**Relevance**

**BUILDING CONSENSUS**

Building consensus means collaborating to find a solution that satisfies everyone’s needs without compromising.Leaders aim to reachaconsensus 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.
1. 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.