How to make everyone happy

Open Decision Framework

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How to make everyone happy

TITRE : Open Decision Framework
SOUS-TITRE : How to make everyone happy

ABOUT ME

- My name's Damien Clochard
- Founded a PostgreSQL consulting company in 2005
- Involved in the Postgres community at various levels
- https://github.com/daamien

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ABOUT POSTGRESQL

Most Advanced Database in the Universe !

- Started in 1995
- Decentalized community
- Focus on documentation
- No Steering Committee / No Roadmap
- « Do What You Want »
- Competing with Oracle, Microsoft, IBM, ...

OUR STORY

We built a FLOSS company using FLOSS principles :

- Worker-owned / Cooperative
- Transparency by default
- Open discussions
- Decentralized / Working remotely
- Horizontal structure / Elected management

Open Decision Framework

PROBLEMS

- Consensus does not scale

- Dull meetings + Hundreds of endless email threads

- « Did we decide something ? »

- Silent Disapproval

- Not taking a decision is a decision itself

THE OPEN DECISION FRAMEWORK

- Developped by Red Hat, published on github in 2016

- We translated it in French in 2017

- Then we "forked" it to our fit our own needs

WHAT IS AN ``OPEN DECISION'' ?

Open decisions are made using open source principles:

- Transparent
- Inclusive
- User-Centric

KEY POINTS

- Open exchange
- Participation
- Release early + often
- Meritocracy
- Community

YOU CAN'T PLEASE EVERYONE

- Let people you hear and value their critics
- Provide safe communication channels
- Define the common values and group culture
- Let people contribute at any level
- Give visibility to avoid surprises
- If you fail, learn from your mistakes

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4 BASIC STEPS

1. Concept, Define, Plan, Ideate
2. Research, Analyze, Complexify
3. Design, Develop, Test
4. Launch, Deploy, Close

PHASE 1

CONCEPT, DEFINE, PLAN, IDEATE

QUESTIONS

- What is the problem ?
- Whose problem is it ? Who else could be impacted?
- How will we make the decision?
- Who is likely to disagree, dissent, reject, or opt out?
- What's the roadmap

POTENTIAL FLAMEWARS

- Communication channels
- Confidentiality
- Deadlines

PHASE 2

RESEARCH, ANALYZE, COMPLEXIFY

QUESTIONS

- Who already tried to solved this? How did it work?
- What are the hidden problems behing this?
- Get user Feedback
- Who is likely to disagree, dissent, reject, or opt out?

THIS IS THE MOST DIFFICULT PART

- Most people want to rush to a solution

- Embrace complexity

- Maintain a safe environment and let people expose their problems

- Take your time

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PHASE 3

DESIGN, DEVELOP, TEST

QUESTIONS

- What if…. ?
- Where are the beta-testers and early adopters ?

THIS IS THE FUN PART

- Build a prototype

- Search for alternative solutions

- In the end, simplify and reduce the options

- Prepare an escape plan :)

PHASE 4

LAUNCH, DEPLOY, CLOSE

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QUESTIONS

- Did we answer the initial question ?
- How do we monitor the impacts of our decision ?
- How do we make revisions based on feedbacks ?
- What are we leaving to the "future generation" ?
- What have we learned ?
- Do we need to revisit the decision later ?

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BE PROUD !

- Write an announcement

- Tell "the story" of your decision

- Contribute upstream

- Stay engaged with those who reject the decision

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IN PRACTICE

We used the framework in 6 different workgroups for marketing decisions

- Each phase can take between 1 and 4 hours
- Each group is composed of 3-5 persons
- Some people find the framework a bit awkward
- For other it's easier to get involved

RESULT : SUCCESS

We solved a particular problem that was bothering everyone for the last 5 years.

We found a compromise in a situation with 2 strong opposite groups

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RESULT : FAILURE

It's not magic : some decisions failed...

... but they failed fast ;-)

BUILD YOUR OWN FRAMEWORK

Red Hat
https://github.com/red-hat-people-team/open-decision-framework

Gitlab
https://about.gitlab.com/handbook/leadership/#making-decisions

Valve
http://www.davidmidgley.net/2013/01/valves-cabal-system-for-game-design/

HACK YOUR COMPANY !

Let's use FLOSS principles for corporate management

Treat your company like an open source project !

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THANKS !

Contact
damien@dalibo.com

Twitter
daamien

Feedback
https://submission.fosdem.org/feedback/6112.php