

How Productive Groups Act

Why are some groups more successful than others? Why are some groups able to work together more easily than others? People who have worked with groups and studies group behavior report these differences:

In Productive Groups

1. People listen and pay attention to one another.
2. People discuss the subject at hand.
3. Everyone's ideas and suggestions are welcomed.
4. Everyone has a chance to state his or her views.
5. The group uses its agenda as a guide for discussion.
6. One or two members are appointed to summarize the discussion and see that everyone has had a chance to speak.
7. Members know and use problem-solving steps.
8. Members are clear about group decisions and committed to them.

In Non-Productive Groups

1. People do not listen, and all tend to talk at the same time.
2. The discussion jumps from one idea to another.
3. Some members' ideas don't seem to count, so these people don't act as if they really belong to the group.
4. One or two people do all the talking.
5. The agenda is not clear, and there is no written guide for discussion.
6. No one summarizes or checks to see if everyone who wants to speak has actually spoken. Discussions go on and on until people get tired.
7. No order is followed for identifying and solving problems.
8. Decision-making is muddy, and people aren't committed to the group's plans.