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Facilitation - Beyond Dot Voting

Premise

Dot voting is a standard facilitation approach used to determine the priority or level of interest in a particular item or group of items often created as a result of brain storming.

The problem with this approach is that, while you do get a majority view of interest, and some level of second order levels of interest (this was my top interest but I am also interested in these things). What it doesn't allow is for people to register massive disagreement about an item as a non starter, or to passionately defend an item that may get low votes. There is also a "default to majority vote" feeling about dot voting which while a valid technique may not really establish consensus in the participants.

Context

As per the dot vote approach, let's start with an affinity map as a result of a brain storming session.

Technique

Step one is to get everyone to vote "absolutely no" for the items - "vote an item off the island". People take each take a turn to vote explaining why they think this item it is not relevant to the subject or why it causes them heartburn. At this stage people can choose to "pass" if they think it makes sense.

For really large sets of item, you might decide to do a few rounds of "vote an item off the island" until you get something more manageable.

You could now dot vote on the remaining items, but it might be worthwhile to offer up a "save". Perhaps one of the items that has been voted off the island is something that someone in the room feels really passionate about. This gives them a chance to make their case before the final vote.

Then finally you will dot vote in the remaining items and make decisions on the outcome from there.

In general you will find that there is a lot more conversation when you use this approach over a standard dot vote approach.

Example

An example where this might occur is where there is a discussion about organization values. Let’s face it, when we talk about values, they all sound good, and it is hard to say that we can’t agree with each and every one of them. But if you value everything, you are pretty much saying that you value nothing, as the values you have will not allow you to improve your decision making.

What to Know More?

- *Additional information*

Consultant, FacilitationTechnique, Tools, Dotvote

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