

“When we can work together cooperatively..., we can accomplish anything. When we do so, we eliminate the weakness of one person standing alone and substitute the strength of many serving together.”

– Thomas S. Monson

All council members have dual responsibility, and remembering that can increase the unity and effectiveness of a council.

1. To represent the needs and perspective of the individual organizations they lead
2. To share equally with the others a sense of stewardship for the success of the overall objective in that area

“When more people feel ownership of the problem, more people are willing to become part of the solution, which greatly enhances the possibility of success.”

Input from Council + Revelation to lead = Miracle

Key Principles in Decision-Making through Councils (How to be an Effective Leader):

A. An Effective Leader has a Sense of Vision

“While it is true that councils can be effectively used to actually formulate plans of action, it is also true that the leader must come to the council with, at the very least, a sense of vision. That vision doesn’t necessarily have to include every detail of *what we want to do*. But if the council is going to arrive at any meaningful decisions, the leader needs to know *where we want to go* and *what we want to have happen*.”

The council leader must decide and teach the council –

1. Where we want to go – The Vision
2. What we want to have happen – The Desired Outcomes

“Almost universally, people become motivated when they feel a sense of purpose and when they feel as if they are part of a greater cause. It is the privilege and responsibility of leaders to provide those whom they lead with a clear and overpowering sense of vision.”

B. An Effective Leader Encourages Free Expression

“...councils should always allow time for discussion and consideration of differing points of view. We may not always agree with everything others say, but we will all grow from having the opportunity to express ourselves and to consider opinions or approaches to a problem that may vary greatly from our own.”

C. An Effective Leader Respects the Gift of Agency

“Although freedom always brings with it certain risks, challenges, and responsibilities, it also brings real power to those who choose to exercise it wisely. And it gives to all who are so endowed a degree of ownership for council decision, which experience has shown to be a key element in the successfully functioning council.”

D. An Effective Leader Gives Clear, Precise Instructions

Clear and precise instructions given by the council leader are indispensable to the success of the council. Just as much as it the leader’s responsibility to give clear and precise instructions, it is a responsibility of the council members to ensure that they understand the instructions as it meant. The leader must clearly define expectations and then let the council members decide how to best accomplish the details.

E. An Effective Leader Works Step by Step

The council leader must take the council through the process one step at a time, providing plenty of opportunity for reporting, counsel, and follow-up instructions along the way.

F. An Effective Leader Delegates

“Any leader who becomes bogged down in an endless array of details runs the risk of undermining the effectiveness of his or her ministry.”

Two important reasons to delegate –

1. The leader is responsible for giving highest priority and attention to tasks he or she alone has the authority to handle. Delegating tasks that can reasonably be accomplished by someone else allows him or her to do so.
2. It is not only about the person delegating. Another important reason to delegate is to teach. It contributes highly to empowering and preparing leaders for future service. One of the most important evidences of effective leadership is the number of well-prepared people who are in place to carry on the work.

When delegating responsibilities, the leader should always ask for follow-up reports to make sure that the work is being done correctly.

G. An Effective Leader Sets an Example of Hard Work

The leader can inspire the council members and set an example for them by “going and doing”. “...”going” and “doing” isn’t always easy or comfortable. Occasionally, it requires some sacrifice on our part—of time, energy, or personal will. But it is almost always worth whatever effort we make.”

H. An Effective Leader Teaches by Precept and Example

The council leader should not only teach the council members what to do but also show them how it’s done. This principle may not be applicable at all times in every situation. But certainly, the council members should be shown exactly how it’s done when the nature of the task demands for it.

I. An Effective Leader Serves with Love

“...members are more likely to seek counsel from leaders from whom they feel sincere love emanating.” Cultivating and expressing love for those the leader is serving is one of the most important ways to be an effective leader.

“Lean upon them. Learn from them. Love them. Listen to them.”