TEAM EFFECTIVENESS

The Decision Trap Smart Teams Fall Into



Have you ever been in a meeting where everyone agrees, the decision gets made, and yet something tells you that the team hasn't really explored all the possibilities?

It happens more often than we realise. In teams, we often value collaboration, alignment, and the ability to move quickly. But sometimes, in our effort to maintain harmony, we stop asking the questions that could lead to better decisions. This is where groupthink creeps in.



Imagine a leadership team preparing to launch a new initiative. The leader is confident about the proposed approach, and one by one, team members agree. A few have reservations, but nobody wants to slow things down or appear unsupportive. The team moves forward, only to discover later that some obvious risks were never discussed. The problem wasn't a lack of expertise. It was the absence of healthy challenge.

In my view, one of the biggest misconceptions about effective teams is that they must always be aligned. True alignment doesn't mean everyone thinks alike; it means people have had the opportunity to think differently before committing to a decision.



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A Manager's Playbook: Make Disagreement Work for You

So, how can managers encourage better decisions without turning every discussion into a lengthy debate?



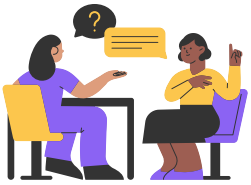


Invite different perspectives early.

Give people a moment to form their own opinions before opening the discussion, especially when senior leaders are involved.

Ask better questions.

Instead of "Does everyone agree?", try "What might we be missing?" or "What could go wrong with this approach?"





Normalise constructive disagreement.

Make it clear that challenging an idea is not the same as challenging a person.

Know when to move forward.

Not every decision needs extensive debate. Match the depth of discussion to the potential impact and reversibility of the decision.



As managers, our role isn't to create rooms where everyone agrees. It's to create environments where people feel comfortable speaking up, challenging assumptions, and contributing perspectives that might otherwise go unheard. Because sometimes, the most valuable contribution in a meeting isn't another person saying yes. It's the person brave enough to ask, ***"Have we looked at this differently?"***



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