

Staying Connected

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Training opportunities

Looking for a good conference? In need of a skill upgrade or rejuvenation? Consider these quality training opportunities:

- The Creative Education Foundation's [54th annual Creative Problem Solving Institute](#), June 22nd - 27th, 2008, Pine Mountain, GA
- The [HUMOR Project's 52nd International Conference](#), June 20-22, 2008 at the Silver Bay Conference Center on majestic Lake George, NY
- Pegasus's [Synergy at Work: Gathering Momentum for Meaningful Performance](#), November 17-19, 2008, Boston, MA

Client feedback

96% of the more than 250 respondees to our two-year customer satisfaction survey agree that voting with [Prism's group decision support system](#) accelerates the client team's decision making. 96% also agree that Sean Brady optimizes the client team's overall performance.

On the web

Visit www.prismdecision.com for the latest news, services, and resources.

Our passion

Organizations often struggle through planning or decision-making. Planning teams experience conflict, fail to reach explicit agreement, end frustrated and finish drained.

Prism's client teams are engaged, have fun, move quickly and reach consensus. They emerge refreshed, energized and committed to a plan that will take them from where they are to where they want to be.

Your preferred future

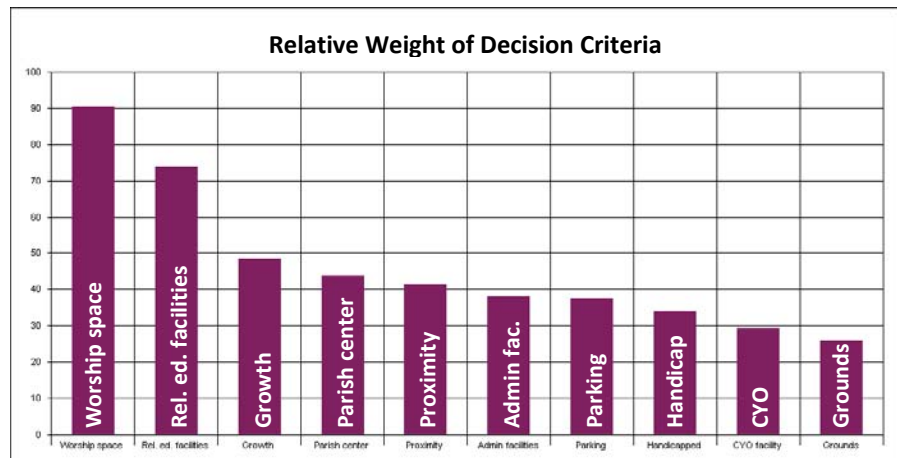
Our passion is to maximize the human potential of client groups to make and implement decisions that achieve their preferred future.

Church merger

Prism's Sean Brady recently assisted two churches that are merging. The parish councils had made excellent progress joining governance and human resource functions. But after two years they remained at stubborn if polite impasse regarding which site to close. This would be a great test to see whether or not [Prism's group decision support system](#) could make an intractable decision tractable!

Three nights to agreement

We spent the first night agreeing to and weighting ten decision criteria. This collegial activity exposed that parking was *not* the most important criterion—despite its having



Solutions

- Strategic planning
- School improvement planning
- Benchmarking
- Alliance management
- General decision support

Tools

- Group decision support systems for face-to-face sessions.
- schoolbenchmarking.com to find benchmark or best-in-class schools
- Frontier Analyst® to benchmark, measure organizational efficiency and set performance targets.
- Concept Systems® for web-based focus groups and planning.

dominated much of the two-year long debate. In fact, it ranked only seventh in relative importance. (See graph.)

The second night, combined site teams made evidenced-based presentations demonstrating how each site contributed to each weighted criterion. In effect, they created the equivalent of a side-by-side product comparison such as you might use when purchasing a car.

The third night, the group used Prism's decision support system to complete a weighted criteria matrix and cost-benefit analysis. (*"Church merger" continued page 2*)

Church merger (cont'd)

Voting the matrix

For each criterion, subgroups reviewed the evidence and used a 1 to 9 scale to score the two sites on a worksheet. They then discussed their scores and began to converge on reasonable, evidence-based scoring.

Each person then used a keypad to vote. After voting each cell, we looked at and discussed the bar graph of results, and revoted if necessary to narrow the range. Participants voted with considerable integrity, so we only needed to revote a few cells.



Total weighted score

Once the vote was complete, the decision matrix displayed the average scores for each cell (Table 1). The matrix also multiplied these average scores by the criterion weight to calculate the total weighted score (Benefit) for each site (Table 2). Site A outscored Site B—4006 to 3501. So we had a decision, right?

Analyzing costs and benefits

Wrong. Site A had greater benefit than Site B, but its five-year total operating costs were higher (Table 2). We now needed to complete the cost-benefit analysis. The matrix allows us to do this by normalizing the numbers in both the “Benefit” and “Cost” columns so that we can subtract cost from benefit to calculate relative value.

Site A scored a positive (+3) meaning that in relative terms it is worth more than it costs while Site B scored a negative (-3) meaning that it costs more than it is worth (Table 3). So we had a decision, right?

Weighing all the trade-offs

Not yet. Even though Site A scored better on the weighted criteria and cost-benefit analyses, there still was not a consensus to close Site B. So the group began to review the specific trade-offs of choosing one site over the other. While Site B was superior regarding parking, proximity and grounds, Site A was superior

Merger: weighted criteria & cost-benefit analysis

Table 1

Average raw scores (N = 20):

	Handi-capped	Worship space	Proximity	Parking	Grounds	CYO facility	Parish center	Rel. ed. facilities	Admin facilities	Growth
Church A	8.5	9	8.7	7.7	7	9	9	9	9	8.5
Church B	8.6	7.1	9	9	9	0	7.6	8	7.6	8.6
Criterion Weight	34	91	41	37	26	29	44	74	38	48

Table 2:

Weighted scores with costs:

	Handi-capped	Worship space	Proximity	Parking	Grounds	CYO facility	Parish center	Rel. ed. facilities	Admin facilities	Growth	Benefit	Cost
Church A	288	815	360	288	182	263	393	664	342	410	4,006	\$ 3,055,818
Church B	292	643	370	335	233	0	334	587	291	417	3,501	\$ 2,827,424

Table 3:

Benefit and cost normalized:

	Handi-capped	Worship space	Proximity	Parking	Grounds	CYO facility	Parish center	Rel. ed. facilities	Admin facilities	Growth	Benefit	Cost	Value
Church A	288	815	360	288	182	263	393	664	342	410	107	104	3
Church B	292	643	370	335	233	0	334	587	291	417	93	96	-3

regarding worship space, parish center, and CYO, religious education, and administrative facilities (Table 1: purple cells).

Reaching consensus

Examining the comprehensive set of trade-offs created the breakthrough to consensus. The group agreed that too much would be lost if Site A were closed. They reached consensus. Site A will host the new, combined parish; Site B will close.

“Prism’s presence, expertise and decision support tools contributed powerfully to our decision making and our ability to achieve consensus,” said Rev. Tim Taugher.

McDonald’s rollout

As its strategic partner, Prism recently assisted New & Improved®, LLC, to facilitate a large, cross-functional McDonald’s team charged to introduce specialty coffees at Mickey Ds. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, this will be the largest McDonald’s new product roll-out in the last 30 years, expected to generate \$1 billion in revenues annually.

More than one executive attending the project management retreat commented that the facilitation and the use of [Prism’s group decision support system](#) was the right method at the right time.

Museum planning

Recently, Prism’s Sean Brady recently assisted the Roberson Museum and Science Center to develop a strategic plan with a mission, vision, performance targets, long-term strategies and immediate priorities.

According to Koen Gieskes, Vice President, Research & Development at Universal Instruments and a Roberson Trustee:

“The Roberson Museum and Science Center’s strategic planning process started without help from Prism Decision Systems, and though we thought that we were making reasonable progress, at a certain stage we got stuck and frankly did not know how to continue.

“However, once Sean Brady volunteered to lead the process, our strategic planning was extremely effective. We now have an actionable plan with approved mission and vision statements. We have significantly improved our image with a group of important community representatives. And we actually had fun throughout the entire process.

“Unbelievably, unexpectedly great! I highly recommend Prism Decision Systems!”