

Difficult Decisions

Tags: [#decision-making](#), [#organizational-politics](#)

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Dialogue

In general, adults prefer that actions affecting their lives are taken with them rather than done to them.

Clarify exactly who you are going to engage and how you intend to do so.

How do you determine should be engaged?

Before you discuss the content of the decision with the identified stakeholder(s), explain clearly and directly exactly how the decision is going to be made.

Don't mess this part up.

Before asking for ideas, opinions, or contributions, make explicit whether you are offering the respondent a view, a voice, a vote, or a veto.

Distinction between view and voice?

Absent that clarification, the individual is likely to assume that her perspective is a veto.

Standardize the process to focus on decision-making.

Example?

Ask your stakeholder(s) for their input.

"What do you think?" is probably the standard question most people ask.

Thank your stakeholders for their input and remind them about how the decision is going to be made.

Don't underestimate the importance of reasserting the process of making the decision and their role in it.

On paper, we might appear to be belaboring detailed actions. But in reality, decisions lose their power and their potential for impact when they lose the engagement of their stakeholders.

What have you changed your mind on?

Quotes

Most adults very much prefer that actions that affect their lives and realities are done with them rather than to them. That makes the process of influencing essential in seeing through the enactment of a difficult decision.

Remember, if you ask someone for an opinion without intending to follow their advice, you risk disengaging or even insulting them. Think through your stakeholders' individual styles and needs and consider what approach will enable you to secure their investment on clear, transparent terms.

Say, "I'm asking you because. . ." And then specify why you're asking: "I want to hear your view / to account for your voice / to get your vote / or to give you veto power." Make it clear whether you are going to make the call or whether someone else will do so.

Be sure to find out why they're holding the perspectives that they express. What is informing their point of view? How do their experiences, roles, identities, communities, cognitive and emotional styles contribute to their opinions? Demonstrate authentic curiosity. Understanding each stakeholder's vantage point allows you to consider implications of the decision for different audiences.

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References