Making a decision

Listen to a meeting in which colleagues make a decision to practise and improve your listening skills.

Before listening

Do the preparation task first. Then listen to the audio and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–f) with the vocabulary (1–6).

Vocabulary	Definition
1. …… agile	a. a plan for when things will happen and how long they will take
2. …… a timeline	b. one of the stages of a process
3. …… additional	c. able to move quickly and easily
4. …… a phase	d. most of the people in a group
5. …… to adapt	e. something that is extra or more than planned
6. …… the majority	f. to change something to make it better or more successful

Tasks

Task 1

Circle the best option to complete the sentence.

1. The objective of the meeting is to …
   a. decide on the role of each team member.
   b. agree when each phase of the project will happen.
   c. improve team communication.

2. Emiko wants …
   a. to be told what to do.
   b. everyone to make a decision together.
   c. to check the decision with the head office.

3. David …
   a. prefers a structured approach.
   b. is happy to take a flexible and agile approach.
   c. agrees with the decision they make in the end.

4. Carolina doesn't say much at first because …
    a. she doesn't have a specific opinion on the topic.
    b. she is worrying about something else.
    c. she is considering people's suggestions.

5. The decision they take is based on …
    a. a vote.
    b. a recommendation from Jani's boss.
    c. a majority decision to follow the team leader.

6. David suggests they should …
    a. allow some extra time later in the project.
    b. get help from another team.
    c. use an online project management tool.

Task 2
Write the expressions in the correct group.

How do you feel?	That's right.
I don't think I agree with you.	I agree with you on that point.
I'm sorry, I don't think so.	What do you think?
It would be best to …	I think we should …

Asking for opinion	Giving opinion	Agreeing	Disagreeing

Discussion
How are decisions usually made where you work?

Transcript

Jani: Thanks for coming, everyone. So, we're here today to define the timeline for our new project.

Emiko: Yes, Jani, that's a great idea.

Carolina: OK. What do you need from us?

Emiko: Hold on a moment. I think we need to decide between us what to do, to make sure it works for all departments.

Jani: Yes, exactly, don't worry. We're going to discuss this and make a decision together. Let's first think about the scheduling of each project phase. What do you think, Emiko?

David: Can I interrupt? I think we should first be clear about the process we'll use to make the decision. How are we going to do it?

Jani: Ah, yes. Good point. Well, I think the best way is for each of you to give your opinion and then we can discuss and make a decision.

David: OK. That sounds good.

Emiko: Yes, that works for me too. I know we're still planning the structure of the later phases of the project, but I think we should begin phase one as soon as possible. We can work out the rest later, as we go along.

David: I'm sorry, I don't think so. How can we start phase one if we're not fully clear on where the rest of the project will take us? We might make a wrong decision and waste time.

Jani: I agree with you on that point, David. However, we'll waste too much time if we wait until everything is planned before we actually start working on the project. I think we should take an agile approach.

David: Agile approach?

Jani: Well, it means that we start quickly and then adapt as we go along.

Emiko: That's right.

Jani: Carolina, you've been very quiet.

Carolina: Um … I'm sorry. I didn't want to interrupt. I'm listening … and thinking.

David: Do you agree we should get the plan right first, and then start with phase one?

Carolina: I'm sorry, David. I don't think I agree with you. It's important to have a good plan. But plans can change, even the good ones – and business changes often. We need to be flexible, and we also need to move quickly.

Jani: OK. So should we take a vote?

Emiko: Well, you're the project leader. Let's go with your decision.

Carolina: Yes, I'll follow your lead, Jani.

David: Well, I guess that's decided then. We'll follow your agile approach, Jani. Start quickly and keep planning the later stages of the project.

Jani: Yes, that's right.

David: I still don't think this is the right decision, but I'm happy to go with the majority. We should add some space into the schedule later for additional work this 'flexibility' will need.

Jani: Don't worry, David, we will. OK, so it's decided then. We'll start phase one as soon as possible, and in the background we'll continue planning the later phases and adapt them as we go along.

Answers

Preparation task
1. c
2. a
3. e
4. b
5. f
6. d

Task 1
1. b
2. b
3. a
4. c
5. c
6. a

Task 2

Asking for opinion	Giving opinion	Agreeing	Disagreeing
How do you feel? What do you think?	It would be best to … I think we should …	That's right. I agree with you on that point.	I don't think I agree with you. I'm sorry, I don't think so.