

PARTICIPATORY DECISION MAKING

Tool: Criterion Grid¹

WHAT IS IT?

“Criterion Grid” is a matrix used to assess a set of ideas in order to determine which one(s) are most likely to offer the best solution(s).

WHEN TO USE IT?

Use this tool when the group needs to bring more objectivity and thoroughness to the decision-making process.

WHAT DOES IT DO?

“Criterion Grid” changes the decision-making process to one where each potential solution is objectively judged against the same set of criteria.

HOW TO DO CRITERION GRID?

Step #1: Identify criteria by which the alternatives will be evaluated.

NOTE: It is easier to make a good decision and get it accepted when it is based on agreed-to criteria rather than personal preference or opinion.

Identify your criteria by...

- ⇒ Brainstorming a list of criteria (quantity is not a goal here). Examples:

Saves time	Supports the strategic plan	Saves money
Reduces stress	Is something we can control	Is timely
Is doable	Represents the right sequence	Is affordable
Is fast	Will get management support	Builds empowerment
Doesn't disrupt our operation		
- ⇒ Narrowing the list down to no more than seven criteria.
- ⇒ Testing each criterion to ensure it is clear enough and specific enough to all members so that the group can tell whether or not it has been met.

Step 2: Using a “grid” (example worksheet is available), list criteria and options agreed upon by the group.

Step 3: Take one option/alternative at a time and compare it to each criterion.

NOTE: If it meets the criterion, make an “X” in the box where the columns meet; if it doesn't meet the criterion, put an “O” in the box.



¹ Adapted from Bens, Ingrid. (2008) Facilitation at a Glance! A Pocket Guide of Tools and Techniques for Effective Meeting Facilitation (2nd Edition, pg. 152). GOAL/QPC, AND Anderson, Marian, et al (1999) Facilitation Resources: Volume 5—Making Group Decisions. (p 5.24). University of Minnesota: St. Paul.

Step 4: When you've finished all the criteria, count the total "X"s you marked for the option and write the number in the total column.

Step 5: Go on to the next option and repeat the process.

Step 6: When finished with all options, the option with the greatest total of "X"s is probably your best.

NOTE: If two or three options are equal, see if you can use them all. Or, you might combine them into a mega-option.

LEARNING MORE

"Criterion Grid" is just one type of *decision making tool*. For more tools and examples, here are a few additional resources you might consider reviewing:

Anderson, Marian, et al (1999) Facilitation Resources: Volume 5—Making Group Decisions. University of Minnesota: St. Paul.

Bens, Ingrid. (2008) Facilitation at a Glance! A Pocket Guide of Tools and Techniques for Effective Meeting Facilitation (2nd Edition). GOAL/QPC.

Bens, Ingrid. (2005) Facilitating with Ease! Core skills for facilitators, team leaders and members, managers, consultants, and trainers. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.

Kearny, Lynn (1995). The Facilitator's Toolkit: Tools and Techniques for Generating Ideas and Making Decisions in Groups. Human Resource Development Press, Inc: Amherst, MA

Justice, Thomas and David Jamieson (1998, First Edition). The Complete Guide to Facilitation: Enabling Groups to Succeed. Human Resource Development Press, Inc.: Amherst, MA

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

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WORKSHEET

Criterion Grid

Criteria #1:	Criteria #2:	Criteria #3:	Criteria #4:
Option A: <i>Activity =</i> <i>Transportation =</i> <i>Meal =</i>			
Option B: <i>Activity =</i> <i>Transportation =</i> <i>Meal =</i>			
Option C: <i>Activity =</i> <i>Transportation =</i> <i>Meal =</i>			
Option D: <i>Activity =</i> <i>Transportation =</i> <i>Meal =</i>			