

# 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
<b>Interdependence</b> is used in a <b>positive</b> way, so that goals are achieved by the group that otherwise would not be achievable.	<b>Interdependence</b> is not used constructively; the group does not achieve its goals easily or effectively.
<b>Goals</b> 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 <b>goals</b> ; goals are competitively structured so that each member strives to outperform the others.
<b>Communication</b> is two-way, and the open and accurate expression of both ideas and feelings is emphasized. Dialogue is encouraged.	<b>Communication</b> is one-way and only ideas are expressed; feelings are suppressed or ignored. Dialogue is discouraged.
<b>Participation and leadership</b> are distributed among all group members; goal accomplishment, internal group maintenance, and group development are all considered.	<b>Leadership</b> is delegated and based upon authority; participation is unequal, with high-power members dominating; only goal accomplishment is emphasized.
Ability and information determine <b>influence and power</b> ; contracts are built to make sure individual goals and needs are fulfilled; power is equalized and shared.	Position determines <b>influence and power</b> ; power is concentrated in the authority positions; obedience to authority is the rule.
<b>Decision-making procedures</b> are matched with the situation; different methods are used at different times; consensus is sought for important decisions; involvement and group discussions are encouraged.	<b>Decisions</b> are always made by the highest-ranking authority; there is little group discussion; members' involvement is minimal.
<b>Structured controversy</b> , 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.	<b>Disagreement</b> among members is suppressed and avoided; quick compromises are sought to eliminate arguing; groupthink is prevalent.
<b>Conflicts</b> are resolved through integrative negotiations and mediation so agreements are reached that maximize joint outcomes and leave all members satisfied.	<b>Conflicts</b> are resolved through distributive negotiations or avoidance; some members win and some members lose, or else conflict is ignored and everyone is unhappy.
<b>Interpersonal, group, and inter-group skills</b> are stressed; cohesion is advanced through high levels of inclusion, warmth, acceptance, support, and trust. Individuality is endorsed.	The <b>functions</b> 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* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.) (p. 14). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.