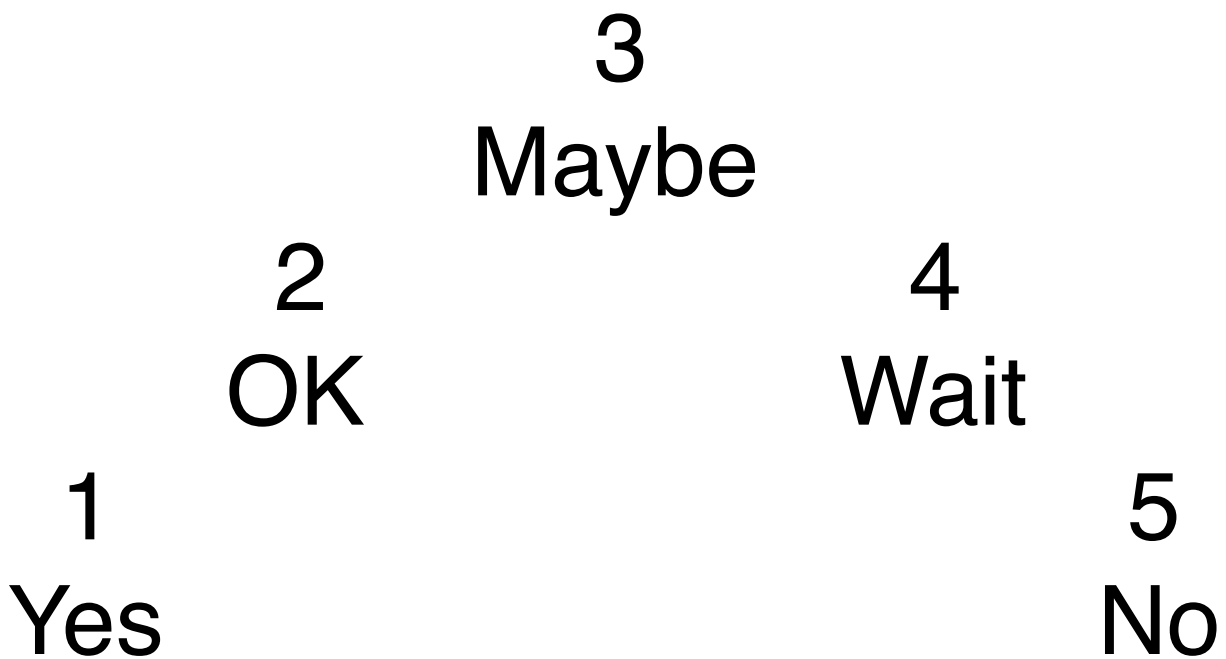


Where do you stand on the following proposal:

?



Using a five-degree consensus scale to reach consensus.

- 1. Invite everyone you want to be involved to join you in a meeting.**
- 2. Using a sheet of paper, flip chart, or white board, write the numbers one through five from left to right in a pyramid across the bottom half.** Label each number, like so: 1 Yes, 2 OK, 3 Maybe, 4 Wait, 5 No.
- 3. Have someone propose a course of action.**
- 4. Begin alternating between taking questions and taking polls.** Even if everyone is already in agreement, encouraging even a little discussion by everyone involved may increase the quality of their input, understanding, and commitment.
- 5. Poll the group by asking each person in the group where they stand on the proposal on the scale of one through five.** For a small group, place a token for each person on the chart next to their stance using sticky notes, magnets, or if it's a white board, markers. For a larger group, post only the number of people taking each stance. Hand signals, where people hold up from one to five fingers to show their rankings, may also be useful.
- 6. Continue alternating between polling and discussion until consensus is reached or deadlock seems clear.** Consensus is reached when everyone is on the left side as a one or a two, which means the proposal is approved; or everyone is on the right side as a four or a five, meaning the proposal can be dropped. Either way you have consensus. Deadlock means everyone isn't together on one side or the other, and alternative proposals or a decision-making criteria besides consensus may be needed.

Enhanced explanations for the stances one through five are:

1. Yes. Let's do it.
2. OK. It's good enough.
3. Maybe. I have questions.
4. Wait. Can we change it?
5. No. Let's do something else.

Questions that might help members of the group include:

- What parts of this proposal do you like?
- What do you want to achieve?
- What parts of it don't you like?
- What do you want to avoid?
- What assumptions are being made that are not agreed to?
- What facts, if we knew them, would make a difference?
- What are the deliverables (who, what, when, how, how much)?
- What alternative deliverables would also work, if any?
- What would change the stances of the most people?