**Decision Making Options Worksheet**

**Think of a work group you are currently or have recently been a part of.**

**Which of the decision-making options (outlined by David Straus in *How to make collaboration work,* 2002)does the work group use the most?**

* **Decide and announce**
* Decision is made by one person, most likely someone in a leadership position.
* This option should be reserved for issues which are already aligned with previously agreed upon core values and strategies.
* These types of decisions may be needed in an emergency or when time is of the essence.
* This option provides the lowest level of group involvement and therefore group ownership will be low.
* **Gather input from individuals and decide**
* Decisions for leadership to make, after soliciting input and helpful insights from key others.
* When using this option, it is best for leaders to explain the criteria they are using to make the decision so that if the final decision is not in line with one person’s input, they understand their role was one of sounding board, not decision-maker.
* **Gather input from team and decide**
* Leadership makes the final decision, but after input is gathered from the group or team in a group setting.
* This allows everyone, including the leader, to hear the variety of opinions and options offered and can elicit new creative options being presented as a result of group synergy.
* Transparency about the decision-making process is crucial, as is informing the group from the start of when the decision will be made and how they will be informed of it.
* **Seek consensus**
* The group goal is to come to general agreement and to achieve solidarity of belief.
* Consensus may not always be able to be achieved, but sometimes groups give up too soon. If time is not an issue, facilitative leaders need to help groups through this process and encourage them to keep at it.
* The group can always fall back to the previous decision-making option if consensus cannot be reached. After full group discussion, the group members are likely to understand the complexity of the issue and be willing to support the final decision.
* **Delegate with constraints**
* Authority is turned completely over to the group, as long as boundaries and criteria are clear.
* If the group has built strong alignment on vision, mission, values and strategy, then this option can result in a good decision and provides the optimal level of group involvement and ownership.

**Why does your work group use the primary decision-making approach they do?**

**Are there times a different option would be better?**