

# **Witadd: a system to access individual and collective ingenuity in team decision-making**

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## **Abstract**

Team meetings are the usual means used by leaders to carry out analysis and search for solutions to the challenges they face. The main objective of these meetings is to access the ingenuity and wisdom of the participants, through the search for consensus to reach the best decision. The problem is that usually the decisions that have the most consensus come from those who have more influence over others or those who have more authority<sup>1</sup>. This behavior reduces the probability of finding the most appropriate solution, leading to decisions that often cause greater problems than those that were attempted to be solved. The second problem is that those who participate in decision-making are those considered with the greatest suitability and experience to do so. In this case, the difficulty is due to the fact that these people apply criteria based on their experience and knowledge that, as such, many times they do not consider a reality that changes every moment<sup>2</sup>. In order to avoid that these two aspects affect the quality of decision-making, we propose a solution that allows access to individual and collective ingenuity, through the autonomous participation of each person.

## **1. Introduction**

Team and work meetings have become the main tool to solve problems of a certain complexity in all kinds of organizations that is why they are the usual means used to access better solutions. However, its greatest limitation is that individual ingenuities do not complement each other but rather line up behind the most influential. On the other hand, from childhood, people are encouraged to believe that those who are best qualified are also those best prepared to make better decisions.

For this reason, possibly, people who exercise leadership believe that the correctness in their decisions is intrinsic to their role, when in reality that success will depend on leading actions that, through the available resources, allow them to reach the best solution of the issue<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a system that allows the integration of individual and group ingenuity to reach more accurate decisions.

## **2. Considerations for making better decisions**

- a. In order to access the greatest ingenuity available in decision-making, we must allow everyone who is related to that issue to participate because that will collaborate in reaching the best decision<sup>4</sup>.
- b. Make proposals outside of a meeting and autonomously, gives participants the opportunity to access their best wits because they are less exposed to the expectations of others<sup>5</sup>.
- c. To avoid influences among the participants, it is necessary that the proposals be presented for voting without knowing the author or the preferences of the others because this helps to access the collective intelligence of the group<sup>6</sup>.
- d. The presentation made by the leader of the question to be resolved should not influence the design of the proposals or their vote<sup>7</sup>.
- e. The leader must encourage the participants to invest their best ingenuity in such autonomous performance. In this sense, one of the main stimuli that will collaborate with the results of this process and also of future processes is the behavior, the actions and decisions that the leader assumes<sup>8</sup>.

### **3. Decision-making system Witadd**

The Witadd system is developed through a project that has the following stages:

- a. The first task is to define the Situation that must essentially stimulate the search for options that address it.
- b. Then it is necessary to define the Objective. The Objective must include the limits that must be respected and the benefits sought so that the proposals made are suitable, feasible and acceptable.
- c. Third, the preparation of the proposals to be made by the participants. This stage includes:
  - i. The leader's invitation to those who can make a proposal.
  - ii. The actions that the leader is going to take so that the invited participants are interested in investing the best of their ingenuity to develop a proposal.
  - iii. To set a deadline to make proposals.
  - iv. The submission of the proposals.
- d. The next task is to vote on the proposals to choose the proposal that they consider most appropriate in relation to the established Situation and Objective. This stage includes:
  - i. The call made by the leader to those who can choose a proposal.
  - ii. The actions that the leader will carry out so that those summoned are interested in investing the best of themselves to choose the best proposal.
  - iii. To set a deadline to vote.
  - iv. Voting of the proposals.
- e. Next, the results obtained with the most voted proposal must be recorded. Since knowing the valid results in relation to the chosen decision requires time, it is important for the leader to bear in mind that to confirm the results, at least a few months must have elapsed since the chosen decision was implemented.
- f. Finally, the conclusions arising from the results obtained must be recorded.

### **4. The leader and their tasks**

We define a leader as a person whose decisions affect the future of others who have a dependent relationship with him. We define leadership as the ability of a person to use the ingenuity of those who are under their dependence to solve the challenges of reality.

The leader, as we indicated, defines the title, the situation, the objective, who is invited to participate, and the times available for that participation. The leader must bear in mind that their behavior, their actions and their decisions in relation to the participants will be one of the main incentives that will collaborate with the results of this development<sup>9</sup>. However, one of the main and most important tasks is the actions that the leader is going to carry out in their relationship with the participants so that, avoiding influencing their perspective; he encourages them to use their ingenuity when they make a proposal and when they vote on it.

Finally, the leader is the one who implements the most voted proposal, records the results of that decision, and presents the conclusions on the verified results.

### **5. Participants**

Participants are those people that the leader has enabled to participate in one of the two stages. The participants in the realization of the proposals and those who vote for them do not have to be the same. However, it is advisable that those who can make proposals can also participate in the vote. Participants who can be selected to vote are those who understand the situation, the objective and the proposals. The leader can also make a proposal and participate in the vote.

### **6. Selection of participants in a project**

It is advised the participation of all those who have some relationship, direct or indirect, with the subject discussed. Normally when any topic is analyzed in the different areas of human activity, only select groups

participate in these analyses, who are those that the leader considers with the capacity and suitability to collaborate in solving the situation.

This prevents the use of the individual and collective ingenuity of all those who are related to the subject and do not participate. Individual ingenuity does not depend on hierarchy, experience, age, training, sex, race or any other aspect that is often used to classify or qualify people. Individual ingenuity is normally a consequence of the opportunities and stimuli that affect each person and to the extent that these stimuli and opportunities are accompanied by regular and intensive training, it will be perceived more clearly<sup>10</sup>. On the other hand, in order to access this ingenuity, we need that the person is interested in using it and investing their effort to collaborate in solving the set objective.

When we make the selection of the participants, mainly in the realization of the proposals, it is important to keep in mind the record of the Bible about David and Goliath. In that story, the Israelis to resolve a dispute with the Philistines, encountered an obstacle that seemed insurmountable and that was to find a member of the Israeli army to face and defeat Goliath, who appeared as a giant and an expert fighter, difficult to defeat, and that he belonged to the army of the Philistines. The result of the confrontation would determine that the army of the defeated would be subordinate to that of the victor. David, a shepherd who had come to the place to bring food to his brothers, and who was not part of the Israeli army, introduces himself to Saul, the leader of the Israelis, and offers to confront Goliath. Saul accepts the offer. David confronts Goliath, knocks him down with a stone thrown from his sling and kills him.

It is important to keep in mind that the fear of the Israeli soldiers originated in that they considered it unlikely to defeat Goliath, and that to do so they relied on the skills and weapons that a soldier normally used to fight a rival. David also thought that he only had his skills and weapons to face the rival, but since he was a shepherd his enemy was the lions and bears that attacked his sheep, through his sling he developed the ability to hunt and kill them when they attacked. Goliath was surely a slower and weaker target than a bear or a lion and so David must have thought he could beat him.

Knowing who has a different perspective and experience within a group, which allows access to an unexpected, simple and effective solution, is something normally impossible to predict, that is why we should allow the collaboration of all those who have a relationship with the process and are interested to participate because that increases the probability of finding the best solution<sup>11</sup>. The David of today we can find in those unknown young people, with limited training and experience, who create amazing companies, some of which are among the first in the world market. That is why the striking thing about this anecdote is not that David has defeated Goliath, but that David has been allowed to face Goliath, although he was not part of the army, he did not handle his weapons and he did not even wear his uniform. However, they listened to him as one more of the team, they accepted that his proposal could be effective, and allowed him to star in a challenge that was decisive for the destiny of all Israelis.

That is why when we must decide who can participate in each stage we should take into account that the ingenuity to access the best decision can come from anyone, especially from those whose perspective relates the particularities of the problem and its resolution with the greatest effectiveness and the lowest cost. Given that we frequently ignore the ingenuity of others, especially those who do not work in our immediate environment, giving the opportunity to participate to more people who can understand the problem and contribute proposals, will translate into a greater probability of accessing a more suitable decision<sup>12</sup>.

## **7. The relationship among participants**

In order to participants to be able to access their own ingenuity and integrate it, they should not know the author of each proposal until the end of the process that will allow reaching a final decision. Once the process is finished, participants will be able to know the authors of the different proposals and the number of votes obtained by each one of them, if the leader so decides<sup>13</sup>.

## **8. Conditions to be met by the proposals**

- a. Satisfy the situation and the goal set by the leader.
- b. Be written in simple terms so that they can be understood by anyone who is not a specialist in that subject.
- c. Explaining why the proposal meets the objective and the established limits.

- d. The proposal should include the limits or references to be taken into account to ensure its effectiveness.
- e. The proposal must be simple, effective and efficient, that is, in a simple path to satisfy the situation and the objective set with the lowest costs and highest benefits.

## **9. Choosing the best proposal**

Participants enabled to vote must choose, according to their criteria, the proposal that meets the following conditions: that satisfies the situation and the objective, that is the simplest and easiest to implement, and that requires the least material and human effort.

## **10. Information management**

Only the project leader will have access to the number of votes obtained by each proposal. The leader is the only one enabled by the system to allow other people, including participants, to access detailed information about the process.

## **11. Conclusions**

- a. The traditional team meetings that are held to make decisions and solve problems, due to their characteristics, make it difficult to access the creativity and ingenuity of the participants.
- b. The process to access individual and collective ingenuity begins with the leader through their suitable performance. That is why it is vitally important to take into account that all the messages transmitted to the group, including their attitudes and behaviors in relation to each member, are stimuli that can collaborate or prevent access to the ingenuity and creativity of the group<sup>14</sup>.
- c. The Witadd system makes it easy to access individual and collective ingenuity. On the other hand, this system also stimulates the participants, to the extent that it is used, to enhance their talents, turning the team's behavior into a spiral that feeds back itself, because the relationship that is built between all its members becomes a stimulus that allows improving the performance of each one and of the group, and thus access every day to more correct decisions<sup>15</sup>.

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