Useful Problem Solving Models

Remember:
- No small group within a larger group should number more than 6 participants or someone will feel disenfranchised.
- Allow time for small groups to share/present their thoughts with the larger group…
- Use chart paper for presentations so that all ideas are posted and validated even if rejected in the long run.
- Chart agreed-upon combinations of ideas without prioritizing.
- Use colored stick-on dots for participants to select their choices… If all one color it shows the number in agreement, if different colors it shows priorities. Sometimes I use different colors to select priorities for a final selection using one color.

Applications		
Fist to Five	**Decision-Making Model**	**Four Horsemen Model**
- To establish quick consensus of group opinions - To identify who opposes and who will lead. - To establish group feedback about a single action or alternative. - To poll the group for immediate action	- To assist in individual decision-making - To help a small group brainstorm and analyze alternatives - In a group, when people need to evaluate and analyze	- To establish a group consensus - To prioritize alternatives - Provides forum for members to influence the group - Useful for small or large groups - To make a decision that everybody can live with
Process		
Make Action statement. Group holds up	Steps (see chart)	Steps (see directions)

Fist = I oppose, will block
1 finger = I oppose, will not block
2 fingers = I oppose, but might help
3 fingers = I support, but not willing to help
4 fingers = Strong support, will work for it.
5 fingers = strong support, will provide leadership
	1. Identify the problem
	2. Information needed
	3. Brainstorm alternatives
	4. Evaluate the consequences
	   • Positive
	   • Negative
	5. Identify factors influencing me
	6. Make a choice
		1. Agree on the problem to be solved or decision to be made.
		2. List possible solutions and/or ideas
		3. Ask for clarification; make sure everybody understands the ideas.
		4. Combine ideas that are similar or duplicate.
		5. Invite all group members to express opinions about any ideas or argue for or against them
		6. Each group member selects 3 to 5 ideas he/she likes best.
		7. Tally selected ideas.

Decisions I Make

What's the Problem???

Information Needed

Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
Positive consequences Negative consequences	Positive consequences Negative consequences	Positive consequences Negative consequences

Factors Influencing Me

My Choice

No Lose Group Decision Making

Group decisions that work are made when no group member ends up feeling like a loser. To achieve this, a group must pay attention to the process of decisions as much as the issues being decided. Making no lost decision involves two phases:
- The invention phase, in which the group generates a long list of possible solutions without regard to their feasibility.
- The evaluating phase, in which the group sets priorities and reduces the list of ideas to arrive at the idea(s) it will use.

Steps with the Four Horsemen

Agree on the problem to be solved or decision to be made. Make sure everybody is talking about the same thing. Remember that a group can only do one thing at a time.

The Brainstorm Horseman:
- List possible solutions and/or ideas. List every idea you can think of, without regard to feasibility, legality or cost. Encourage group members to build on each other's ideas, even silly or ridiculous ideas. This should be fun!

The Clarify Horseman
- Ask for clarification; make sure everybody understands the ideas. Don't debate the ideas here; just focus on clarifying and understanding. Any group member can help to clarify.
- Combine ideas that are similar or duplicate. Resist the tendency to over-organize the list; the purpose here is only to avoid having an idea listed more than once.

The Advocate Horseman
- Invite all group members to express opinions about any ideas on the list, argue for or against them. Keep comments focused on the ideas; avoid commenting on other people's opinions.

The Prioritize Horseman
- Each group member selects the 3 to 5 ideas he/she likes best. Base selections either on personal preferences or specified criteria you have developed. Items with the highest vote totals are group priority ideas.

Board Decision Making   Kirkland Alliance of Neighborhoods Board   Marcia Holland, CAE