

# Leading Together: The Magic of Group Decisions

Highlight Notes from a Keynote by Craig Freshley  
at the AISC Future Leaders Ideas Lab in Philadelphia on October 21, 2016

## What Facilitative Leaders Do

1. Inspire visionary action
2. Support and encourage followers
3. Set and maintain expectations
4. Decide for the group
5. Know limits
6. Go first

## Done Right Ingredients

1. Common goals
2. Understanding first
3. Right process
4. Communication skills
5. Helpful attitudes
6. Individual actions

# Leading Together: the magic of group decisions

*when done right!*

## Productivity

- Stuff gets done
- New good created
- Problems are solved

## Efficiency

- Stuff gets done once

## Peace

- People get along with each other better
- Helps yourself, others, and the world

## Audience Comments

### Why lead alone?

- If my money is at risk
- When the people I'm deciding with have other objectives

### Why lead as part of a group?

- If there is lots of money at risk
- If many people are affected by the decision
- Respect the people I work with and expect they will be helpful

### Why we resist making decisions in groups:

- It takes more time
- Those not in unanimous agreement might resent being left out
- As a leader you have to give up control

### Benefits of making decisions in groups

- Reaffirm what you are thinking
- Buy-in
  - Helpful when it comes to implementation
- Educates everyone about the background and the impact of the decision
  - Leader educates group
  - Group members educate each other
- You get new perspectives from others
- Different levels of commitment when facilitated effectively
  - Helps people focus
  - Decision has more authority

## Key ingredients for group decisions done right

- Open mind
- Mutual respect
- Have a diverse group
- Group includes people affected by decision
- Right size the group – not too many or too few people
- Participation
- Group members have access to relevant information
- Willingness to compromise

## Key characteristics of facilitative leaders

- Confidence
  - To establish credibility and trust
- Validate others' opinions
  - Even if you disagree
- Remain impartial
  - To a point
- Clarify decision-making role at the start
  - Explain to team how their input will be used
- Keep focused and keep the group focused
- Create an environment of mutual trust and respect
  - Ideas on the table are “the group’s” ideas
    - Critique the idea, not the person

## Ground Rules that Craig used at the Teens to Trails Retreat

(at Flagstaff Hut, on Flagstaff Lake, in Maine, in March!)

- For the good of the organization as a whole
- All views heard
  - Be recognized to speak
  - Contributions equally welcome from Board and staff
  - Board members vote
- Listen to understand
- In the spirit of shared problem solving
  - Show us where you stand
  - Group time for group stuff
- Flexible agenda
- Themes and conclusions now and later
- Neutral and confidential facilitation and reporting
- Have fun!

## Conclusions from Craig

- Leading together is not about standing out
  - It's about joining in
- Leading together is not about getting my way
  - It's about working with your colleagues to find the best way for your group as a whole
- Leading together is not about just making things better for myself
  - It's about changing the world around us for the better
- My hope for you is that you lead together – done right!  
.....and change your world for the better.