

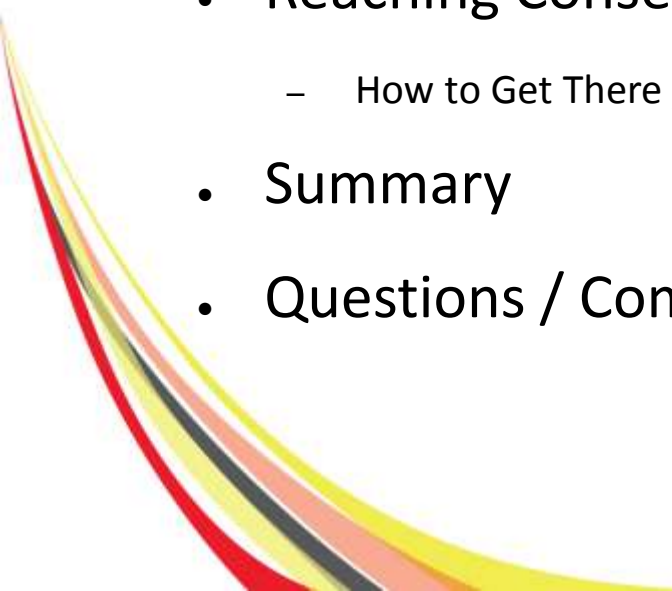
It's OK – Consensus Reached. We've Agreed to  
Disagree!

Sharan Foga

Budapest: 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2015



# Agenda

- Introduction
    - About Me / Consensus Definitions
  - Misconceptions
    - Apache and Project Organisation / Community Interaction
  - Changing Perspective
    - Asking the Community / Changing my Ideas
  - Reaching Consensus
    - How to Get There / Problems / Agreeing to Disagree
  - Summary
  - Questions / Comments
- 

# INTRODUCTION

Who am I?

What is Consensus?



## Who am I?

- Consultant / Project Manager / Author
- Worked in Europe and NZ



- Involved with OFBiz since 2008
- Committer and PMC Member
- My 2<sup>nd</sup> Apachecon




# Definitions: What is Consensus?



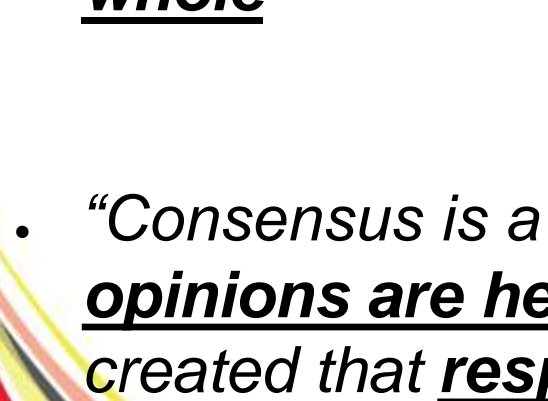
- Agreement
- Harmony
- Accord
- Unity
- Oneness
- Like-mindedness
- Unison
- Solidarity



## Definitions: What is Consensus?

- *“When there's a consensus, **everyone agrees** on something”*
  - *“**Middle ground** in decision making, between total assent and total disagreement”*
  - *“Consensus implies that **everyone accepts** **and supports** the decision, and **understands** the reasons for making it”*
- 

## Definitions: What is Consensus?

- “Consensus depends on participants having shared values and goals, and on having broad agreement on specific issues and overall direction”
  - “Consensus decision-making is a group decision-making process in which group members develop, and agree to support, a decision in the best interest of the whole”
  - “Consensus is a group discussion where everyone's opinions are heard and understood, and a solution is created that respects those opinions”
- 

What did Consensus mean to me?

# Absolutely Nothing!

- I didn't need it
- Didn't use it
- Didn't care
- It didn't affect me





# MISCONCEPTIONS

Project Organisation  
Community Interaction



# My Normal Working Environment

- Corporate Projects
  - Defined Goals and Objectives
  - Fixed Budget
  - Deadlines



## MANAGEMENT




- Managing Projects
  - Planning and Tasks
  - Defined Roles
  - Constant Tracking

# Misconceptions: PMC and Committers


- Project Management Committee
  - Project Steering Committee
  - Senior Management
- Committers
  - Project Managers / Team Lead
  - Follow Up and Progress Reporting



## Misconceptions: Proposals

- Only PMC, Committers or established community members can make proposals
  - It's already been discussed in the past so can never be brought up again
  - I'm new so I don't know anything
- 

## Misconceptions: Responses

- Someone disagrees so it's never going to be accepted
  - No one has responded means no-one is interested
  - Sometimes silence means agreement
  - My opinion won't count I'm not important enough in the community
  - If I disagree with someone they might see it as a personal attack
  - It seems to be like a vote so I can't participate
- 

## Consensus and Me

**It only became important  
to me when I wanted  
the project to do  
something that I wanted!**



# CHANGING PERSPECTIVE

Asking the Community

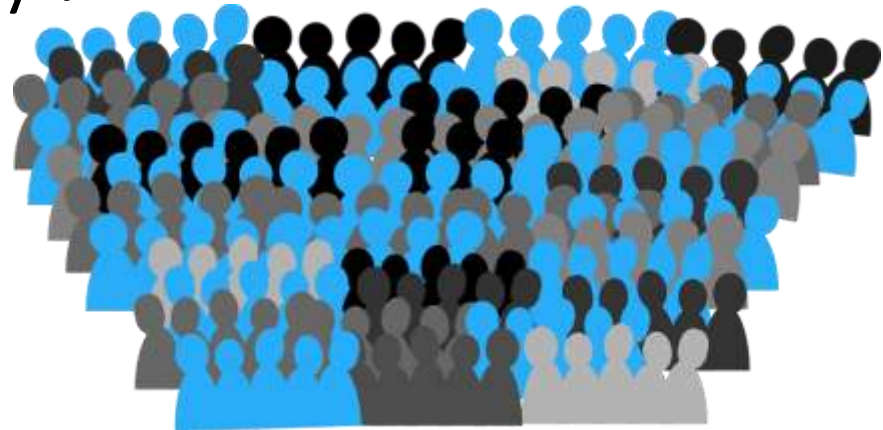
Changing My Ideas



# Asking the Community



- Making proposals is hard
- Publicly stating your view
- Who are these people anyway ?





# Disagreeing

- Disagreeing publicly is hard
- Focus is the topic
- What are the other options?

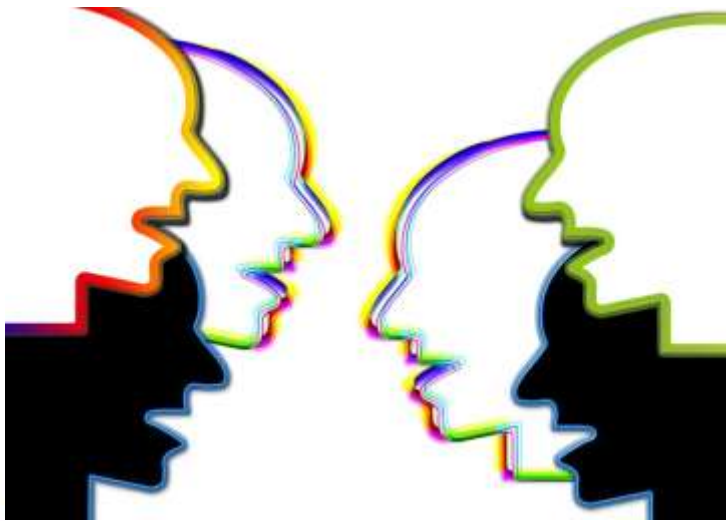


# What made me change my ideas?

- Change of involvement
- Positive feedback /  
Community Support



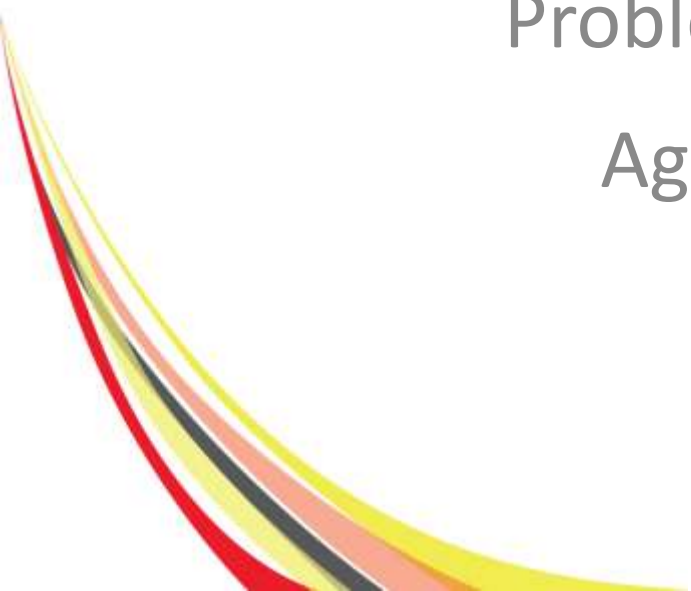
- Didn't have to convince everyone
- Everyone didn't have to actively agree
- Consensus began to work for me



# REACHING CONSENSUS

Problems of Getting There

Agreeing to Disagree



# Consensus: Problems Getting There

- Something you have to work at to achieve
- Can be easy or hard



- Discussions can go on and on
- Things get left in limbo because no decision is taken either way
- Language misunderstandings

# Stating What You Want to Do or Change

- Communicate simply and clearly
- Why are you doing it?
- What benefits does it bring?
- Always ask for feedback

**WHAT?**

**Why?**

**Benefits?**



# Interpreting Responses

- Disagreeing doesn't mean they think it's a bad idea
- Sometimes smaller steps are needed
- May need to go away and do some work offline then report back
- Do you need to respond – Is it Lazy Consensus?
- Focus on the topic not the person
- Assess any alternative options

**It's OK to change  
your mind!**



## Totalling it All Up!

- Integers and Fractions

- +1, 0, -1

- +.75, -0, -0.9

**1+1 = Yes**

- Reading the general mood

- Acknowledge feedback and input

- Address any further discussion points

- Don't close off getting any more feedback

**-0.25 +0.75 = MAYBE?**

# Agreeing to Disagree

- We are all different

- Different people, background
- Different ideas
- Different experiences

- Diverse Community

- Discussions are multi way,
- Based on mutual respect
- Need to accept that not everyone will agree with you
- Not about being right or wrong - it's about having a different opinion





# Agreeing to Disagree

## Problem

- Causing tension / friction in the community
- Open and sometimes heated
- Clear conflicts of opinion
- Round and round with no resolution

## Resolution

- Agreement out of disagreement
- Found a solution even though we didn't agree on the way to handle it
- People did the right thing for the project



# SUMMARY



# Summary

- Didn't think it would affect me ....but it did
- Seen how my views changed by becoming part of a community



- Found that disagreeing is also part of our diversity
- Learned how you can achieve agreement out of disagreement

# Consensus and Me

- Agreement but also recognition that what you want may not be as important
- Process, mindset and idea
- Can't be defined by a single word or sentence
- It's a group of ideas around a central theme



THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

Questions?

Comments?

