Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) to Reach an Informed Group Conscience

In a Knowledge-Based Decision-Making culture, background information is introduced to frame a topic and then full discussion of the idea takes place before a motion is presented. Sometimes these discussions continue over several Conferences before any decision for a motion or action is made.

KBDM requires considerable research and information gathering before and possibly even during the discussion. At the end of a discussion, further information and knowledge may be necessary to reach an informed group conscience. A motion need not be made after every discussion. Premature action (e.g., making or amending motions early in the discussion or hastily calling the question) can divert attention from the subject at hand, thus confusing or delaying Conference business. With KBDM, the decision reached is usually one that most Conference members can support.

Five key elements comprise the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making process for reaching an informed group conscience:

1. Open communication between leadership and membership
2. Dialogue before deliberation
3. Common access to full information for all decision-makers
4. Existence in a culture of trust
5. Confidence in the competency of our partners

The Four KBDM Questions

The background information used to frame a topic is usually gathered after the four KBDM questions below have been answered:

**Question 1**: What do we know about our current or prospective members’ wants, needs, or preferences that is relevant to this discussion? What do we wish we knew, but don’t?

**Question 2**: What do we know about the capacity and strategic position of the organization relative to this issue? What do we wish we knew, but don’t?

**Question 3**: What do we know about the current realities and evolving dynamics that are relevant to this discussion? What do we wish we knew, but don’t?

**Question 4**: What are the ethical implications of our choices (pros and cons)? This includes consideration of how the Legacies apply. Identify both pros and cons. What do we wish we knew, but don’t?