Characteristics of Effective and Ineffective Groups

Effective Groups	Ineffective Groups
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 that 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.	Communication is one-way and only ideas are expressed; feelings are suppressed or ignored.
Participation and leadership are distributed among all group members; goal accomplishment, internal maintenance, and developmental changes are underscored.	Leadership is delegated and based on 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 that individuals' goals and needs are fulfilled; power is equalized and shared.	Position determines power; power is concentrated in the authority system; 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 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 of interest are resolved through integrative negotiations and mediation so that agreements are reached that maximize joint outcomes and leave all members satisfied.	Conflicts of interest 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 intergroup skills are stressed; cohesion is advanced through high levels of inclusion, affection, acceptance, support and trust; individuality is endorsed.	The functions of group members are stressed; individuality is deemphasized; cohesion is ignored; rigid conformity is promoted.