

“67 Shades of decision-making”

by Dale Hunter and Simone Maus.

Here is a selection of decision-making processes that facilitators and group workers can use with groups. This list was initially collected from participants of the “50 Shades of decision-making” workshop at the Australasian Facilitators Conference (AFN) at Ballina Beach, NSW, Australia, November 2015. Then the list was expanded to include content collected at the International Association of Facilitators (IAF) Oceania Conference in Melbourne, South Australia, May 2016. These additions are indicated with a (*). There are now 67 processes.

For easier use, we have created some categories:

- A)** Simple group decision-making techniques
- B)** More advanced group decision-making methods and techniques
- C)** Intuitive methods and techniques
- D)** Philosophical and political systems / methods
- E)** Preparing for decision-making

In this document the abbreviation “pr.” refers to “processes” (as referenced in Dale Hunter’s books). These processes will also soon be made available through www.zenergyglobal.com

Section A: Simple group decision-making techniques

A1 Applause – clapping

Volume of clapping indicates support. Length of clapping indicates support.

E.g.,

- In response to the question: Which of these ideas/solutions do you like the best?

A2 Chance:

- Scissors, Paper, Rock.
- Pick names from a hat (to decide on the order of “turns”).
- Pick numbers from a hat (raffle).
- Drawing straws (of different lengths) This is another good method for organising the order of “turns”.
- Throw the dice.
- Decision- Wheels: <http://www.decision-making-confidence.com/decision-wheels.html>

A3 Standing up (yes) and sitting down (no)

E.g.,

- “If you like this solution, stand up”.

A4 Continuums

Create an imaginary line across the floor. People place themselves along the line according to strength of preference or opposition.

People strongly in favour of proposal are asked to go to one end of line – those strongly against go to the other end of the line.

E.g.,

- Continuum, pr. 24 (*Dale Hunter: The Art of Facilitation, p. 260*).

A5 Using dots / ticks / marks to indicate preferences (Dot-mocracy)

Everyone has a certain amount of dots/ ticks/ marks they can put on a list of options. The highest number of dots indicates the top preferences of the group. For more examples

see:<http://dotmocracy.org/>, also now called Idea Rating

Sheets: <http://www.idearatingsheets.org/>

For examples of decision-making processes, where preference marking can be used.

- Priority Setting, pr. 4. (*Dale Hunter: The Art of Facilitation*, p. 238).
- Criteria Setting, pr. 5. (*Dale Hunter: The Art of Facilitation*, p. 239).

A6 Moderation with Emoticons

Smiley faces for 'I like', 'I don't like', 'I don't mind'.

A7 Hand signals and finger counting.

This technique gives a quick 'read-out' of levels of agreement.

A fist (0 fingers) means "I don't agree" and 5 fingers means "I totally agree". The level of agreement can be indicated by increasing the number of fingers 1 – 5.

A8 Arm gauge

To indicate agreement or enthusiasm (up, down, halfway).

E.g., Arm above your head – high agreement , arm close to your hip – low.

A9 Thumb gauge

To indicate agreement or enthusiasm (up, down, halfway).

A10 Voting using a %

This includes majority decision-making (such as national and local government elections) where over 50% agreement is required. In facilitated groups a different % percentage may be used (e.g. 75%) for all or some decisions. There are many techniques to get a % vote from a group and some are included in this document.

A11 Voting with your mobile phone

Vote by pressing a certain combination on your phone.

E.g.,

- The group can vote by sending a text to the facilitator (or designated group member). This method was popularised by TV talent and reality programmes for audience voting.

A12 “What is your 48hour commitment?”*

Usually only for one action.

A13 “Captain’s – Call” as an interim Measure*

A designated leader decides on behalf of group.

A14 Voting using Gold Coins (instead of dots)*

E.g., “How do I spend the money?”.

A15 Gradient of Agreement Scale*

The Gradients of Agreement Scale was developed in 1987 by Sam Kaner, Duane Berger, and the staff of Community At Work.

It enables members of a group to express their support for a proposal in degrees, along a continuum. Using this tool, group members are no longer trapped into expressing support in terms of “yes” and “no.”

See (*Kaner et.al : Facilitator’s Guide to Participatory Decision-Making*)

See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gradients_of_agreement_scale

Section B: More advanced decision-making methods and techniques

B1 Developing criteria for decision making.

Criteria can be weighted by importance and then used to inform decisions. E.g.,

- Criteria Setting, pr. 5: (*Dale Hunter : The Art of Facilitation, p. 239*).
- Solution-Storming, pr. 86: (*Dale Hunter et al : Zen of Groups p.157*).
- Agenda Setting, pr. 9: (*Dale Hunter et al : Zen of Groups p. 102*).
- Brainstorming, pr. 3: (*Dale Hunter et al : Zen of Groups p. 95*).

B2 Prioritisation processes:

For example: Sort into priorities (say 1 – 5),

E.g.,

- Priority Setting, pr.4. (*Dale Hunter: The Art of Facilitation, p.238*).
- Refining Priority List, pr.11 (*Dale Hunter et al : Zen of Groups, p.104*).

B3 Listening for agreement

One of the skills of a facilitator is to pick up on the energy of the group and to listen for an alignment or a decision to be spoken.

E.g.,

- Listen for agreement, pr. 14. (*Dale Hunter: The Art of Facilitation, p. 250*).

B4 Coloured Card System

Earthsong Eco Neighbourhood Group uses a consensus decision-making process of coloured cards. This is a system used widely in the co-housing movement.

- Appendix A (*Dale Hunter: The Art of Facilitation, p 321*).

B5 Hand signs from the Zbaba Facilitators Collective

The group decides on hand signals i.e. “I would like to say something” (Raise your hand with 1 finger up), “I agree with you” (Wave two hands in the air)etc.,

- Appendix B (*Dale Hunter: The Art of Facilitation, p 324*)

B6 Testing (‘feeling into’) the possibilities

The following exercises may form the basis of a decision :

E.g.,

- Drawing / writing down the various possibilities on sheets of paper.
- Placing the sheets on the floor and stepping on to each one to ‘get the feel’ of each possibility. Which one(s) feel good?, enhance my mood?, take me forward?.
- Multisensory Approaches, (*Dale Hunter: The Art of Facilitation, p. 200*)

B7 Using rounds

Good for checking-in and conflict resolution, Everyone gets a turn to

speak. Rounds can either go in a circle or go in 'popcorn' style.

E.g.,

- Structured rounds, pr.1 (*Dale Hunter: The Art of Facilitation, p 234*)
- Unstructured rounds, pr.2 (*Dale Hunter: The Art of Facilitation, p 236*)

B8 Long term thinking

Generational perspective. Use questions like: "What would our great grandchildren think about that?" "Where would we be in 500 years depending on our decision now?"

B9 Sociodrama and Psychodrama

"Under the guidance of a trained practitioner known as the director, this method involves improvisational dramatic action. The script for this drama is written, moment by moment, out of purpose and concerns of an individual, or the group where the method is applied."

See also: <http://aanzpa.org/> (*Australia and Aoterea New Zealand Psychodrama Association*)

B10 Sociometry and Sociometrics

Historically known by the work of J. L. Moreno. Sociometry is traditionally identified with the analysis of data collected by means of the *sociometric test*. This is a type of questionnaire in which, roughly speaking, each member of a group is asked with which members he would most like to carry out some activity. Sociometry can be used to support decision making.

E.g.,

- Who are our Peers, pr.4. (*Dale Hunter et al : Co-operacy, p.163*)

B11 Theory U Methodology. Developed from the work of Otto Scharmer

See : The Presencing Institute: www.presencing.com

B12 Pyramid model

The pyramid model for decision making works from the bottom up and may be useful when user workshop groups are large. The group is divided into sub-teams to reach consensus within each sub-team prior to reaching consensus at the total group level.

E.g.,

- Subgroups, pr.4 (*Dale Hunter et al : Zen of Groups, p. 93*)

B13 Cause Map:

Cause Mapping an issue can identify areas where it may be useful to dig into more detail to fully understand a problem and can help develop effective solutions. This is done in a brainstorm by asking questions around the root cause and mapping it out. Questions are : Why?, Where?, When?, Who? and What?

See: ThinkReliability: www.thinkreliability.com

B14 Six Thinking Hats:

This is a design thinking process developed by the De Bono Group. “Six Thinking Hats is a simple, effective parallel thinking process that helps people be more productive, focused, and mindfully involved. A powerful tool set, which once learned can be applied immediately! You and your team members can learn how to separate thinking into six clear functions and roles. Each thinking role is identified with a colored symbolic ‘thinking hat’. By mentally wearing and switching ‘hats’, you can easily focus or redirect thoughts, the conversation, or the meeting.”

See: www.debonogroup.com

B15 WRAP : A 4 step process developed by the Heath Brothers*

“To make better choices, we must avoid the most common decision-making biases. Being aware of these biases isn’t sufficient to avoid

them, but a process can help. The WRAP process can help us make better, bolder decisions.”

W – Widen your options

R – Reality Test your Assumptions

A – Attain Distance before deciding

P – Prepare to be wrong

See: http://heathbrothers.com/ot/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/The_WRAP_Process_one_pager.pdf

B16 ABCD Model – By Nic Peters*

A – Assess (What is the problem or decision?)

B – Brainstorm (What are the possible choices or solutions?)

C – Consequences/Consider (Consider both positive and negative consequences. Also consider your values.)

D – Decide (Make a decision and act.)

E – Evaluate (Evaluate the choices you made and learn from them.)

See: https://prezi.com/_tg8pakbu2le/abcde-decision-making-model/

B17 SMART framework*

“SMART is a **mnemonic acronym**, giving criteria to guide in the setting of objectives, for example in **project management**, **employee-performance management** and **personal development**. The letters S and M usually mean specific and measurable. The other letters have meant different things to different authors, as described below.

Additional letters have been added by some authors.”

See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SMART_criteria

B18 Consensus Workshop Method*

“ (That is) the Consensus Workshop Method at its simplest: Context, Brainstorm, Cluster, Name, and Resolve. The Institute of Cultural Affairs created the Consensus Workshop Method through the ‘on the

ground' community development efforts of hundreds of people from the 1950s through the 1990s, coupled with intense ongoing research into how people think, decide, create, innovate, learn, and live.”

See:<http://oqi.wisc.edu/resource/library/uploads/resources/Consensus%20workshop%20-%20Description.pdf>

See: (*Laura Spencer, Winning through Participation*) and (*Brian Stanfield, The Workshop Book*). Also check the ICA's website www.icaassociates.ca.

B19 Dynamic Facilitation Method by consultant Jim Rough*

Collection of data across 4 panels:

Problems (or Situation Statements, or Inquiries),

Solutions (or Possibilities or Options)

Concerns

Data.

See: <http://www.co-intelligence.org/P-dynamicfacilitation.html>

B20 Pareto Voting*

Pareto voting is a technique for prioritizing criteria; determining which of the identified needs should be addressed first and selecting which of the strategies or solutions to implement. It is based on the Pareto principle : “ ...approximately 20 percent of the items brainstormed or developed by the group will be chosen by approximately 80 percent of the group's participants.”

See: donblake.com/day3/resources/paretovoting.doc

B21 Decision Making Matrix*

A decision making matrix evaluates and prioritizes a list of options.

The team first establishes a list of weighted criteria and then

evaluates each option against those criteria. This is a variation of the L-shaped matrix.

See: <http://asq.org/learn-about-quality/decision-making-tools/overview/decision-matrix.html>

B22 ORID*

“The ORID (Objective, Reflective, Interpretive, Decisional) method is a form of structured conversation led by a facilitator. It is a method that was developed by the Institute for Cultural Affairs. This tool allows the group having the discussion to clearly identify the relevant facts (objective), be aware of their feelings and perceptions surrounding these facts (reflective), analyze the facts and feelings, and interpret accordingly the implications (interpretive) and then to make decisions intelligently (objective).”

See : <http://changematrix.org/images/uploads/ORID.pdf>

Section C: Intuitive Decision-Making methods / techniques

C1 Holonomic focus

Create a group environment of deep listening. Begin to address the issue, listening for ‘resonance’ in the voice of each contributor. For those who see energy, look for bright or glowing energy around individuals suggesting they are ‘tuned In’. Notice body language. Notice when a contribution ‘lands’ in the group and a silent or spoken ‘yes’ emerges. The facilitator’s job is to ‘catch’ these moments.

E.g.,

- Listen for agreement, pr. 14. (*Dale Hunter: The Art of Facilitation, p. 250*).

C2 Journalling with intent

Journaling for Self Discovery and informed decision making.

See: <http://www.peopleandpossibilities.com/JournalingForSelfDiscovery.html>. See:<http://www.journalingtools.com/>.

C3 Muscle testing

“Based on the concept of internal energy fundamental to traditional Chinese medicine, muscle testing is a noninvasive way of evaluating the body’s imbalances and assessing its needs..”

See: http://www.goodhealthinfo.net/herbalists/muscle_testing.htm

C5 Dreaming:

To invite people to talk about their dreams during ‘check-ins’ or decision making processes offers the opportunity to access a wider spectrum of the whole person, such as the intuitive or spiritual level. There exists research and training on how to interpret our dreams to support our decision-making. Here are a few sites that work with that:

- <http://thedreamwell.com/>
- www.dreammoods.com, “Dreaming, randomness and decision making”
by Patrick McNamara

C6 Multi Sensory – using all the senses (e.g. Jean Houston’s work)

E.g., Multisensory Approaches, (*Dale Hunter: The Art of Facilitation*, p. 200)

C8 Choice Compass

An app that measures your heartbeat and helps you decide according to your heart’s reaction.

See: <http://choicecompass.com/>

C9 Kinesiology

Kinesiology encompasses holistic health disciplines which use the gentle art of muscle monitoring to access information about a person’s well being.

See: <http://www.kinesiology.org.au/about-kinesiology>

C10 Organic Decision Making Method*

“Organic decision making is gained from a informal communication system: conversations you overhear in the company bathroom, the body language and tone of voice people use in meetings, what you’ve managed to Google on the Internet. Mechanic decisions are made through a systematic process that’s probably documented.”

See: <http://www.informit.com/articles/article.aspx?p=434641&seqNum=6>

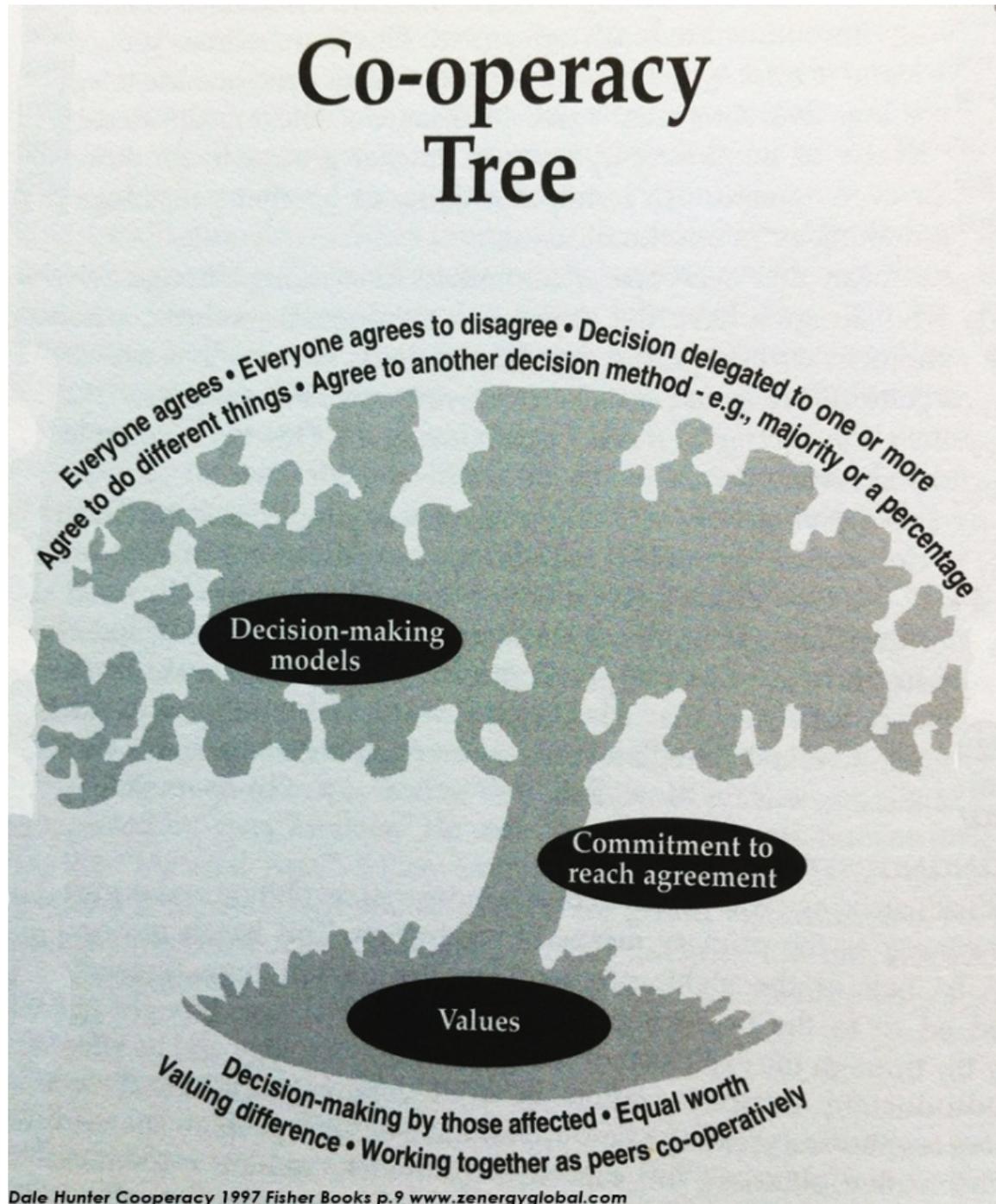
Section D: Philosophical / Political Systems

D1 Cooperacy:

See: (Dale Hunter et.al : *Co-operacy: A New Way of being at Work.*

Fisher Books) Available on <http://www.amazon.com>.

See also the Cooperacy Tree diagram below.



Co-operacy Tree diagram

D2 Sociocracy:

“Is a system of governance using consent decision-making and an organizational structure based on cybernetic principles. Sociocracy is a whole systems governance method that makes collaboration, self-organization, and distributed authority practical and effective. It is applicable in corporations as well as in neighborhood associations. Sociocracy requires transparency, inclusiveness, and accountability, the characteristics of any good method of governance.

Combining the values and traditions of democracy with the methods of sociocracy produces a deeper democracy.

See: <http://www.sociocracy.info>

D3 Holacracy:

“ The traditional hierarchy is reaching its limits, but ‘flat management’ alternatives lack the rigor needed to run a business effectively.

Holacracy is a third-way : it brings structure and discipline to a peer-to-peer workplace.” <http://www.holacracy.org/> See book by Brian J Robertson called Holacracy.

D4 Occupy movement: from Occupy Wall Street movement in USA and elsewhere beginning in New York in 2011. There are various websites including: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Occupy_Wall_Street For their consensus making method see this Youtube clip by Tim Hartnett.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_m3yjrC23Fc

D5 Decision Making Pyramid

“The objective of the decision-making pyramid is to illustrate that ‘simple’ decisions and choices taken by individuals on a daily basis cumulatively have a global impact, and how vice versa, we need to

break down global decisions into smaller frequent sustainability choices at the individual level.”

See: <http://www.gdrc.org/decision/pyramid.html>

D6 Behavioural Economics

“ ‘Behavioural economics’, along with the related sub-field, ‘behavioural finance’, studies the effects of psychological, social, cognitive, and emotional factors on the economic decisions of individuals and institutions and the consequences for market prices, returns, and the resource allocation.”

See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Behavioral_economics

D7 Consumer behaviour

“This is the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, use, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society.”

See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consumer_behaviour

See also: Becchetti L. (2015), Vote with your wallet ([Leonardo Becchetti](#))

D8 Organic Organisations

A term created by Tom Burns and G.M. Stalker in the late 1950s. Organic organizations, unlike mechanistic organizations (a term also coined by Burns and Stalker), are flexible and value external knowledge.

“.... For an organization to be organic, the participants or workers should have equal levels, with no job descriptions or classifications, and communication should have a hub-network-like form. Organic organisation thrives on the power of personalities and relationships, lack of rigid procedures and communication, and can react quickly

and easily to changes in the environment, thus it is said to be the most adaptive form of organization.”

See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organic_organisation

See also: (Burns, T. & Stalker, G. M. (1961), *The Management of Innovation*, Tavistock, London).

Section E: Preparing for decisionmaking

E1 Who decides?

E.g.,

- Everyone agrees / one person decide / some people decide / appointed decision maker / decision by indecision: The co-operacy tree (*Dale Hunter: The Art of Facilitation*, p. 24)
- Why is consensus decision-making important in facilitation? (*Dale Hunter: The Art of Facilitation*, p. 22-25)

Example processes:

- Consensus decision-making using criteria, pr.15 (*Dale Hunter: The Art of Facilitation*, p. 251)
- Proactive Consensus, pr.13 (*Dale Hunter: The Art of Facilitation*, p. 248)

E2 Developing consensus

- Consensus decision-making, pr. 50 (*Dale Hunter, et al: Co-operacy*, p.233)

E3 Whole person approach

- The Holistic Approach : Embodied learning (*Dale Hunter et.al : The Art of Facilitation*” p. 198).
- What are distinctions? (*Dale Hunter et. al : The Essence of Facilitation* p.11-16).

E4 Multisensory approaches

See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Learning_styles

See also: (Dale Hunter et.al : *The Art of Facilitation* p. 200)

E5 Reflection / Meditation

Individual and group reflection and meditation – including visualisation techniques.

E6 Role playing

Simple role play can be helpful in clarifying decisions. Participants have the opportunity to express differing perspectives and ‘feel into’ where these perspectives are coming from.

E.g.,

- *Proposing and counter-proposing, pr. 19 (Dale Hunter: The Art of Facilitation, p.255)*

Simple role-plays through to complex enactments (this is part of a bigger body of work that includes Sociodrama).

E7 Resolving conflicts in groups (reaching agreements).

E.g.,

- *Fishing for agreement, pr.17 (Dale Hunter et.al : The Art of Facilitation p.253)*
- *Bottom Lining, pr. 18 (Dale Hunter et. al : The Art of Facilitation p.254)*

E8 Unconscious Bias

People choose and make decisions based on unconscious bias and believe. For example this can relate to Race, Sexuality, Gender, Class etc. When we choose decision making processes this needs to be considered. A good question to ask would be: how can we reduce unconscious bias in the decision making methods that we use?

There are many articles and research on unconscious bias. Here is just one we

collected:<http://www.cookcross.com/docs/UnconsciousBias.pdf>

E9 Building group alignment

E.g.,

- Finding and developing the group purpose, pr. 6 and 7 (*Dale Hunter et. al : The Art of Facilitation, p. 240-241*)
- Developing the group culture, pr 8 (*Dale Hunter et.al : The Art of Facilitation, p. 243*)
- Building a group vision, pr. 10 (Dale Hunter et.al : The Art of Facilitation, p. 246)
- Setting Group Objectives, pr. 7 (*Dale Hunter et al: Zen of Groups, page 98*)

E10 Agreement on ground rules*

Similar to developing a group culture but can be more prescriptive. A facilitator may choose to suggest some ground rules particularly when there is no time to develop a culture with the group.

See: <http://getthepicture.ca/a-list-of-ground-rules-for-effective-meetings/>

Rodger Schwarz: Ground rules for effective groups:https://is.muni.cz/el/1423/podzim2010/HEN572/um/13._SchwarzGroundRules.pdf

E11 SWOT Analysis*

“**SWOT analysis** (alternatively **SWOT matrix**) is an **acronym** for *strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats*—and is a structured **planning** method that evaluates those four elements of a **project** or **business** venture.”

See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SWOT_analysis

E12 Investment Logic Mapping*

“Investment Logic Mapping is a methodology for visualizing on one page, an investment story in enough detail to enable a layperson to understand complex and or significant investment opportunities. ...

The Department of Treasury & Finance (State Government of

Victoria, Australia) has been developing this methodology as part of the Investment Management Standard since 2004.”

See: <http://mchannigan.com/investment-logic-mapping-overview/>

More Resources for facilitators

at: [http://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/Investment-Planning-and-](http://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/Investment-Planning-and-Evaluation/Understanding-investment-planning-and-review/What-is-the-investment-management-standard/Templates-examples-and-facilitators-tips-and-traps)

[Evaluation/Understanding-investment-planning-and-review/What-is-the-investment-management-standard/Templates-examples-and-facilitators-tips-and-traps](http://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/Investment-Planning-and-Evaluation/Understanding-investment-planning-and-review/What-is-the-investment-management-standard/Templates-examples-and-facilitators-tips-and-traps)

Co-operacy Tree from “Co-operacy” by Dale Hunter et al. Published by Fisher Books (1997) p.9.

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