking at our target outcomes, we have generated ideas; we have combined some, eliminated others, and added to some to make them more reflective of our group’s thinking. Is there anyone who would not agree that we have met our target outcome?”
- “Good, now let’s make sure we are all on the same page about the action plan that will be developed to reflect our decision.”