
Collective Intelligence Training Course: Better Joint Decisions in Committees and Teams

19 – 23 April 2027
Barcelona





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Programme Summary

Collective intelligence is the subject of this one-week training course for directors and senior managers, ending in a group decision protocol for one live question. Committees and cross-functional teams often decide worse than their best members could, through dominance, conformity and poor use of information. The programme moves from principles, through diagnosis of group process failures, to design of structured methods and digital tools, and then to application. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this collective intelligence programme for leaders from mixed organisations.

The Business Case

Major decisions are usually taken by groups, yet few organisations manage how groups think. A small number of loud voices, early anchoring and unshared information can produce confident but weak choices that are costly to reverse. Leaders who design the process, protect independent views and combine judgements deliberately obtain better decisions from the same people, and a clearer record of why choices were made.

- Decision Reversal Rate: Falls as options are tested through independent judgement before discussion.
- Forecast Accuracy: Improves as individual estimates are aggregated and scored over time.
- Meeting Effectiveness: Rises as turn-taking and structured methods replace open debate alone.

Principles and Evidence Base

- James Surowiecki's conditions for wise crowds: They set the tests of diversity, independence, decentralisation and aggregation applied in Sessions 1 and 3.
- Irving Janis's groupthink research: It supplies the symptoms reviewed when diagnosing group process failures in Session 2.
- The collective intelligence factor identified by Anita Woolley and colleagues: It links group performance to social sensitivity and equal turn-taking, which are observed in Session 2.
- The Delphi method: It provides the structured, anonymous, iterative consensus procedure designed in Session 3.

Intended Participants

- Directors who chair committees and boards that take strategic decisions.
- Heads of function who convene cross-functional teams to solve shared problems.
- Senior managers who run planning, risk and review meetings.
- Strategy and foresight leads who gather expert views on uncertain questions.



Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to evaluate whether a group meets the conditions for sound collective judgement.
2. Participants will be able to diagnose groupthink, anchoring and unequal participation in group decisions.
3. Participants will be able to construct a Delphi round and a nominal group session for a defined question.
4. Participants will be able to design digital polling and forecasting tools that capture independent views.
5. Participants will be able to justify the choice of a group decision method for a given question and time limit.
6. Participants will be able to prioritise rules for turn-taking, dissent and decision records.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Collective Intelligence Principles and the Conditions for Wise Groups

When does a group judge better than its best member?

- Surowiecki Wise Crowd Conditions
- Collective Intelligence Factor Findings
- Diversity and Independence Checklist
- Group Judgement Aggregation Methods
- Decision Quality Criteria

Day 2: Diagnosing Groupthink and Group Process Failures

Why do capable groups reach poor decisions?

- Janis Groupthink Symptom Review
- Turn-Taking and Airtime Observation Log
- Hidden Profile Information Audit
- Authority Bias and Anchoring Check
- Past Decision Post-Mortem Template

Day 3: Designing Structured Group Decision Methods

Which method suits the question, the group and the time available?

- Delphi Method Round Design
- Nominal Group Technique Protocol
- Pre-Mortem and Red Team Exercise
- Silent Writing and Ranking Sheet
- Method Selection Grid



Day 4: Designing Digital Tools, Crowd Input and Group Rhythm

How can online tools and wider input improve judgement without adding noise?

- Anonymous Polling Tool Setup
- Prediction Poll and Forecast Scoring
- Internal Idea Platform Rules
- Hybrid Meeting Facilitation Plan
- Decision Record and Learning Loop

Day 5: Applying Collective Intelligence to One Live Decision

Is the group decision process ready to run on a real question?

- Applying the Session 1 Conditions Checklist to the Chosen Group
- Testing the Session 2 Failure Signals against Past Decisions
- Running the Session 3 Method Selection Grid
- Configuring the Session 4 Tool Set
- Completing the Group Decision Protocol

Methodology

The programme uses a structured exercise method built on anonymised decision cases, estimation tasks and meeting records. Participants work in small groups and as a whole cohort to run the methods themselves, compare group and individual answers and review process failures, with feedback from the facilitator on every work product.

- Suggested activity: Estimating a set of quantities alone, then as a group, and comparing the error of each approach.
- Suggested activity: Running a short Delphi round on a live strategic question and reading the shift in estimates.
- Suggested activity: Reviewing a past meeting record for signs of groupthink and drafting process rules.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a group decision protocol for one live question. It holds a conditions checklist, a chosen method with its steps, a turn-taking and dissent rule set, a digital tool configuration and a decision record template. The protocol is used at work to run the next committee or team decision and to review its quality afterwards.



Frequently Asked Questions

Is collective intelligence suitable for senior managers who have not used structured group methods before?

Yes. Collective intelligence is taught from first principles and assumes responsibility for chairing or sponsoring group decisions, not prior experience of formal methods.

Which models does collective intelligence rest on in this programme?

Collective intelligence here rests on Surowiecki's conditions for wise crowds, Janis's groupthink research, the Woolley collective intelligence factor and the Delphi method.

How is the group decision protocol from collective intelligence used at work?

You use the group decision protocol to run your next committee or team decision and to review afterwards how well the group judged.

How does collective intelligence differ from a programme on facilitation skills?

Collective intelligence centres on how to combine many judgements into better decisions, while facilitation skills centre on guiding conversations and managing participants.