Multi-voting

Teams and work groups use tools, e.g., brainstorming, to generate lists of process-related problems, potential solutions, approaches or options to address an issue. Once this is done, however, teams are sometimes unable to quickly and easily reduce the items on the list into a few manageable ideas. When team members perceive that more than one item has significant merit, multi-voting can be used to quickly identify the most important items on the list. Multi-voting is best suited for use in large groups that are reviewing long lists. It is valuable when there is difficulty in reaching a consensus on the highest priority items on a list. It is not used, however, when trying to reach a consensus on a single issue.

Guidelines

Use the following guidelines to conduct a multi-voting exercise in a team or work group meeting:

- Display the items under consideration on a flipchart, making sure to eliminate duplicate items
- Number the items on the list to facilitate recordkeeping.
- Give each team member a number of votes equal to approximately one half of the number of items on the list (e.g., 10 votes for a 20-item list).
- Have each team member vote for the items he or she believes are most important. Team members may cast all votes for one item, for several items, or vote for individual items until they use their allotted number of votes.
- Tally the votes.
- Select the four-to-six items that receive the highest number of votes. Discuss and rank order the items. If the team cannot establish the top four-to-six, remove the items having the fewest votes and then conduct another vote.

Types of Voting

Dots - members are each given a sheet of adhesive dots. One dot is provided for each vote the member is allocated. Members stick their dots next to items on the flipchart. As stated earlier, they may cast all votes for one item, or distribute their votes as they choose.

Show of Hands - the team leader or facilitator asks for a show of hands on each item on the list. Members keep track of how many times they've voted and are on the honor system to raise their hands only the prescribed number of times.

Ballots - The list of items is reproduced on a paper ballot, and team members identify their preferences. This method is the most confidential, and ensures that each member votes only the allowed number of times. Depending on the number of items, tabulation can be time consuming and group momentum can be lost while waiting for the count to be completed.

Example

The example below shows the outcome of a volunteer EMS organization's listing of potential quality improvement projects. The checkmarks show the votes each topic received during the multi-voting exercise.

Multi-voting Tally Sheet for Quality Improvement Project Selection

Topic	Vote Count	Total
1. Inaccurate run reports	✶✶✶✶✶✶	6
2. Excessive response time	✶✶✶✶✶✶✶✶✶✶	10
3. Low scores on practical exam	✶✶✶	3
4. Complaints about scheduling	✶✶✶	3
5. Vehicle maintenance costs too high	✶✶	2
6. Inability to get hospital feedback	✶	1
7. Excess restocking time at hospital.	✶✶✶✶✶	5
8. Intubation success rates falling	✶✶✶✶✶✶✶✶✶✶✶✶	12
9. Decline in fund raising revenues	✶✶✶✶✶✶✶✶✶✶✶✶✶✶	14
10. New member recruitment too low	✶✶✶✶✶✶✶✶✶✶	10

Why Use Multi-voting?

Multi-voting is used to help teams focus on problem-solving and identifying high priority items in an efficient manner. It is particularly valuable in deciding issues because each member has a clear understanding of how the team will reduce the number of items to manageable proportions and how it will identify them in priority order. Multi-voting allows for each member to participate equally in the decision making process. This is particularly important in gaining acceptance and buy-in for future actions based on the decision.

Reference: http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/ems/leaderguide/#qitat