

TRG LEADERSHIP TOOL

"Practical Means for Dealing with Difficult Times"

On an ongoing basis, this section of our site will feature business tools and planning considerations designed to assist leaders for whom "just keeping up" is not good enough. These notes will focus on sequences of thought and action intended to enhance the positioning for your group, both on a long and short-term basis.

Please check back frequently to review the next tool. Visit our [LEADERSHIP TOOLS ARCHIVE](#) for previous tools.

BUILDING CONSENSUS PART 1

The best plans are proposed by those who are responsible for conducting the component parts of the plan and approved by whoever has the final responsibility for overall results. Since a plan which nobody follows is a worthless plan, the planning process should assure active cooperation by asking the managers of the plan if what is said actually represents what they intend to do.

A solution to a single issue is in fact a plan of limited duration and complexity. If the outcome is not readily apparent, it can often be reached by treating the issue as a universe of elements and following a sequence that is complete in terms of steps taken but abbreviated as to the level of effort for each step. The best decision processes are both streamlined and complete. A group can be two people. A phase can be one meeting. A plan can be a sentence as long as it completely and clearly states the solution.

"CONSENSUS BASED" PLANNING DIVIDES THE UNIVERSE INTO DIGESTIBLE PIECES

When done effectively, Consensus Based Planning can yield a very positive result for a group. Arriving at a successful Consensus Based Plan requires the group to follow a process involving a series of activities in which the group:

- **DEFINES THE UNIVERSE:** determines the universe of issues confronting the group
- **DIVIDES THE UNIVERSE:** establishes priorities among the issues
- **ESTABLISHES OWNERSHIP:** distributes individual acceptance of responsibility for key issues, naming the targets that the "owners" feel that they can accomplish
- **SETS THE CYCLE:** reviews, selects and/or approves the strategies intended to either resolve the issues or accomplish the targets presented
- **RUNS THE AGENDA:** one individual must assure that the agenda is both built to follow the group's decisions and followed by the group throughout the cycle

OWNERSHIP

BUILDING CONSENSUS PART 1 12/16/10

Once a plan has been established, the group must assign ownership to each objective, strategy and/or initiative to ensure that progress and completion is reached. Each "owner" should be responsible for:

- Resources are available that are both appropriate and sufficient to accomplish the stated results
- All commitments can be accomplished within a designated timeframe
- Those tasks required to realize the results are actually under way and will be carried out successfully
- The results will be reported back to the group as and when promised

AGENDA PROCESS

A written agenda, developed to incorporate the key strategic areas, should be used to run regularly scheduled meetings of the plan "owners." Agenda items reflect all major initiatives and remain "on the Agenda" until they are accomplished.

Agenda items should include the name of the initiative "owner" and if appropriate, a target date for completion, and/or the number of weeks or months the item has remained on the agenda.

The agenda is developed to reflect both the priorities of the larger strategic and/or tactical plan initiatives and also in response to unforeseen needs.

The agenda should follow a general sequence that will guide the progress reports of the consensus based plan. The agenda sequence should include:

- An initial development period, which is a great deal shorter than the strategic plan's term (this development period can be as short as a few weeks or as long as several months)
- During the development period, conduct regular development meetings
- Following a written agenda which is developed in advance of each meeting
- At each meeting FOLLOW THE AGENDA. If you find that you are jumping around the agenda at each meeting, then either the Agenda was not well set, or the individual responsible for running the Agenda must bring the group back on track meeting by meeting. If you leave the agenda, then either you have not selected issues which must actually be addressed, or you are at risk because KEY ISSUES are not being addressed! Although a single individual can run an agenda, having at least 2 people at the meeting will help fill in the action holes by asking the question, "If this item is on the agenda, why is it not being done?"
- Conducting cyclical review sessions of the plan:
 - In the first year, hold review sessions no less than quarterly
 - In subsequent years, hold review sessions no less than each half year
 - Put all of these meetings on the calendar now!

For additional information regarding Building Consensus, please visit our [Contact Page](#) and send us an Email or simply call us directly during East Coast business hours on our toll free number 1.800.97-REGIS (1.800.977.3447).