



How to be a Winner in a Group Discussion?

Dear PGDM/MBA Aspirants,

Most of the B-schools have group discussion as one of the methods of selecting students for admission. For this purpose, a large number of students get professional coaching from various institutes but STILL remain unsuccessful. The basic purpose of a GD is to test a student's communication, initiative, sense of logic, power of persuasion and general awareness. But GD also has a few technicalities which if not taken care of, can lower a candidate's performance.

Generally, the size of group is 8-12 depending upon the administrative arrangements. A topic (often of general interest) is selected and the candidates are given a few minutes to ponder and assemble points of discussion. Total discussion time is generally 12-15 minutes during which the discussion has to be wound up. Sometimes, the evaluators ask a few candidates to sum up the outcome of discussion in one or two lines or intervene in the course of discussion to ask non-participating candidates to give their views on a point under discussion. The evaluation panel generally consists of a few faculty members and industry experts. The panel members closely watch the performance of each and every candidate and assign marks according to a pre-decided criteria which includes several factors like communication, confidence, logic or reasoning and manners. The members finally decide the marks to be awarded to a candidate by averaging or by consensus. It is not necessary for the evaluators to select candidates from every group. A whole group can be rejected on the basis of performance.

The candidates may follow the following tips or guidelines for better performance:

1. Be natural, be yourself. Behaving artificially or like some role model may make you look inconsistent. Have a **cheerful** disposition. Looking tense or worried brings discredit.
2. Understand the topic of discussion as quickly as it is announced. Think fast, take down some bullet points for help during discussion. Organise your thoughts well. Before the formal start of the discussion, you may seek any clarification about the topic from the penalists.
3. You can show leadership and initiative by opening the discussion. The opening remarks must be judiciously made and should not be provocative. In fact, here one must make a substantial point. If someone else opens the discussion, then listen to her carefully and enter the discussion with a connecting remark or view. Speaking independent of what the previous speaker has said would break the continuity of discussion.



4. When a particular point in a discussion has been carried long enough, you may intervene to switch to other aspects of the issue or topic.
5. Do not speak for long as it deprives others of the time to speak. Put forward your point emphatically (not loudly), briefly, and with conviction. Remember, GD time is scarce. If you try to monopolise the discussion, evaluators might intervene to stop you (and that can bring you discredit). Do not try to dominate the discussion and give a fair chance to others to speak.
6. Do not interrupt others abruptly while they are making their point. Rudeness, sarcasm, rough body language or any other type of uncivilised behavior can spoil your chances of selection. If this behavior is coming from the other side, stay cool and unprovoked. In any case, do not take any criticism personally. Defend your position well but do not be shy of coming round to someone else's view if it is more logical. Respect difference of opinion and address it appropriately.
7. Don't speak with the intention of making your presence felt. Make yourself visible by your logic and communication.

regards & best wishes,

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