

Comparison of Effective and Ineffective Groups



The table below presents the **extremes** along a number of dimensions to clearly differentiate between groups that are more and less likely to be successful.

Adapted from:

Effective Groups	Ineffective Groups
Interdependence is used in a positive way, so that goals are achieved by the group that otherwise would not be achievable.	Interdependence is not used constructively; the group does not achieve its goals easily or effectively.
Goals are clarified and modified so that the best possible match between individual goals and the group's goals is achieved; goals are structured cooperatively so all members are committed to achieving them.	Members accept imposed goals ; goals are competitively structured so that each member strives to outperform the others.
Communication is two-way, and the open and accurate expression of both ideas and feelings is emphasized. Dialogue is encouraged.	Communication is one-way and only ideas are expressed; feelings are suppressed or ignored. Dialogue is discouraged.
Participation and leadership are distributed among all group members; goal accomplishment, internal group maintenance, and group development are all considered.	Leadership is delegated and based upon authority; participation is unequal, with high-power members dominating; only goal accomplishment is emphasized.
Ability and information determine influence and power ; contracts are built to make sure individual goals and needs are fulfilled; power is equalized and shared.	Position determines influence and power ; power is concentrated in the authority positions; obedience to authority is the rule.
Decision-making procedures are matched with the situation; different methods are used at different times; consensus is sought for important decisions; involvement and group discussions are encouraged.	Decisions are always made by the highest-ranking authority; there is little group discussion; members' involvement is minimal.
Structured controversy , in which members advocate their views and challenge each other's information and reasoning, is seen as the key to high quality, creative decision making and problem solving.	Disagreement among members is suppressed and avoided; quick compromises are sought to eliminate arguing; groupthink is prevalent.
Conflicts are resolved through integrative negotiations and mediation so agreements are reached that maximize joint outcomes and leave all members satisfied.	Conflicts are resolved through distributive negotiations or avoidance; some members win and some members lose, or else conflict is ignored and everyone is unhappy.
Interpersonal, group, and inter-group skills are stressed; cohesion is advanced through high levels of inclusion, warmth, acceptance, support, and trust. Individuality is endorsed.	The functions of group members are stressed; individuality is de-emphasized; cohesion is ignored; rigid conformity is promoted.

Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, F. P. (2000). *Joining together: Group theory and group skills* (7th ed.) (p. 14). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.