**DISTINCT** vs. **GROUP BY**

A DISTINCT and GROUP BY usually generate the same query plan, so performance should be the same across both query constructs. GROUP BY should be used to apply aggregate operators to each group. If all you need is to remove duplicates then use DISTINCT. If you are using sub-queries execution plan for that query varies so in that case you need to check the execution plan before making decision of which is faster.

***Example of DISTINCT:***  
SELECT DISTINCT Employee, Rank  
FROM Employees

***Example of GROUP BY:***  
SELECT Employee, Rank  
FROM Employees  
GROUP BY Employee, Rank

***Example of GROUP BY with aggregate function:***  
SELECT Employee, Rank, COUNT(\*) EmployeeCount  
FROM Employees  
GROUP BY Employee, Rank