

DECISION SUPPORT CENTER

The Institute for Economic Advancement (IEA) Decision Support Center located in the Donald W. Reynolds Center for Business and Economic Development on the University of Arkansas at Little Rock campus is available as a resource for group decision facilitation. The IEA Decision Support Center allows the synthesis of information on the organizational level, the department level, the unit level, the team level, and the individual level. The decision support center's goal is to assist with each facet of the group decision making process.

The facility permits a trained facilitator to guide groups through complex issues via a set of user friendly GroupSystems tools selected to make meetings not only more efficient but also more interesting. Issues and ideas can be efficiently evaluated and prioritized making it possible not only to achieve a set of workable results, but also, obtain a documented report of the proceedings. The center allows groups to make decisions quickly, collaboratively, and with confidence.

The mainstay of the IEA Decision Support Center is the anonymity component afforded meeting participants by the GroupSystems collaborative software tool. IEA's Decision Support Center users can add ideas, comments, and observations to the structured group discussion anonymously, by means of their keyboard. Anonymous input allows participants a sense of freedom from the traditional problems associated with group discussion and consensus building. The playing field becomes equal as dominant personalities no longer drive the discussion and business relationships no longer direct opinion. The process improves the quality of group decisions by removing the most frequent impediments to good decision making.

What are the advantages to using the Decision Support Center for your meeting?

- ◆ Preserves the richness of information by managing the complexities of issues instead of having to use a weaker overview of the information.
- ◆ Maintains the focus in group meetings by reducing the need to repeat ideas, while building on and around the information already on display.
- ◆ Enables facilitator to keep participants focused and communicating.
- ◆ Build feasible, practical and acceptable solutions by combining the opinions of different people and negotiating a shared understanding.
- ◆ Enable participants to enter complex situations and understand the value of multiple opinions and ideas.

What types of problems can the Decision Support Center address?

- ◆ An abandoned agenda
- ◆ Decisions that were not reached
- ◆ Plans for follow-up not made
- ◆ Undocumented meeting notes and recommendations
- ◆ Dominating personalities
- ◆ Quiet participants not making a valid contribution
- ◆ Ideas limited by negative comments

What type of meeting can the Decision Support Center help with?

- ◆ Strategic Planning
- ◆ Idea capturing
- ◆ Conflict resolution/negotiation
- ◆ Focus creativity in meetings
- ◆ Stakeholder analysis
- ◆ Structured brainstorming
- ◆ Scenario building
- ◆ Problem identification/solving
- ◆ Qualitative data analysis
- ◆ Consensus building through polling and voting
- ◆ Curriculum development/redesign
- ◆ SWOT analysis
- ◆ Board and departmental retreats

How do I learn more?

Free demonstrations are available to highlight the center's capabilities. Initial no charge meetings to discuss your specific needs can be arranged by calling Greg Hamilton at 501-569-8542 or through email at gghamilton@ualr.edu. Additional information on decision support and other services offered by IEA can be obtained by visiting the IEA website <http://www.aiea.ualr.edu>.

How much will it cost?

Each meeting in the IEA Decision Support Center will be tailored to the unique needs of the client. A comprehensive proposal outlining costs, timelines, and reporting capabilities will be provided after the initial meeting.



"The in-depth work-product of the Decision Support Center has become an invaluable guide for us at The Clinton School. The Center's contribution is insightful and very constructive. We constantly refer to it and certainly have learned from it. Truly a first-rate presentation!"

David Pryor, Dean, Clinton School of Public Service