

## Relevance

Building consensus means collaborating to find a solution that satisfies everyone's needs without compromising. Leaders aim to reach a consensus that is workable and sustainable.

## Learning objectives

By the end of the session, participants should be able to:

- Understand consensus and its value
- Find strategies to build a consensus

## Before the session

- Ask participants what they would like to gain from the session and use their comments to customize its content.
- Consider how you will facilitate the session and adjust it for your audience.
- Think of an opening activity that will grab participants' attention and other ways to keep the session interactive.
- Prepare any materials you will need for the session.

## During the session

- Welcome participants and introduce yourself.
- Review learning objectives.
- Highlight these key messages:
  - Consensus allows everyone to offer opinions on decisions that affect them.
  - When people are involved in decision making, they are more likely to support the solutions and have higher morale and trust.
  - Building consensus often includes:
    - Forming a method and timeline for finding a solution
    - Listing what each person wants from the situation
    - Reviewing what is and isn't crucial for each person
    - Getting people together and having them freely suggest to one another as many new solutions as possible
    - Discussing the outcomes of those solutions

- Reworking the solutions and other decisions to meet key needs
- Use discussion questions to boost conversation:
  - How would you describe a consensus?
  - When did you need to build consensus?
  - What are its benefits in decision making?
  - How can openness build consensus and improve morale?
  - What are some tips for building consensus?
  - How can you work toward building consensus at work? In Rotary?
- Lead one of the activities below.
- At the end of the session:
  - Take questions from participants.
  - Review the learning objectives to make sure they've been achieved.
  - Ask participants to write down one idea they'll use from the session.

## Activities

1. Purpose: Building a consensus in Rotary
  - Allow 20 minutes for this activity.
  - Tell participants that their Rotary club membership is falling.
  - Explain that groups of participants will discuss solutions and reach a consensus on how to change their club to attract new members and engage current ones.
  - Divide participants into small groups to begin discussions.
  - Afterward, have a volunteer from each group present its solutions to the larger group and explain how group members reached a consensus.
  
2. Purpose: Building a consensus in a group
  - Allow 20 minutes for this activity.
  - Describe this scenario to the group: A plane carrying their team has crashed on a desert island.
  - Ask each participant to choose only three items that the participant thinks would be most useful for survival, ranking each item in order of importance.
  - Explain that groups of participants will discuss their choices and reach a consensus on a master list of only three items, listed in order of importance.
  - Divide participants into groups of four or five to begin discussions.
  - Afterward, have each group present its list and tell how it reached a consensus.