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More on Consensus Decision Making from the Leader of One of Our 2010 SMB Award Finalists

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Last week I wrote on employee engagement around group decision making. Working off an article by the Wharton School, I surmised that as a company grows, its ability to reap returns from making all major company decisions by consensus worsens. In other words, I asked, *Is size the enemy of consensus decision making?*

I was pleasantly surprised to see that Bill Witherspoon, CEO of The Sky Factory – an Iowa-based factory-direct product manufacturer and distributor that's one of 40 finalist organizations for our 2010 Top Small Company Workplace award – left a comment. I thought it was so insightful that it deserved its own post. **Here's part of Witherspoon's response to the question I posed:**

The barrier to consensus is not group size or number of participants. The barrier lies in:

1. *Different levels of information among individuals within the operation (the result of transparency or lack thereof).*
2. *Different "political" agendas within the operation (the result of hierarchical management systems).*
3. *Lack of [Buy Cialis](#) uniformly understood goals of the operation.*
4. *Lack of history - meaning the longer consensus decision making is practiced, the more efficient it gets as the group becomes familiar with the process and develops a deep understanding of the entire operation to which decisions apply.*

I can't deny that Witherspoon's relentless focus on building and relying on consensus decision making – including getting rid of the barriers he mentions above – has produced incredible results for his business: Only 8 years old, The Sky Factory grew revenues in 2008 and 2009, both of which were devastating years for their marketplace peers.

Related: Witherspoon mentioned in his comment that the company posts their workplace culture values on their website. Here's the link to that page and their five "cultural principals." I think they're a fantastic foundation for team engagement activities, whether or not a company leads by consensus.

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