

Open Mind

SKILLS FOR WORK VIDEO WORKSHEETS

Video 5 Worksheet: Understanding Decision-making Styles

Before you watch

A Match the sentences to the different decision-making styles.

1 I've decided we're not going to the conference this year.

2 There's a feeling that we should spend less on training. Do you agree?

3 We have to cut the budget and that's final.

4 I've made up my mind: we go ahead with the first proposal.

5 What does everyone think about expanding the team next year?

6 I'd like to hear what you think about my ideas for improving performance.

Authoritarian

Committee

While you watch

B ▶ Watch the meeting. Choose the correct options to complete the statements.

- 1 Amanda says the department has one of the **highest** / **lowest** turnovers.
- 2 She has decided there will be no overseas **training** / **travel**.
- 3 All **external** / **internal** training will be computer-based.
- 4 The **awayday** / **Way Forward committee** is cancelled.

C ▶ Work in groups. Discuss the questions.

Which of the decision-making styles from Exercise A does Amanda demonstrate?
What are the pros and cons of this style?



D ► Now watch the life coach's feedback on Amanda's decision-making style. Complete the paragraph with the words and phrases from the box.

consultation decisively demoralised group 'buy in' group involvement

'The authoritarian style Amanda used certainly ensured that changes could be made quickly and (1) _____. However, the lack of (2) _____ and an austere communication style could leave staff feeling ignored, (3) _____ and resistant. Because decisions were being made without (4) _____, a better alternative strategy and an opportunity to get (5) _____ could have been missed.'

E Work in groups. Discuss how Amanda's choice of a different decision-making style might work better for this scenario.

F ► Watch the meeting replay and the life coach's feedback. Match the sentences and phrases (1–4) to the categories (a–d).

- 1 'The committee felt ...'
 - 2 It often takes longer to implement.
 - 3 It gives the group a stake in the decision-making process.
 - 4 'Sorry, I'm not making myself clear enough.'
- a) An example of distancing language
 - b) An example of conciliatory language
 - c) An advantage of committee-style decision making
 - d) A disadvantage of committee-style decision making

G ► Watch the meeting replay and the life coach's feedback again. How does the team's approach to decision making compare with your ideas in Exercise E? What are the pros and cons of committee-style decision making?

After you watch

H Work in pairs to do the roleplay below. Then swap roles.

Student A

You are the Sales Manager for Allendale Farm Organic Yoghurt. Turnover in the last quarter was low and the sales team's results have been disappointing.

The board wants you to cut costs and improve performance. These are some of the decisions you think need to be made:

- Cut the team from ten members to eight.
- No more external training workshops.
- Increase the amount of commission given to each member of the team as an added incentive.

Use the committee style of decision making, with distancing and conciliatory language, to discuss these decisions with your assistant.

Student B

You are the Assistant Sales Manager for Allendale Farm Organic Yoghurt.

- You know that recent results have not been good, and your manager wants to talk to you about some possible changes.
- You feel that the team needs more members for it to achieve better results, and you also believe that there should be more external training opportunities.

Use the committee style of decision making to respond to your manager's proposals and make suggestions of your own.



REFLECT ... How can the different styles highlighted by the life coach in the video help you to approach decision making? Which situations are better suited to each of the styles?