

Using the “Thumbs Up” Method of Decision Making

The Thumbs Up Method of decision-making a quick assessment of a given question. It is handy when a brief check-in is needed on a topic, whether a break is needed, whether an agenda item should be tabled until the next meeting – and many other scenarios.

Here is how it works:

1. The facilitator stops the discussion at the appropriate time to make clear that a brief decision check is needed. The meaning if each hand position is described as pictured below.



Fully Agree



Could go Either Way
or Don't Care



Fully Disagree

2. The “question” is phrased so that the possible answers are Yes, No or Don't Care. For example, “Should we table this agenda topic until the next meeting?”
3. Participants are asked to show their hands until the facilitator counts and reports on the outcomes.
4. The facilitator then assesses if the degree of agreement is enough to draw a conclusion. For example: 10 people = 3 thumbs up, 4 neutral, 3 thumbs down might necessitate further clarification. If the next round returns 7 thumbs up and 3 neutral then a pretty clear conclusion can be drawn.

The context for using this technique comes from this book:

Source: [Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making](#) by [Sam Kaner](#) (Author)