USING THE G.R.O.W. MODEL TO ORGANIZE TOUGH DECISIONS

Tough decisions need to be organized so that people can move through them in a logical way. One technique to help people manage difficult discussions is the GROW model. It's a tool facilitators use to manage virtually any kind of tough conversation. It works like this.

The *G* in GROW stands for "**goal**." The first thing in a difficult conversation is to establish the goal of the discussion—and the overall goal you're trying to achieve. Maybe it's to clear the air. Or define the next step in a decision. Or to fix a problem. Or address a looming competitor. Talking about the goal first ensures people are oriented toward the same goal. As an example, let's assume the goal is to fix a database so that people can enter data more easily from different locations.

The *R* in GROW stands for "**reality**." The second thing people need to talk about is the current reality. What's going on? How did we get here? What do we know? What don't we know? Using the database example, the current reality may be that people aren't using the same fields consistently, records are inaccurate, and the database can't import data from other sources.

The *O* in GROW stands for "**options**." What could you do to fix the database? Hire a contractor? Change the management? Establish tighter procedures? Set priorities for what gets fixed first? Scrap the existing platform? Here's where people need to engage in brainstorming and share their ideas.

Finally, the *W* in GROW stands for "**will**"—as in, what will we do? This is the time for people to decide on the next step. It can be the toughest part of the discussion, since a decision means forgoing other options. Perhaps the decision is to hire a contractor to deliver an objective assessment of the database. Then that's what will happen.

Teaching people the GROW model helps them feel more confident and comfortable in managing tough conversations. And that's a key part of managing decisions well.

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