

# GROUP DISCUSSION (GD)

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# Mock session

- 1 GD with 5-6 participants
- Duration: 15-20min minutes
- All the other students to keep noting down their observations about the,
  - Good things and
  - Mistakes if any #
- We will discuss this after the GD. I might randomly ask anyone of you to share your observations. ##

# Agenda

- Why GD?
- What is a GD?
- What should be your Objective?
- Words from the Wise
- Skills Assessed
- Common Mistakes :: Scenarios
- Some Topics ##



# Why GD?



- A way of filtering. Why??
  - Large number of candidates appear for recruitment process
  - Because Interview is an expensive affair #
- To check your??
  - Maturity
  - Knowledge
  - Team/Social skills
  - Leadership/Initiative
  - Communication skill ##



# What is a GD?

- A simulated exercise
- Leaderless groups of 6-9 candidates formed
- Given a specific situation to analyze and discuss within a time limit (20 – 25 min.)
- In rare cases, may be given a case study and asked to come up with a solution for the problem
- Panel observes the proceedings and evaluates each member on predetermined criteria ##



# What should be YOUR Objective?

- To be noticed
- To have contributed meaningfully
- Attempt to help the group reach a consensus

WHAT DOES THIS IMPLY? ##

# Being Noticed



- Ensure that the group hears you
  - If the group hears you so will the evaluator
  - Please don't shout – you will be noticed for the wrong reasons! #
- Be assertive
  - If you are not an assertive person – LEARN
  - Being Assertive doesn't mean being arrogant or bull-headed #
- Create opportunities
  - Don't wait for opportunities, create them ##



# Contribute Meaningfully



- Enhance your knowledge base
- Present arguments logically
- Identify improvement areas in communication skills
- Quality v/s Quantity
  - Volume and length will not help
  - Boost the quality of content ##



# Contribute Meaningfully



- Preparing the content
  - Jot down as many points as you can
  - Have arguments for AND against
  - Look at what is “not obvious” (New, Different, Interesting)
- “Different” contribution will be appreciated by the panel if
  - It is relevant to the topic
  - Can you take the group ahead if it is stuck
  - Can you lead the discussion in a fresh direction ##

# Build Consensus

- Gain support, influence group members
- Your attempt is more important than the actual result
- This is important because it tests your abilities as a team player ##





# Words from the Wise!

- Be natural
- Use the thinking time well – organize your thoughts
- Seek clarification if you have any doubts
- INITIATE
- Not making valuable contributions will overshadow any positive impact your opening might have had
- Try to end with a statement that everyone will remember
- Do not be sarcastic ##

# Words from the Wise!

- Try to be objective even if you don't agree on some point
- Don't lose your cool – don't take discussion personally
- If your views are challenged do not get defensive or aggressive
- Polish your leadership skills – motivate others to speak, listen to them
- Be receptive to others' views – do not be aggressive
- Avoid slang ##







# Words from the Wise!

- Make it a point to speak at least 4-6 times
- Be aware of what message your non-verbal language is giving
  - Eye-contact: speak to the whole group
  - Be clear and audible – mumbling/ soft voice can be irritating
  - Pay special attention to your tone
  - Avoid gesturing unnecessarily #
- Substantiate your points with examples, statistical data
- Be friendly and cheerful – remember, you have come to win friends not make enemies ##

# Skills Assessed



- **Leadership**
  - Initiating, guiding the discussion, encouraging team members to participate
- **Communication**
  - Explaining concepts in a clear, simple language so that it is understood by all members
  - Don't be a Shashi Tharoor when it comes to vocabulary ;-)
- **Interpersonal**
  - Not giving in to provocation, not being aggressive
  - Encouraging others to contribute ##



# Skills Assessed

- **Persuasive**
  - While appreciating others' perspective, effectively communicating own views without offending others #
- **Problem-Solving**
  - Thinking of divergent, off-beat solutions #
- **Conceptualizing**
  - Ability to grasp a situation, summarizing discussion at the end
  - Alertness and presence of mind cannot be over-emphasized ##

# Some Topics

- Should we pursue our policy of dialogue with Pakistan?
- Are peace and non-violence outdated concepts?
- How to deal with the population problem?
- Foreign television channels are destroying our culture.
- Is dependence on computers a good thing?
- Should the public sector be privatized?
- How to deal with international terrorism?
- Should there be limits on artistic freedom? ##



# Some Topics

- The education system needs serious reforms
- Is People management an art or a science
- Do professional managers stand a chance in family run businesses?
- Is an MBA necessary to succeed in life
- Solutions to Dowry system
- Are we not serious about saving wildlife/ environment?
- Showing violence and crime on TV should be banned ##

# Common Mistakes – Scenario 1

Rashmi was offended when one of the male participants in the GD made a statement on women generally being submissive.

When Rashmi finally got a chance to speak, instead of focusing on the topic, she vented her anger by accusing that participant of being rude and went on to defend women in general. ##



# What went wrong??

## Emotional Outbursts:

- Deviated from the topic
- Lost objectivity and made personal attacks
- Treated the discussion as a forum to air personal views

Rashmi's behavior will be perceived as immature and demotivating to the team and humiliating for the person under attack. ##

# Common Mistakes – Scenario 2

Gautam believed that the more he talked, better were his chances at the GD. So he interrupted others at every opportunity.

He did this SO often that the other candidates got together to prevent him from participating in the rest of the discussion. ##



# What went wrong?

## Quality v/s Quantity

- The criteria for evaluation includes your ability to be a team player
- The mantra is “Contributing to your team’s success”
- Domination in any form is to be avoided at all costs
- Gautam’s behavior drew attention to his self-centredness ##

# Common Mistakes – Scenario 3

Krishna was happy to have got a GD topic he had prepared for. He took pains to project his vast amount of knowledge on the subject. Every second statement of his contained statistical data.

Soon, the rest of the team laughed at him or ignored his attempts to enlighten them. They also felt he was cooking up the data! ##



# What went wrong?

## Showing Off:

- Moderation is the key.
- Attempts at showing off will not be liked by others.
- Facts and figures need not validate ALL your statements
- It is your interpretation and insights that are important not just rattling off facts and figures.
- You might be appreciated for your knowledge but you will fail miserably at your people skills  
##

# Common Mistakes – Scenario 4

Srikumar knew that everyone would compete to initiate the discussion. So, as soon as the topic, “Discuss the negative effects of India joining the WTO” was read out, he began talking.

In his anxiety to be the first to speak, the word “negative” did not register! He was talking about how India was benefiting from the WTO, only to be stopped by the evaluator to correct his mistake. ##



# What went wrong?

## Getting noticed:

- False starts are extremely expensive
- Listen and understand the topic before you jump into the discussion.
- Spend the initial minutes analyzing the topic.
- Some mistakes are irreparable – starting off on the wrong foot is one such, unless you have sense of humor which could salvage the situation! ##

# Common Mistakes – Scenario 5

Sumati was very nervous, she felt some of the other candidates were exceptionally good. Thanks to her insecurity, she contributed little to the discussion.

Even when she was invited to comment on a particular point, she preferred to remain silent. ##



# What went wrong?

## One's insecurities:

- Remember, you are a participant in the GD, not an evaluator. Rather than evaluating your/others' skills/ performance, participate in the discussion.
- Your confidence is being evaluated – and lack of it shows through your body language as well. ##

# Questions

- How important are one's language skills?
- What happens if you cannot initiate?
- Why is body language important?
- What are the topics that are generally given? ##





# Questions