

Group Discussion



Objectives

- Understand
 - Objectives
 - guidelines
 - types of Group Discussion
- Participate in group discussions
 - Confidently
 - Communicate effectively and assertively
- Use techniques which will help them in making a positive impact in their group discussion

Group Discussions

- A Group Discussion is a methodology used by organizations to gauge whether the candidate has certain personality traits and/or skills that it desires in its members.
- In this methodology , the group of candidates is given a topic or a situation , given a few minutes to think about the same , and then asked to discuss the topic among themselves for 15-20 minutes.

What is a Group Discussion?

- A Group Discussion (GD) is a technique used by corporates, educational institutes, and other organisations to judge the problem-solving skills of applicants in a team setting.
- Communication skills are a crucial factor here, possibly even more than technical knowledge.
- In a GD, a topic will be given to a closed group by a moderator (the recruiter)
 - Candidates will be asked to discuss the topic for a set amount of time.

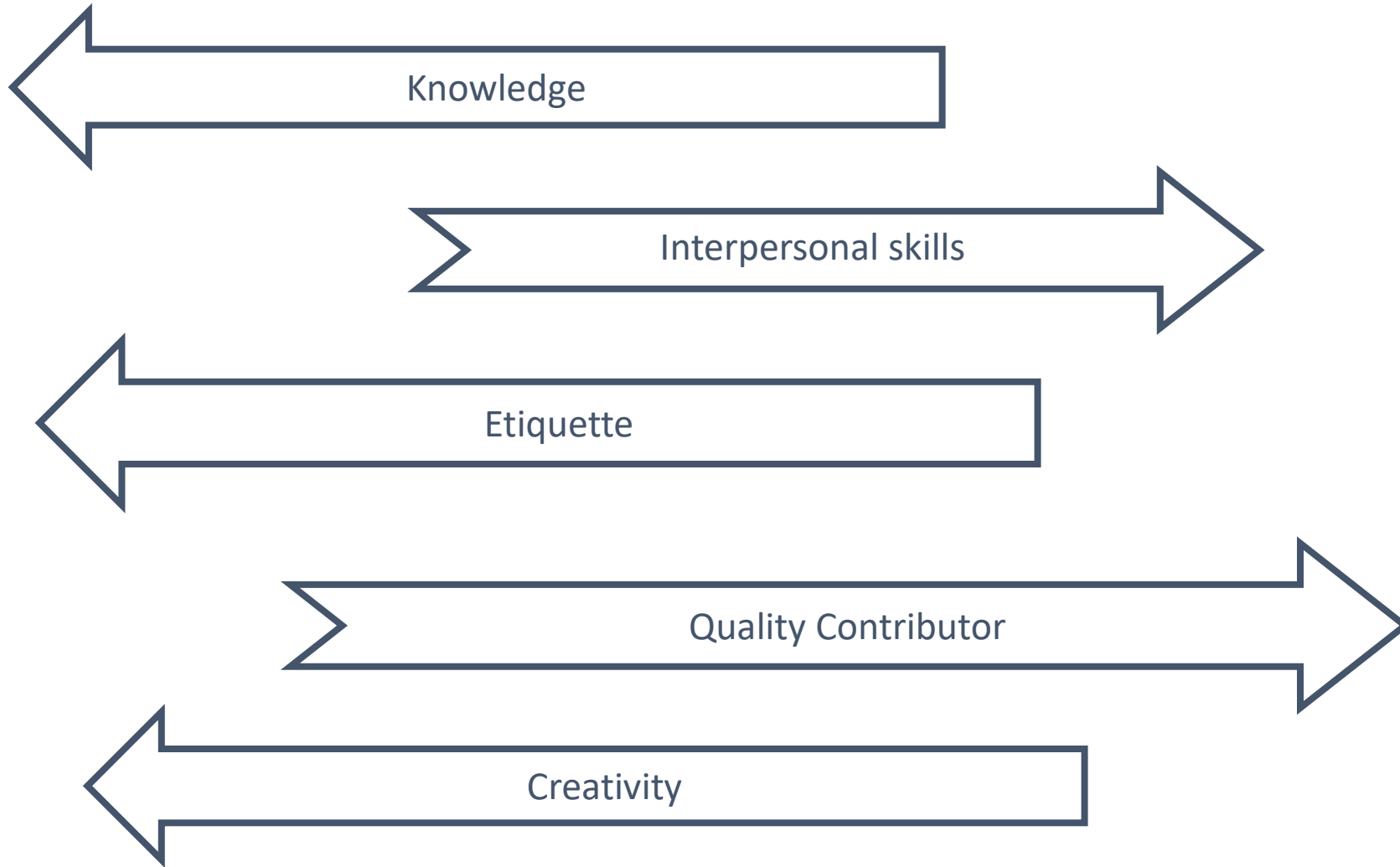
Why are GDs Important?

- As managers/employees, you'll interact with different people such as team members, senior managers, and customers.
- Your interpersonal skills play a crucial part in such interactions, and GDs test precisely these.
- GDs in the interview process are used for mass screening.
- The GD selection criteria is based on the company's actual requirements.

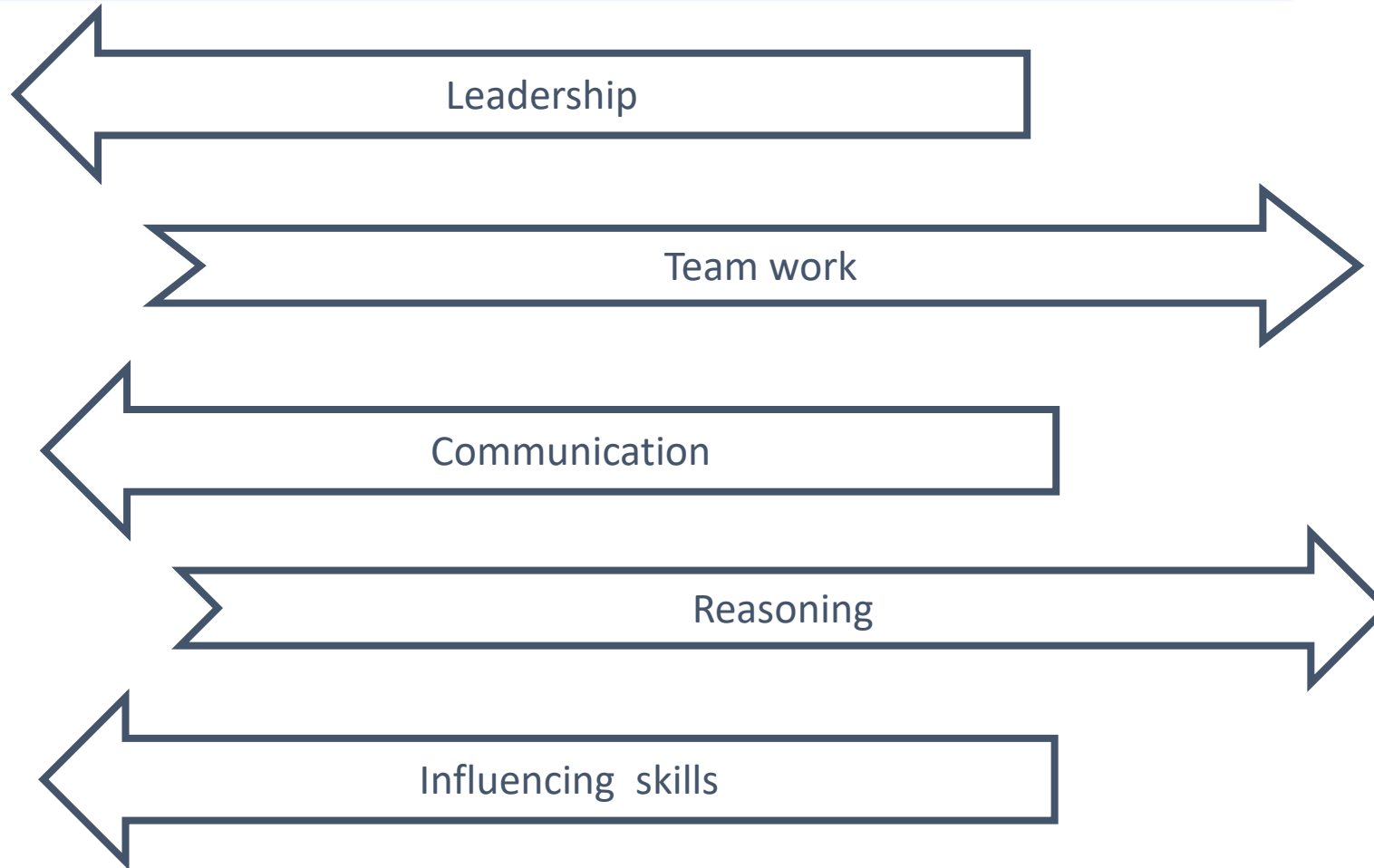
What Skills are Judged in a GD?

- How good are you at communicating with others?
- How do you behave and interact with a group?
- How open-minded are you to other views i.e how good are your listening skills?
- How do you put forward your views?
- How good are your leadership and decision-making skills?
- How good are your analytical skills and subject knowledge?
- How good are your problem solving and critical thinking skills?
- Your overall attitude and confidence.

What does a group discussion help to measure ?



What does a group discussion help in measure ?



Types of Group Discussions

Case Based

Topic Based

Group Discussion



Factual Topic

Controversial topic

Abstract Topic

5 Types of GDs

- **Factual discussion**

- e.g. “Growth of India’s economy since 1947”.
- Knowledge may seem like the most important factor in such a GD.
- However, asking the right questions to get the group going can also be very helpful.

5 Types of GDs

- **Controversial discussion**

- This type of discussion tests how good you are when faced with potential conflict and opposing opinions.
- One example of this is “Love marriage vs arranged marriage”

- **Abstract discussion**

- These will not present a problem prima facie.
- However, these will test your conceptual thinking and how you view situations as a whole e.g. “Integrity is extremely important in any workplace”

5 Types of GDs

- **Case-based discussion**

- In such discussions, you will be given a specific problem or case and asked how you would resolve it
- e.g “our company sales have been falling for three quarters. Discuss how you would improve them”.
- In such discussions it’s important to keep a focus on the specific issue without getting too generic

5 Types of GDs

- **Article-based discussion**

- Such discussions will simply mention a recent event or news article e.g. “India wins a gold medal in weight-lifting at the Commonwealth Games 2022”.
- For such discussions, you’ll be provided with the article to read and discuss.
- Such discussions will test how you approach situations as a leader and it’s important to keep a goal-oriented approach without getting too caught up in things like how proud it makes you feel etc.

A Group Discussion Consists of:

Exchange of
thoughts

Knowledge and
ideas regarding a
given subject

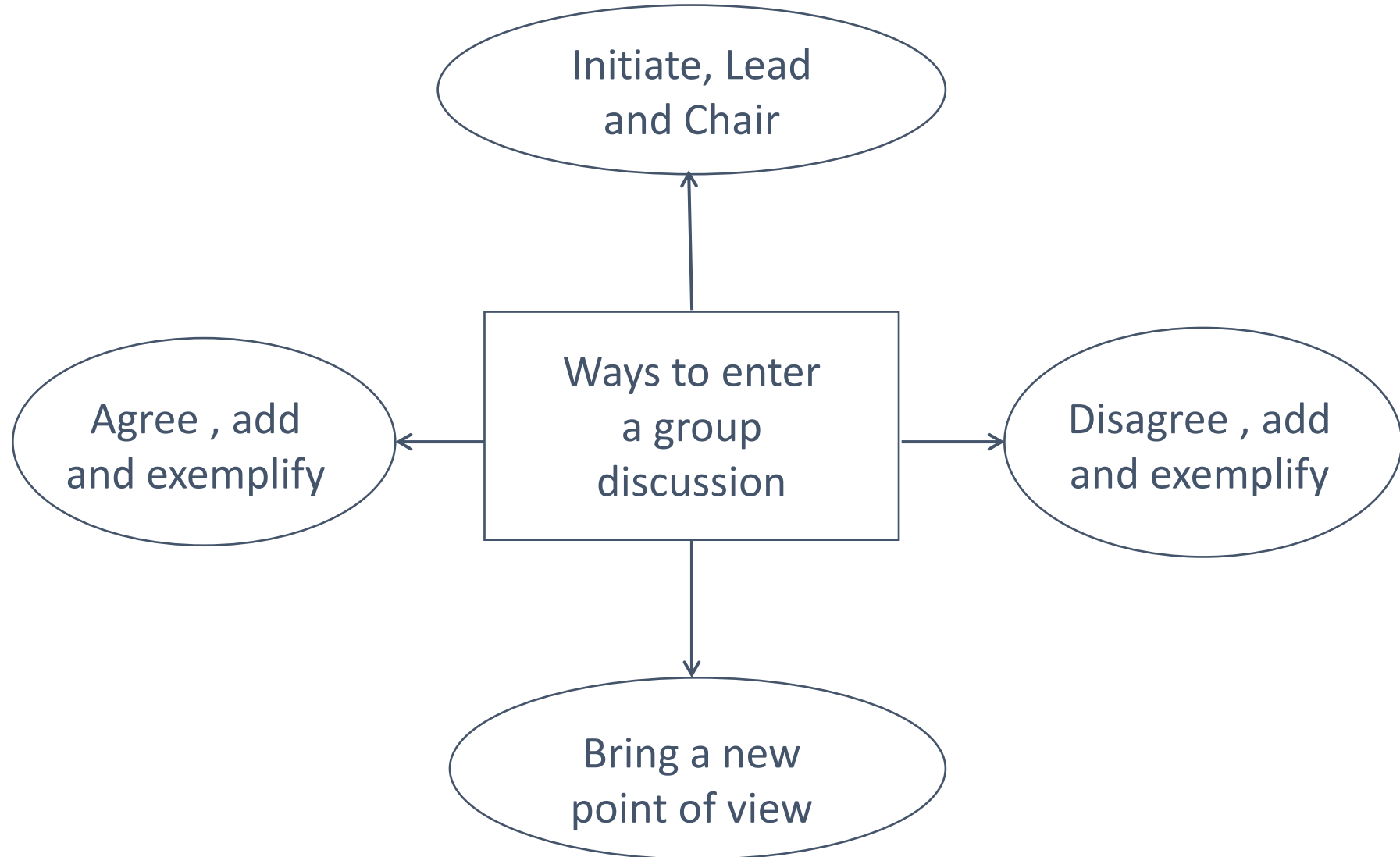
Communication
Skills

Addressing
the group as
a whole

Capability to
co-ordinate
and lead



Methods to Enter a Group Discussion



Initiating the GD

- The first step in a GD is *initiating* the discussion. One among the group will be the first to speak.
- It's not necessary to be the first to speak but it makes a good impression if you're able to lead the discussion.
- As such, if you feel confident about your knowledge on the topic, you could initiate with a relevant insight or data point.
- However, more important than knowledge is the ability to lead, so if you're able to share a relevant question that gets the group thinking that marks you as a good leader.

Initiating the GD - II

- You could also start with a quotation as many find that inspiring.
- However, keep in mind that speaking for the sake of it could lead to you saying something which doesn't add any value to the discussion, so be very sure of what you're saying if you're initiating the discussion.
- For example, if the topic of the discussion is "Ways to improve the Indian economy", you could potentially initiate the discussion with some statistics on recent GDP growth as a data point.

Initiating the GD - III

- Alternatively, you could simply mention the metrics which are important (such as inflation, employment etc) so that those who are aware of the figures can chip in. In this way you've led the discussion further.
- A simple method would also be to just share a quote or insight about economics e.g “an economy which grows at 7% a year will double its GDP in 10 years”.

Participating in the GD

- As the discussion continues, you should highlight other factors which contribute either directly to a solution or help arrive at a solution, as described above.
- However, it's important for what you say to be relevant to what has already been said.
- Simply quoting a random figure in the middle of the discussion would be unhelpful and should be avoided as the goal is to work *as a team*.

Participating in the GD - II

- Ensure that you are concise and to the point.
- Don't drag on unnecessarily and be mindful of the time for which you speak
 - It's also important to establish yourself as a leader who is open to other ideas.
 - Remember it is a *group* discussion.

Summarising the GD

- If you've been unable to get a word in, you can also consider simply being the one to summarise the discussion
- If you feel the discussion has gone on long enough, you can simply summarise the points shared.
- For example, if the time for the GD is 5 minutes and you see that 4.5 minutes have already passed, you can pitch in and summarise what has been said.
- This shows you are a good listener

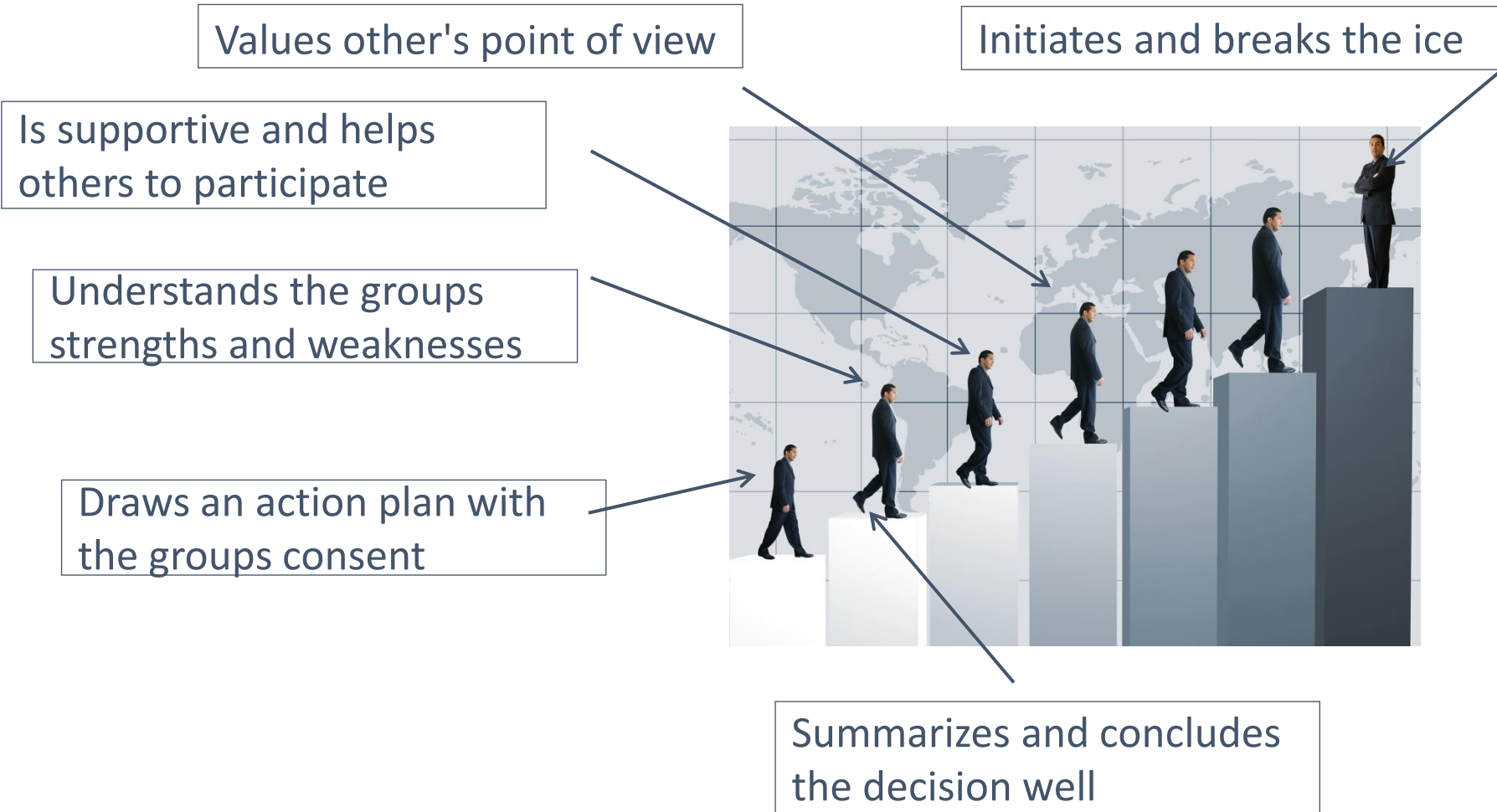
Summarising the GD - II

- However, if you choose to summarise and conclude the GD, ensure that your summary also *contains a solution* as the goal is not just to summarise some points but also to arrive at a solution.
- The summary should be short and to the point and no new points should be added for further discussion. Make sure that the summary is not single-sided but an amalgamation of both sides of the discussion.

Summarising the GD - II

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Leadership skills



Reasoning Ability



Puts forth Logical and apt reasoning
for the point made



Communication Skills

- Articulate thoughts well
- Maintain discussion in the relevant direction
- Listen actively & allows others to speak
- Highlight different perspective
- Keep discussions going
- Be assertive not dominant



Creativity

Giving some
creative &
workable
points

New angles
to subject



Power of Knowledge

Stock &
business

Current
Affairs

Philosophies
& art

Social
issues

Society &
economy



Some advantages of a Group Discussion

Idea generation

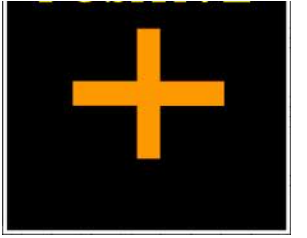
Provide a platform to leaving

Practical application

Working in a group is fun



Positive Task Roles



Initiator

Information seeker

Information giver

Opinion seeker

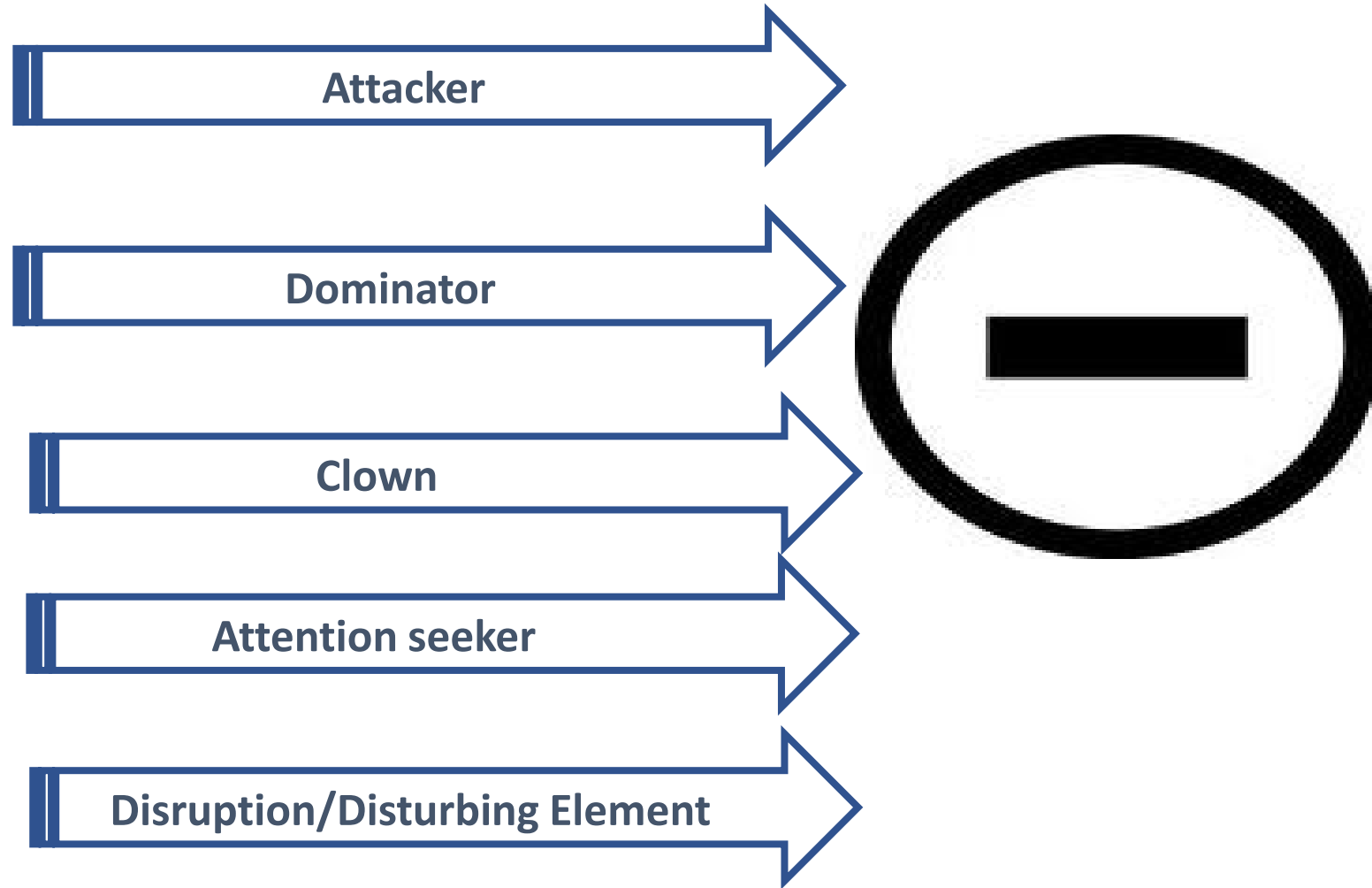
Opinion giver

Clarifier

Summarizer



Negative roles



Dos of Discussion Etiquette

Speak pleasantly and politely

Stick to the discussion topic

Grab a chance to speak

Respect the contribution of every speaker

Be aware of your body language



Dos of Discussion Etiquette

Try to stick to the discussion topic

Ensure that the group hears you

Agree & acknowledge

Be assertive and not aggressive

Think before you speak



Dos of Discussion Etiquette

Carry a paper and pen

Be amongst the first five speakers

Highlight some points that are not obvious

“Something different should be relevant to the topic”

Can you take the group ahead if it is stuck at one point?

Can you take it in a fresh and more relevant direction?



Don'ts of Discussion Etiquette

- Don't Lose your temper
- No argument
- No emotional outburst
- Don't shout
- Don't Use too many gestures when you speak
- Don't be aggressive
- Don't dominate the discussion
- Don't interrupt
- Don't show your ego
- Don't get personal



Don'ts of Discussion Etiquette

- Don't get noticed for wrong reasons
- Don't show your nervousness
- Don't talk too much be an active listener
- Don't be too conscious of the presence of observers
- Don't use inappropriate non-verbal communication
- Don't hesitate to disagree even with good reasons



Dos of GDs

- Ensure your personal grooming including appearance and dressing are suitably formal and well-groomed.
- Always maintain eye contact with your team. Do not address the moderator/recruiter as they are not part of the group.
- Tone and volume - ensure you speak clearly and at a medium pace, with a polite and respectful tone.
- Be confident - speak with confidence and be certain of what you say.

Dos of GDs

- When you do join in, ensure you appreciate the point of view of the other candidates in a positive and appealing way.
- There will be cases where the discussion may go off-topic; this is a good opportunity to take the lead and try to bring the discussion back to the topic at hand.

Don'ts of GDs

- Don't drag on for too long – ensure you speak to the point so that it remains a discussion and not a monologue
 - *Quality is more important than quantity.*
- Avoid interrupting others while they are speaking. Listen for your opportunity and jump in when appropriate and when you have something valuable to add.
 - *Avoid negativity and excessive criticism.*

Quality Vs Quantity:

**It does not matter how much you speak
what matters is how you speak.**

**There should be matter in your speech you should
not speak just for the sake of speaking**

Some Final Thoughts to Ponder...

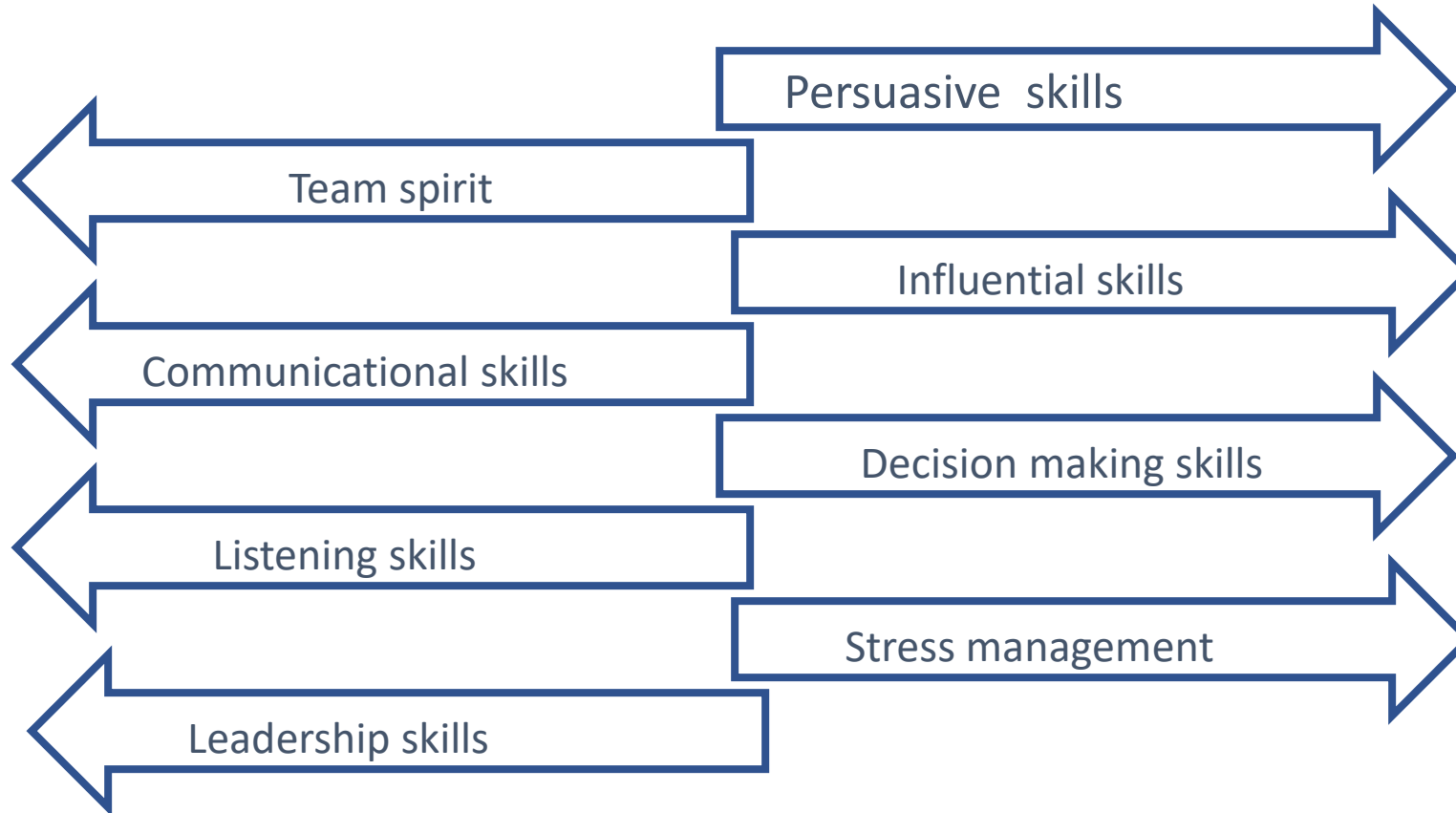
Q. In a group discussion what should my objectives be and how should I achieve them?

Q. Is it wise to take a strong stand either in favour or against the topic right at the start of a Group Discussion ?

Q. Is it a good strategy to try and be the first speaker on the topic in a GD?



Employers' Expectations



* Are you taking decisions emotionally or logically...

What Not to Do at a GD – Don't Be Like Them



Practice Sessions & Individual Feedback



Summary

- We have understood
 - Guidelines
 - Types of Group Discussion
- Effective way of participate in group discussions
- Techniques making a positive impact in their group discussion

Key Take Away

You are not selected on the basis of how much you speak but WHAT
YOU SPEAK