

Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, Volume 25, 1998

HEALTH PROMOTING BEHAVIORS-A DECISION MAKING EXERCISE

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This exercise focuses on the benefits and costs involved in group contrasted with individual decision making. Student like to do this exercise and become very involved. The exercise shows some situational factors a person might consider before using group or individual decision making. The exercise gives students learning about decision making the added opportunity of increased understanding by doing and analyzing decision making in a psychologically safe environment.

The exercise begins with specifying the objectives it wishes to accomplish for learners. There are three-one is to contrast the advantages and disadvantages of individual and group decision making. Another is to experience and discuss some situational factors that a manager might consider when using individual or group decision making. And lastly students are ask to practice consensus building skills in group decision making.

Students working alone are asked to think what percentage of 1262 adults age 18 or over in a national health phone survey reported that they engaged in certain health promoting behaviors. There are fifteen behaviors that they must estimate percentages for. Students are then formed into groups which must do the same task by consensus. Guidelines are given to each group for promoting group consensus. Each individual is given a packet containing instructions and a worksheet for recording individual and group percentage estimates. The facilitator gives students the results of the national health survey. Using the worksheet learners can compute their individual score and the score for their group estimate. Each group using the worksheet health survey official percentages, calculates an individual score by taking the absolute difference between each resultant health survey index percentages and the percentages that the individual working alone gave a behavior. The absolute differences are summed giving an

individual score. The smaller the score the closer it is to the official health survey index percentage ratings. The average individual score as well as the highest and lowest individual score is calculated and recorded on the worksheet. Next group percentage scores are determined using the same procedure.

While these calculations are being done the facilitator puts the following table up. The table is filled in by going round robin from group to group.

TEAM#\nSCORE	1	2	3	4	5	6
INDIV.						
X INDIV.						
HIGH INDIV.						
LOW INDIV.						
TEAM						

Some discussion questions posed to the groups are as follows:

1. Which score most accurately matches the health survey score? The average individual scores or the team score? Why? Remember the more closely the match the lower the score.
2. Was the best or worst individual score more or less accurate than the team score?
3. What were the behaviors that helped and hindered attaining a team consensus? Did these behaviors increase or decrease the team's accuracy?
4. In general what are the advantages and disadvantages associated with team decision making?

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5. Are there certain situational factors that make team decision making more appropriate than individual decision making? What questions should be considered?

The exercise concludes with five factors that a decision maker might consider in choosing between individual and group decision making. The exercise also includes a bibliography and facilitator suggested instructions for conducting the exercise. A complete copy of the decision making exercise may be obtained by contacting Allen Gulezian, 300 Lookout Mountain Drive, Ellensburg, Washington, 98926. Phone (509) 925-3265.