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**PMEducation**

DELPHI TECHNIQUE

**WHAT IT IS**

The Delphi Technique (Delphi Method) is a method to reach consensus. In **Risk Management** disagreements can arise amongst Key Stakeholders about such matters as Cause of a Risk, and possible Effects of a Risk. Dephi is based on the assumption that group judgements are more valid than individual judgements. The Delphi Method prevents any one person from unduly influencing the group decision.

**HOW IT WORKS**

1. A representative group of participants is selected for the purpose of reaching a consensus. The participants are selected for their expertise on the matter for which consensus is sought.
2. The participants remain anonymous. This can mean they do not know who else is participating; or at least their responses remain anonymous. Anonymity prevents one participant from dominating the group, allows free expression of opinions, and allows participants to change their minds.
3. The facilitator issues a questionnaire relevant to the matter. A strict time limit on responses must be maintained.
4. The facilitator collects the answers to the questionnaire, filters irrelevant information, and sends all responses back to all participants. (Again with a strict time limit on response time)
5. Participants modify their responses and comments, with the goal of reaching a consensus.
6. Repeat Steps 3 and 4 until a consensus is reached.
7. Facilitator publishes the final consensus.

**KEY ELEMENTS**

For this method of consensus forming to be effective, the following key elements must be used.

* Representative selection of participants
* Anonymity of participants
* A non-biased facilitator
* Strict time limit on participant responses
* Participants who are motivated to reach a consensus
* Participants can change or modify their responses at any time

ADVANTAGES and DISADVANTAGES

Of DELPHI

ADVANTAGES

* Captures input from experts in the matter.
* Removes influence of hierarchy, biases, and ‘who is the best talker’ from amongst the participants

DISADVANTAGES

* Dependent upon actual expertise of the participants
* May take longer time than available
* Could reach an impasse

FINAL NOTE: Sometimes just knowing that we will keep going with this method until a consensus is reached will be motivation enough for each participant to “give a little” and get to a consensus.