

## ALIGNMENT AS A DECISION MAKING TOOL

*Agreement is futile... alignment is critical!*

When you have a group of smart, opinionated, engaged and passionate people, you will never agree!

Striving for agreement is a waste of precious time and can result in the following symptoms:

- You think you have agreement, but keep revisiting the same problem.
- People leave the room, but don't fully support the decision with others and their team.
- The organization gets stuck, or slows down, and doesn't move forward on key priorities.

Agreement can be an indication of "group think" or a culture where conflict is avoided at all costs. Healthy conflict, differences of opinions, and diverse ideas, are what propel organizations forward, as long as everyone can align on a decision.

This is a decision making tool. Do not go through the process if:

- A decision has already been made
- You have not identified the options – this is not a problem solving tool

**What is it?** A process that you can use to make a decision as a team and move forward, knowing you have full support, not agreement, of everyone involved in the decision.

The alignment process creates an environment of honest dialogue, respect, and alignment out of conflict.

**You have alignment when everyone can say:**

*"I can support this decision, even though it is not what I would have done or wanted. It is sound enough, that I can fully support it and move forward."*

### **4 Steps to Alignment**

1. Everyone has spoken up and fully expressed their idea and opinion.
2. Everyone has fully listened to the idea or opinion of others.
3. Everyone has truly considered that the other idea(s) may be better.
4. Everyone has fully asked themselves, "Can I support this going forward?"



**Who owns the alignment process?**

- The leader who owns the project
- The leader who is facilitating the meeting
- The leader responsible for the department/ priority or outcome

**Can't get to alignment?**

If everyone cannot say yes to all of these, you don't have alignment. That's ok. It's better to say you are not in alignment, than to move forward thinking that you do have it.

If you can't get to alignment, the leader makes the decision after hearing everyone - and everyone walks out of the room agreeing to support it.

Research shows that group decisions are better than individual decisions in almost all cases.

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