


# 06 DECISION MODELS

Decisions can be made by leaders, designated subgroups, or jointly by entire teams. The following list comprises the most common decision models and gives some advice on their application. Very often these models coexist and no one model is representative of how an organization functions. Think about which decision model is the most adequate for addressing your particular issue.

MODEL	ADVANTAGES	DANGERS	WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW
Decision by one leader or leadership circle (hierarchic model)	Clear structure and fast decisions	Possible abuse of leadership power, leaders overloaded by amount of work, low responsibility and involvement of team	Every group has informal hierarchies. (In organizations, usually the pioneers and founders tend to be informal leaders for a long time.) The switch from an informal to a formal (appointed or elected) leadership model is one of the hardest and most crucial developments in an organization's growth. Get external facilitation help for this!
Decision by a competent person or group mandated for a specific task (delegation/task leadership)	Shared responsibilities in the team, people who are competent are in charge of tasks	Unclear mandates, risk that tasks get delegated and forgotten	Assigning a task to a responsible person or task force requires a mini project plan: what is the objective? What are the parameters? What exactly should be decided and done until when? To whom will the result be reported back?
Decision by democratic vote (50% majority or more, e.g. a 2/3 majority is often required for changes in associations' constitutions)	Quick and clear model	Minorities have to live with the majority decision, resistance or exit of members may be the consequence	Before voting, make sure there is an open debate and a negotiation exploring solutions that serve all members' needs (win-win). Define the proposal to be voted on after this debate, not before it. During the debate you can hold test-votes and invite opposing members to suggest changes to the proposal so they can live with it (compromise).
Decision by consensus (everyone agrees wholeheartedly) or consent (everyone can live with the decision and has no major concerns with it)	Everyone is involved and is committed to the decision, strong team spirit	The procedure takes time, people who can argue well have advantages to get their positions heard	Consensus is built throughout several rounds of sharing information and personal needs related to the issue. Appoint an internal facilitator for this process and make sure all voices receive equal space. It can be helpful if the proposal to be tested for consensus is formulated by the facilitator.
Decision by each person or subgroup for themselves with prior consultation of relevant others (self-organization)	Very flexible, high engagement and involvement of everyone	Decentralized actions can become chaotic if there is not enough coordination	Self-organization is not the same as an absence of structure. You need to define clear rules and communication channels to make this work. The consultation process described in the Background Paper <a href="#">Meeting Model Gallery (08)</a> can be a helpful framework.


**INTERNAL COMMUNICATION  
& DECISIONS**

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