

Case Study: Texting all Teams: Amazon Enters the Cell Phone Market
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This paper aims to discuss the case study *Texting all Teams: Amazon Enters the Cell Phone Market* (Scandura, 2016, p. 252). The case illustrates the development of the *Fire Phone* by Amazon and how the project was obstructed by technical and organizational problems.

Scandura (2016) invites the reader to think of methods that teams could potentially use to make a decision based on different ideas from team members. Small teams could decide what the best features should be included in the development process by firstly using brainstorming. Scandura (2016) states that brainstorming allows teams to work on wild ideas generation; additionally, the method defers judgment, builds on the ideas of others and helps team members stay focused on the topic. After a detailed brainstorming, the team could decide on what features they would include using the consensus method. Scandura (2016) affirms that “in a consensus decision-making process, everyone can say they have been heard and will support the final decision” (p. 238). The consensus method involves seven steps: 1) introduction; 2) clarifying questions; 3) discussion; 4) establishing basic directions; 5) synthesizing or modifying proposals; 6) calling for consensus and 7) recording (Scandura, 2016). The founder of Amazon explains that disagreements happen: “we do have disagreements on the base among Amazon executives every day, but not on issues of alignment. The principles are so firmly established that people are very good at self-selecting” (“The boss that is Jeff Bezos,” 2014, p.3). With respect to factors that would be the biggest in making the decision are customer satisfaction and innovative features. Brandt (2011) explains that Bezos’s philosophy is to put customers first. The CEO of Amazon affirms that customer obsession is one of the most important leadership principles of Amazon and he hopes his employees are aligned to that principle. Bezos believes that one “can’t insulate yourself from competition by being customer-obsessed. But if that obsession leads to invention on behalf of customers, it helps you stay ahead” (McGinn, 2014 p. 60). A leader or supervisor should be called when teams cannot reach a consensus; but it is advisable to involve key people to make a decision. The normative decision-making model includes the role of a facilitator in the decision-making process: the leader gives teams autonomy to generate ideas. The reader learns

about conflicts among team members, but it is important to note that if members are aligned to the goal of the organization, the normative decision-making model can still be effective (Scandura, 2016). Scandura (2016) argues that there are factors to consider when choosing the model: 1) the significance of the decision; 2) knowledge of the team; 3) the agreement of team members with the goals of the leader, among others. According to Quinn (2016), Bezos has a curious recipe to establish the ideal size of a team: the team must be able to be fed by two pizzas. Bezos believe in the power of synergy of small teams towards new ideas. In conclusion, this author believes that brainstorming and consensus methods can be utilized in order to reach a decision on the best features to include based on the core values of Amazon: customer satisfaction and innovation. The normative decision-making model with the leader as facilitator can be applied to the case because the decision requires commitment and knowledge from teams and the objective is to get concurrence on a creative and innovative decision (Scandura, 2016).

References

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