

VIRTUAL COLLABORATION BEST PRACTICE

FIST TO FIVE

OBJECTIVE: Achieve clarity on each individual's degree of agreement to an idea in order to reach an acceptable level of group consensus.

This is a classic facilitation practice that works in person and can also work well virtually. All participants give their opinion about a proposed decision and thus the group gains understanding about the level of consensus that has been achieved. This activity can be done quickly with "gallery view" in a video conference platform, or can be augmented using an online whiteboard or slide.

The Question We Are Answering:

What Are We Agreeing To Do First?

The Proposed Decision:

Customer Survey 

The Votes:

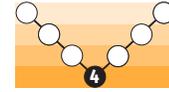
					
No Agreement	Strong Reservations	Some Reservations	Neutral	General Agreement	Enthusiastic Agreement
		Carol	Desmond	Maia	Aesha
				Reggie	Charles
				Minju	Juan

TIME

10-15 minutes,
depending on group size

**Facilitation Model
Stage 4**

Getting Closure
on Commitments

**OPTION 1: Get a Quick “Temperature Reading” With Gallery View**

This option is a visual practice to see how an idea is landing with a group. It is meant to be inclusive, intuitive and fast.

Steps

1. In order to gauge agreement to an idea or proposal via video-conference platform, make sure the group is in “gallery view” or equivalent so that everyone is able to see one another.
2. Frame the activity by explaining that you’d like to test the temperature of the group in regards to the suggested proposal. Instruct everyone to hold up one hand with a vote from zero (closed fist) to five (all five fingers). Explain the scale: A closed fist = no agreement; 1 finger = strong reservations; two fingers = some reservations; three fingers = neutral; four fingers = general agreement; five fingers = enthusiastic agreement.
3. Wait until all have shown their vote. If participants have voted three and above, summarize that there seems to be general agreement. You may ask to hear if some of the “threes” would like to weigh in. If members of the group have voted two or lower, then ask to hear from those folks and learn about their reservations. See if they can suggest an alternate idea or a change to the proposal that would bring them on board.
4. Repeat the process, if necessary. Bring closure to the process by stating what the group has decided.

OPTION 2: Provide a Visual Record of Voting With an Online Whiteboard or Slide

This option is more explicit about the decision making and also provides a visual record of the voting. For in-person meetings, we would often record “Fist to Five” votes on a flip chart. In this exercise, the online whiteboard or slide keeps the record.

Prior To The Meeting

1. Set up an online whiteboard or slide with a scale from 0-5. You can do this simply with numbers, or you can insert icons of hands holding up numbers to give your meeting more visual interest and provide quick comprehension of the exercise for participants. Next to each number, note the degree of agreement it represents.
2. To help focus the decision making, include a place on the screen for “The Question We Are Answering” and a place for “The Proposed Decision.”

During The Meeting

3. In your video-conference platform, screen share your online whiteboard or slide. Fill in “The Question We Are Answering” and “The Proposed Decision.”
4. Introduce the scale on the screen.
5. Ask those that agree enthusiastically to hold up five fingers. Record their names underneath
5. Move on to number 4 and so on until you get down to zero. Ask the group if you’ve recorded all of the votes to make sure you haven’t missed anyone.
6. When every individual has voted, either declare victory if the group has voted at a three or above, or, if not, then ask those that voted two or below to share their thoughts. When those that want to speak have been heard, ask for a new decision or a change to the proposal that would raise their vote. Repeat the voting process with the new, proposed decision if necessary.
7. When the group has made its decision, signal closure with a check mark next to the decision or by circling it.
8. Following the meeting, take a screen shot or allow the group to have continued access to the online whiteboard or slide to review the decision that was made.

Tips

- Having a slide or online whiteboard available with a Fist to Five exercise is a nice resource for your facilitation toolbox. Even if you hadn’t planned on the conversation moving into decision making, being able to pull up this screen will help clarify decisions.
 - You can have people say their votes rather than hold up their hands. This works well if some cameras are turned off, if some people are calling in by phone, or if the online whiteboard is the primary interface in which your group is collaborating. Another variation: ask participants to put their votes in the chat.
 - Having your participant names entered on the digital whiteboard or slide prior to the session will make this exercise go even faster.
 - You can find icons of hands holding up numbers in Mural’s icon menu, or on thenounproject.com.
 - You can also use digital graphic recording for this activity.
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