

SITUATION

This explains the situation and introduces the main characters.

A

DISCUSS

- speed (*We want quick decisions ...*)
 - hierarchy (*decision already taken by management*)
 - independence (*entrepreneurial; freedom and trust to take ... decisions*)
 - consultation (*involve everyone who could be affected*)
- Other approaches might be: flexibility; research-focused; focusing on costs.

VIEW

- consensus (*involve a lot of people before deciding what to do*); speed (*do things quickly*); independence (*take decisions alone*)
- cultural differences; personality; different priorities in their jobs
- Different expectations can cause serious misunderstanding, frustration and wasted time and money as people fight and argue with each other.

REFLECT

An example is direct vs indirect communication, which can be a major issue. Some people believe that decision making should be an open and frank exchange of opinions, where strong disagreement is tolerated as a way to find the way forward as quickly as possible. In some cultures, this directness during decision making is viewed as rude and unacceptable, and can lead to breakdowns of professional relationships.

B

VIEW

Person	Conclusions
Eric	Wants to implement Phase 2 immediately as first tests have produced good results.
Lucas	Happy to move forward as soon as possible to Phase 2 and do user testing at Phase 2.
Gabriella	Wants to wait and involve (internal) customers early and get their feedback in Phase 1 before moving to Phase 2.
Rachel	Agrees with Gabriella – it's a high profile project and quality is a priority so should not move too quickly. There is also a need to get approval from the project sponsor to move to Phase 2, which will take time.

REFLECT

The team members are not really listening constructively to each other's point of view. A more standard and structured way is to list the different decisions possible, and then to analyse the advantages and disadvantages of each option, based on agreed priorities.

C

VIEW

Person	Conclusions
Lucas	Likes speed and wants a decision to move on. This could be because of his personality or simply that he's under pressure from people in his own country to move forward quickly.
Gabriella	Her style is driven by the customer and so is focused on high quality and meeting customer expectations.
Rachel	Aware of the politics of decision making at the headquarters, that it's difficult to get stakeholders to agree on a decision. She knows that things can take time.
Eric	Eric is confused but also supports Lucas's desire to move quickly.

REFLECT

Different styles / points of view create the opportunity to find more creative solutions than when everyone thinks in a similar way. But people need to be tolerant of others' styles for the team to achieve a benefit out of its meetings.

D

VIEW

Person	Conclusions
Gabriella	Will resist people pushing for quick decisions even more strongly and defend what she sees as the interests of the customer.
Lucas	Wants to get the other members of the team to understand his situation, so that decision making can be fast.
Rachel	Thinks that she needs to discuss decision making with the group openly (at the next meeting), especially how decision making works at the headquarters. Feels a private word with Lucas is important, in order to coach him to be less impatient.
Eric	Eric has no clear conclusion. He is simply worried at the complexity of the organisation and the challenge of understanding the different points of view.

REFLECT

Gabriella:

Her approach is an option but it may be seen as inflexible and closed by others.

Lucas:

It's a good strategy to inform others of the pressure you are under. But he is possibly rather self-centred and focused too much on his own individual objectives.

Rachel:

It's smart to slow down the team and educate them in the politics at headquarters. It would be a good idea to talk to Lucas and keep him motivated.

Eric:

His lack of action is worrying. Not doing anything means you can lose control of decisions and decisions that you think wrong may be taken.

E

VIEW

2 Bob gives the following tips:

- Be aware that people take decisions in different ways.
- Differences in decision-making style can lead to dangerous frustrations and arguments. So you need to stay engaged and positive with others, to keep listening in meetings,
- It can be useful to discuss decision making openly with others, in order to find out others' needs and priorities and then maybe get agreement on how to take important decisions, to avoid creating damaging conflicts within the team.

REFLECT

Cultural differences mean that very few specific (if any) recommendations for behaviour can be made which will work everywhere. For example, in more hierarchical business cultures it may not be possible to discuss decision-making styles openly. The group works with the style defined by the leader.