

Thumb Voting

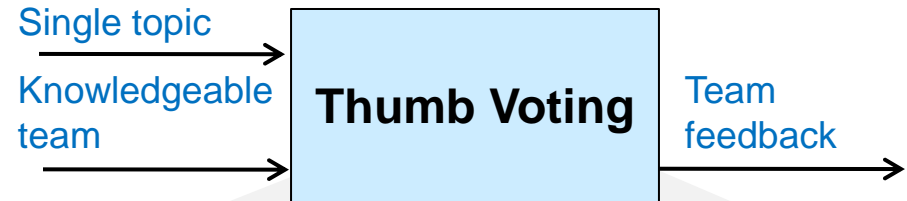
Problem

How to quickly assess team alignment?

Difficulty

Easy to use

- **Thumb voting** is a fast way to
 - Make a go/no go decision
 - Determine that an issue must be addressed
- Thumb voting can enable a team lead to quickly obtain consensus



1. A topic or path forward is presented.
2. Each team member uses a thumb to vote one of 3 ways:
 - Thumb up – **I agree**
 - Thumb down – **I disagree**
 - Thumb sideways – **I can “live with it”**
3. The team lead assesses the thumbs. If the number of sideways thumbs is
 - **Small** – then use the decision from the up and down thumbs
 - **Large** – then more discussion of the topic is likely needed

3 possible votes using a thumb



Yes

I agree



No

I disagree



OK

Good enough

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Thumbs-up-icon.svg>

Thumb Voting – Example – Team Meeting

Suppose you have a team meeting with 20 people.

You have proposed a plan and ask for thumb votes on “**Do we proceed?**”



If you obtain

15

2

3

→ likely safe to proceed

If you obtain

12

3

5

→ likely need to review plan with team

If you obtain

10

5

5

→ certainly need to review plan

Here, there are many sideways thumbs, and the “yes” votes do not overwhelm the “no” votes. The team is not aligned.

Here, there are many more “yes” than “no” votes, and the number of “good enough” votes is modest.

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Thumbs-up-icon.svg>

Thumb Voting – Notes

Slide 1

1. Usual thumb voting is either up or down. The key here is to add a third option – the sideways thumb.
2. The sideways thumb is usually interpreted as “I can live with it” – meaning any of
 - I don’t have a strong opinion
 - I’m not going to argue about it
 - I don’t know enough to make an informed decision
3. Thumb voting involves the entire team. After thumb voting a team often feels more committed to the team’s decision.

Figure

- <https://freesvg.org/thumb-up-symbol-with-right-hand>

Slide 2

1. Here are worked examples about how to interpret different outcomes when 20 people are voting.

Figure

- <https://freesvg.org/thumb-up-symbol-with-right-hand>