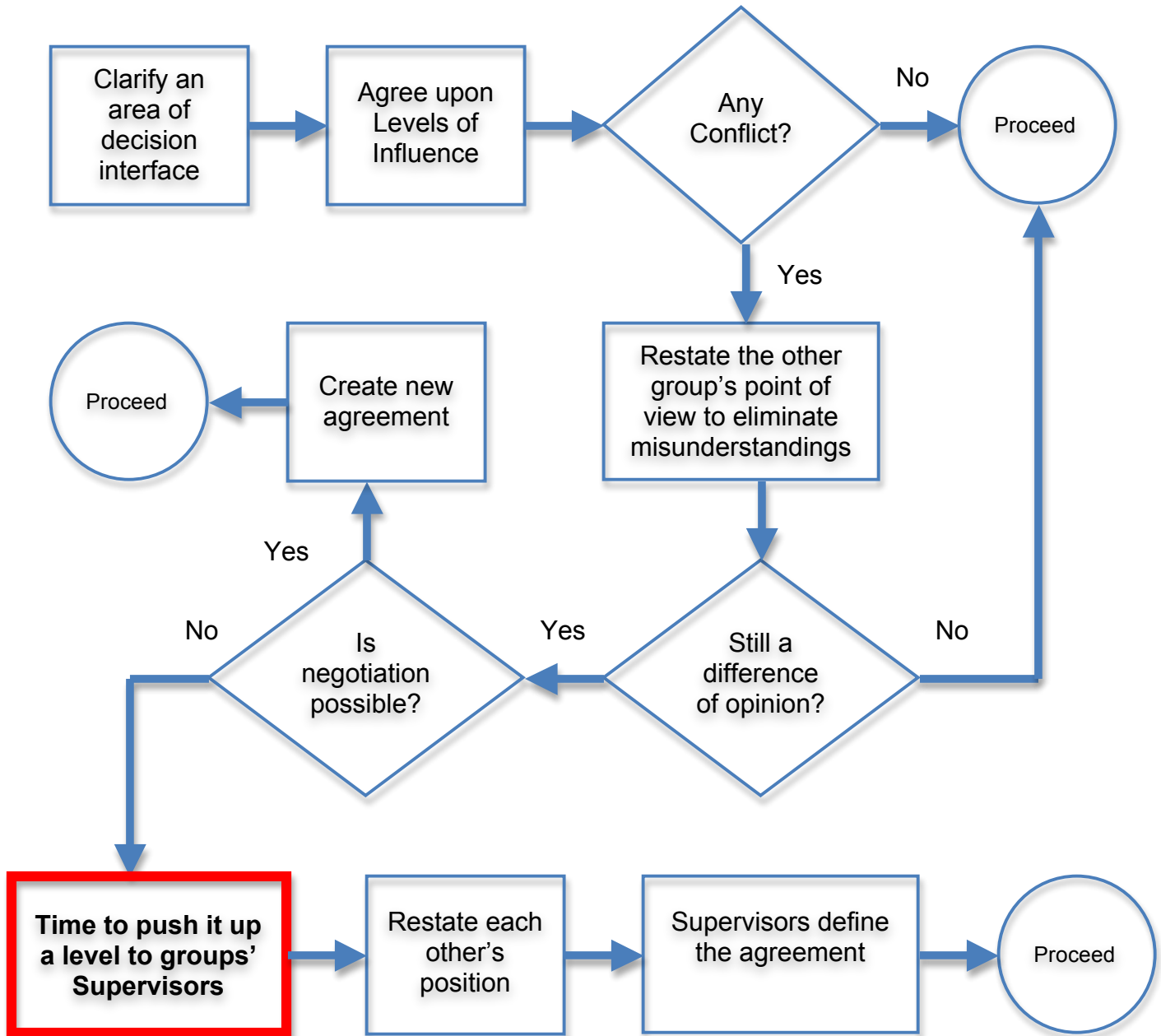


WORKING THROUGH INTERFACE DIFFERENCES

Here is a common sense process for tracking how and when to apply the Levels of Influence when decisions affect responsibilities that are shared by more than one department, function, or group.



Levels of Influence and Responsibility in Decision Making

Suggest

This person is free to give input, but his or her input is not actively solicited. Their input has no authority in the actual decision.

Informed

The results of the decision will influence this person's work, and their work actually puts the decision in motion, so they must be informed of the decision if it is to be carried forward effectively.

Consulted

This person has information that is essential to the ultimate decision. It is important to gather this information at the appropriate time in the process, and a decision is not final if his or her input has not been included.

Participate

This person has an actual "vote" in the decision. The degree of this "vote" must be clarified to identify whether it is intended to be a unanimous, consensus, or majority decision. RI's Decision Making Flowchart explains these differences more clearly.

Veto

This person has more authority than one simple vote. He or she can prevent a decision from being made if s/he objects strongly enough. But s/he does not have the authority to put a decision in motion beyond the objections of any other person.

Authority

This person has the full authority to make and even impose a decision. He or she has the ultimate authority to override the Participate or Veto of any person. It is also true that when a decision cannot be reached, when the desired decision making process is not being accomplished within a defined time frame, then the person with ultimate authority can make a "decision by authority." The authority should ensure the team is understood about their point of view while acknowledging their risk being taken. Each time this is done though, the authority risks losing employee involvement because of less shared responsibility for decisions.

Adapted from Schmuck, R.A., Runkel, P.J., Saturen, S.L., Martel, R.T., & Derr, C.B. (1972). Handbook of organizational development in schools. Oregon: National Press Books, 1972.