

Decision Dynamics - The Groan Zone

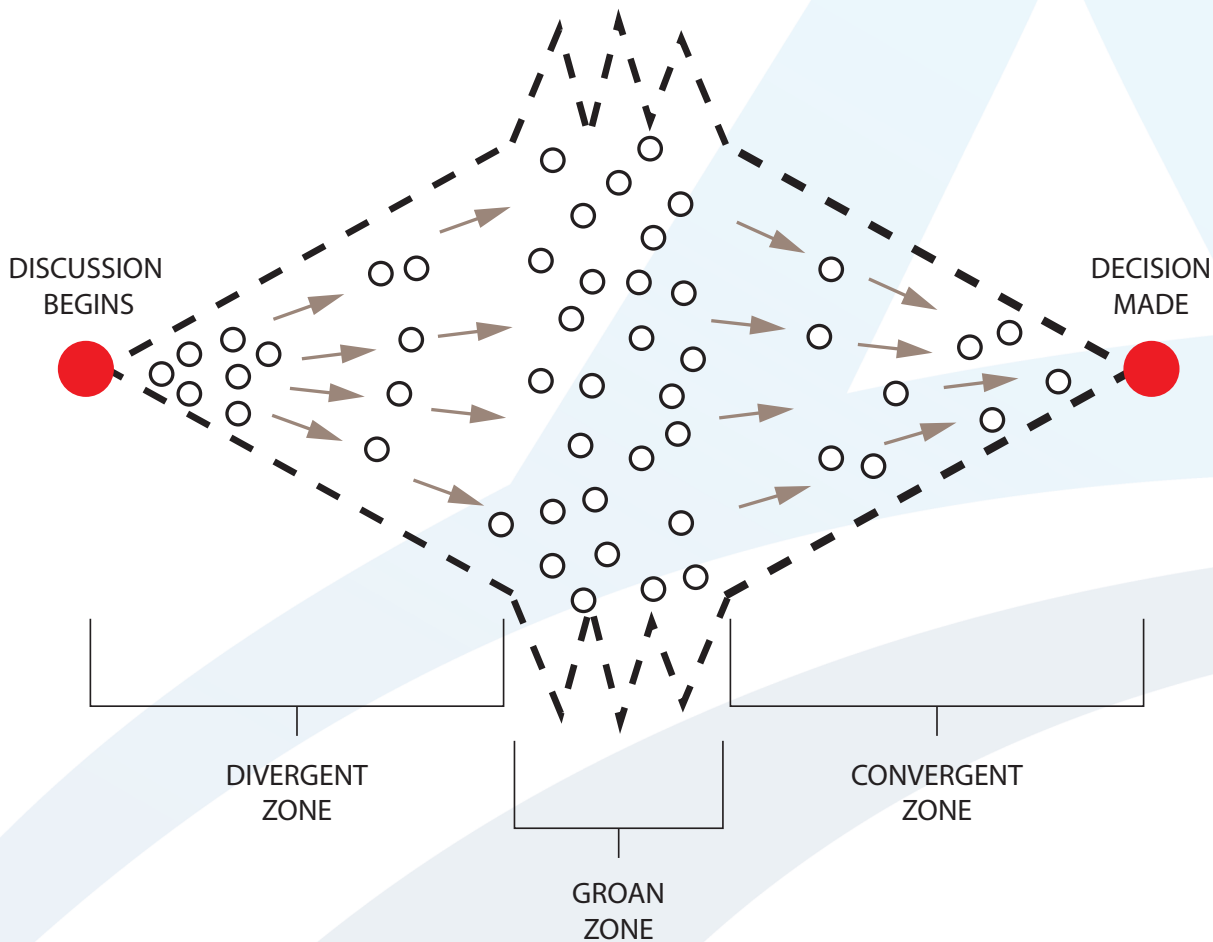
Below is a simple group decision making model. A discussion begins then after discussion a decision is made. When decision making deviates from this process some find it frustrating and unproductive.

DISCUSSION
BEGINS

DECISION
MADE



Guess what, group decision making often deviates from the model above to look more like this...



Model adapted from the *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making* by Sam Kaner.

The Group Dynamics Model

The three zones in the model are representative of group dynamics inherent in different ways of thinking and processing a decision. The **divergent zone** is characterized by the exploring many possible solutions. The **convergent zone** is characterized by narrowing down options, through summarizing, prioritizing, or judgement. The **Groan Zone** is often characterized by confusion and misunderstanding.

The Groan Zone

The feeling of frustration generated in the **Groan Zone** are a byproduct of the often confusing transitions between the divergent and convergent zones. It's painful, it's normal, and if the group wants sustainable agreements, then spending time in the Groan Zone is paramount. With proper facilitation, spending time in the Groan Zone will result in **shared understanding** and convergence on a **sustainable solution**.