



Consensus Building Techniques

Strategy	When to Use	Why it Works
Help team members focus on big ideas rather than on specific details when considering proposals for action.	When team members are focusing on specific details surrounding an issue and losing sight of their common purpose as a result	Teams often disagree or fall apart because they get hung up on specific details; this brings the group discussion focus back to a more general level
Float a trial balloon to encourage brainstorming about the pros and cons of an alternative.	When a new idea is introduced and you want the team to focus on the positives of the idea before considering the negatives	Some people greet almost any new idea with negative comments; team members may stop bringing up new ideas because of their fear of having them shot down.
Clarify what team members who do not support a proposal would need in order to support it.	When you sense that the team is approaching consensus, but there is still resistance from a small number of people	The information they provide is used to modify the proposal in such a way that everyone can accept it.
Encourage members to listen to one another's ideas with respect, empathy, and openness, continuing to modify a proposal until all members' key needs are met.	When team members seem to have difficulty understanding the needs or objections of others	For team members to work well together and make appropriate proposals, they must listen respectfully to each other's ideas and consider a whole range of ways of dealing with issues.
Ask every team member to take a turn expressing his or her opinion about the idea or proposal that the team is considering.	When a proposal has been generated and you want the team to listen to each member's ideas about the proposal	Hearing the views of each member can uncover common agreements or potential areas of alignment.