

Group Dynamics





Teamwork

Agenda

- Group Roles
- Dealing with Difficult People
- Group Characteristics
- Groupthink

Why study groups?

- Group membership is nearly impossible to avoid
- People say/do things in groups they wouldn't normally say/do
- How people feel is influenced by group affiliations
- Every day, important decisions are made by people in groups

Think about the groups you affiliate

- UA Student
- Student Club
- Music Genre Fan
- Religious
- Greek Member
- Honor Society
- Engineering related
- Country/State of Origin
- Sport Fan/Participant
- Language Speaker
- Hobby

“The way a team plays as a whole determines its success. You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don’t play together, the club won’t be worth a dime.

- Babe Ruth



Roles

- Sometimes formalized (president, VP, etc) and other times members informally adopt roles
- Roles can change over time based on length of membership in the group
- Roles can change based on the context of the interaction

Roles



Task



Relational



Hindering



Task Roles

- Task roles refer to the actions of individuals that help move the project, decision, task along
- Task roles help facilitate group communication and decision making processes



Task Roles

- Initiating
- Information/Opinion Seeking
- Consensus Testing
- Clarifying
- Summarizing



Task Roles

- These roles are critical for decision making processes in groups and group meetings
- Roles may be formally assigned or informally adopted by group members
- The **key** is someone has to be responsible for such tasks to ensure group success



Relational Roles

- Relational roles refer to the actions of individuals that help preserve group relations
- **Positive contributions** to group dynamics
- Lack of relational roles in a group can result in **negative outcomes**, damaged relationships, and poor performance



Relational Roles

- Participation encourager
- Harmonizer
- Tension reliever
- Evaluator of emotional climate
- Praise giver
- Empathic listener



Relational Roles

- All members of a group have a responsibility to relational roles
- Non-genuine relational acts will not be received well and are best not even shared (e.g. no flattery is better than fake flattery)



Hindering Roles

- Hinder roles refer to actions of individuals that hinder the group's process and progress
- Negative and obstructing actions to group cohesion and social relations



Hindering Roles

- Blocker
- Attacker
- Recognition-seeker
- Joker
- Withdrawer



Dealing with Difficult People

Know
your value

Avoid
defensiveness

Set
boundaries

Show
respect

Stay
Calm

Listen
for
unspoken

Tell
your truth

Accept
mistakes



Dealing with Difficult People

Show
respect

Listen
for
unspoken

Tell
your truth

- Even if respect isn't reciprocated
- Assume good intentions, initially
- What is the core issue? Is it the issue being discussed?
- Explain yourself and what your position/thoughts are regarding the topic



Dealing with Difficult People



- Take a deep breath
- Don't retaliate
- Seek solutions
- Loosing your calm is letting them win
- Prevent amygdala hijacking
- We all make mistakes
- Honest mistakes should be forgiven to move on

“ By being unflappable and standing up for the principles of fairness, and reason, and mutual best interest, you will be better able to stand up for what’s right – and stand up to them in a way that is neither defensive or provoking.



– Mark Goulston



Dealing with Difficult People

Know
your value

- Respect yourself and worth
- Don't let others define your value or demean you

Set
boundaries

- Be clear in defining
- Time, Tone, Topics
- Speak up when violations occur

Group Characteristics



A silhouette illustration of four climbers on a mountain peak against a warm, orange-toned sky. Two climbers are on the left peak, one is reaching out to help the other. A third climber is on the main ridge, and a fourth is rappelling down the right side of the mountain. A small green light is visible on the left side of the mountain.

“Alone we can
do so little;
together we can
do so much.”

- Helen Keller

Characteristics



Size



Cohesiveness



Function



Network



Presence



Characteristics

Size

- 3 or more people is a group, 2 people are a dyad
- Size of group impact dynamics and communication patterns
- Quantity is often inversely related to quality



Characteristics

Size



Amazon Jeff Bezos
Two Pizza Rule



Characteristics

Cohesiveness

- esprit de corps
- the degree to which the members are attracted to one another and to the group - Wilson & Hanna
- the ability of group members to get along, the feeling of loyalty, pride, & commitment of members to the group - Ellis & Fischer

Pitfalls of non cohesive groups

- Hidden Agendas
- Competition & Compromise
- Resistance & Sabotage



TEAMWORK

A FEW HARMLESS FLAKES WORKING TOGETHER CAN UNLEASH AN AVALANCHE OF DESTRUCTION.

www.despair.com



Characteristics

Function

- Social relationships
- Task
- Professional
- Work
- Political
- Religious



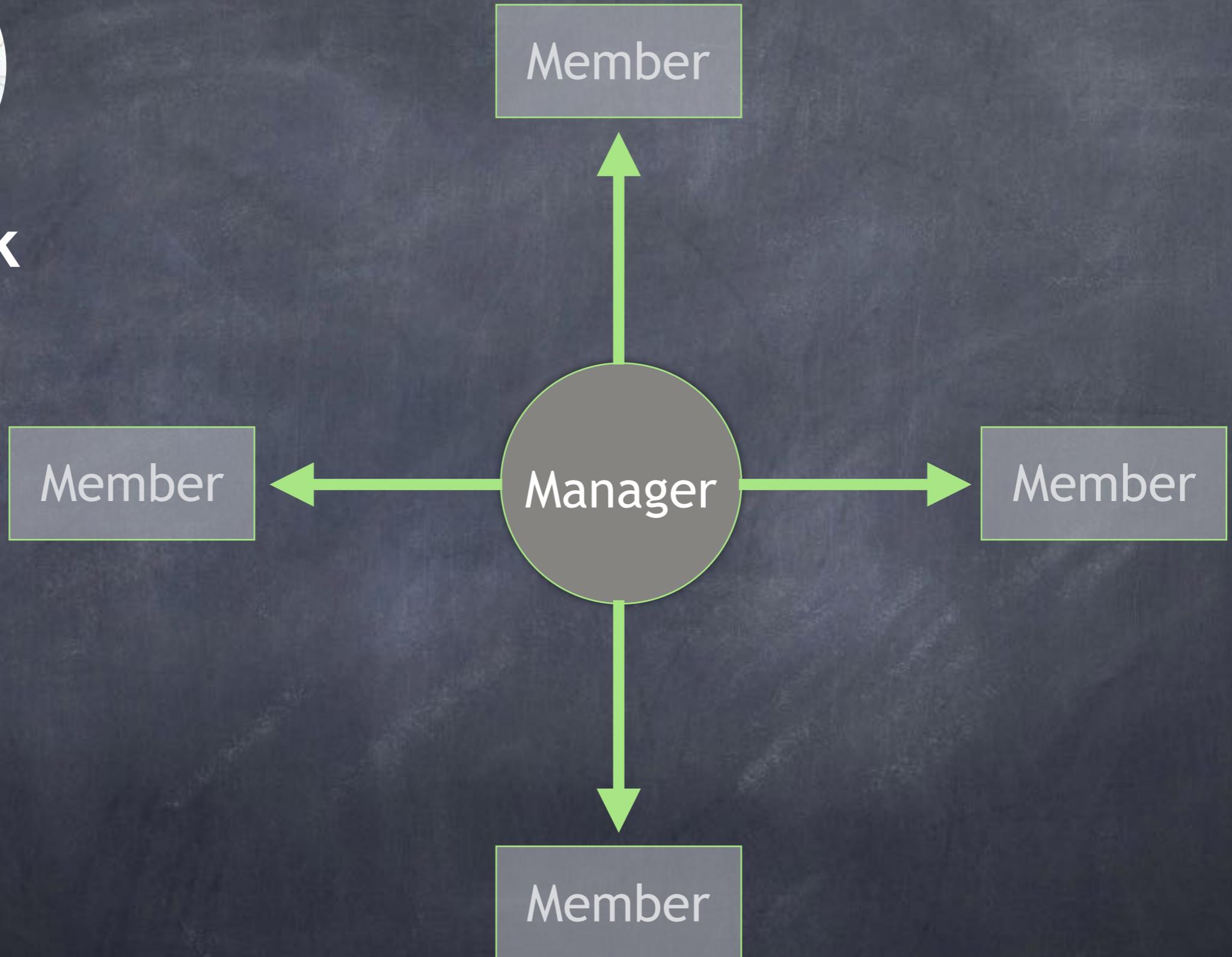
Characteristics

Network

- Four types of small group communication networks
 - Wheel Network
 - Chain Network
 - Circle network
 - All channel Network



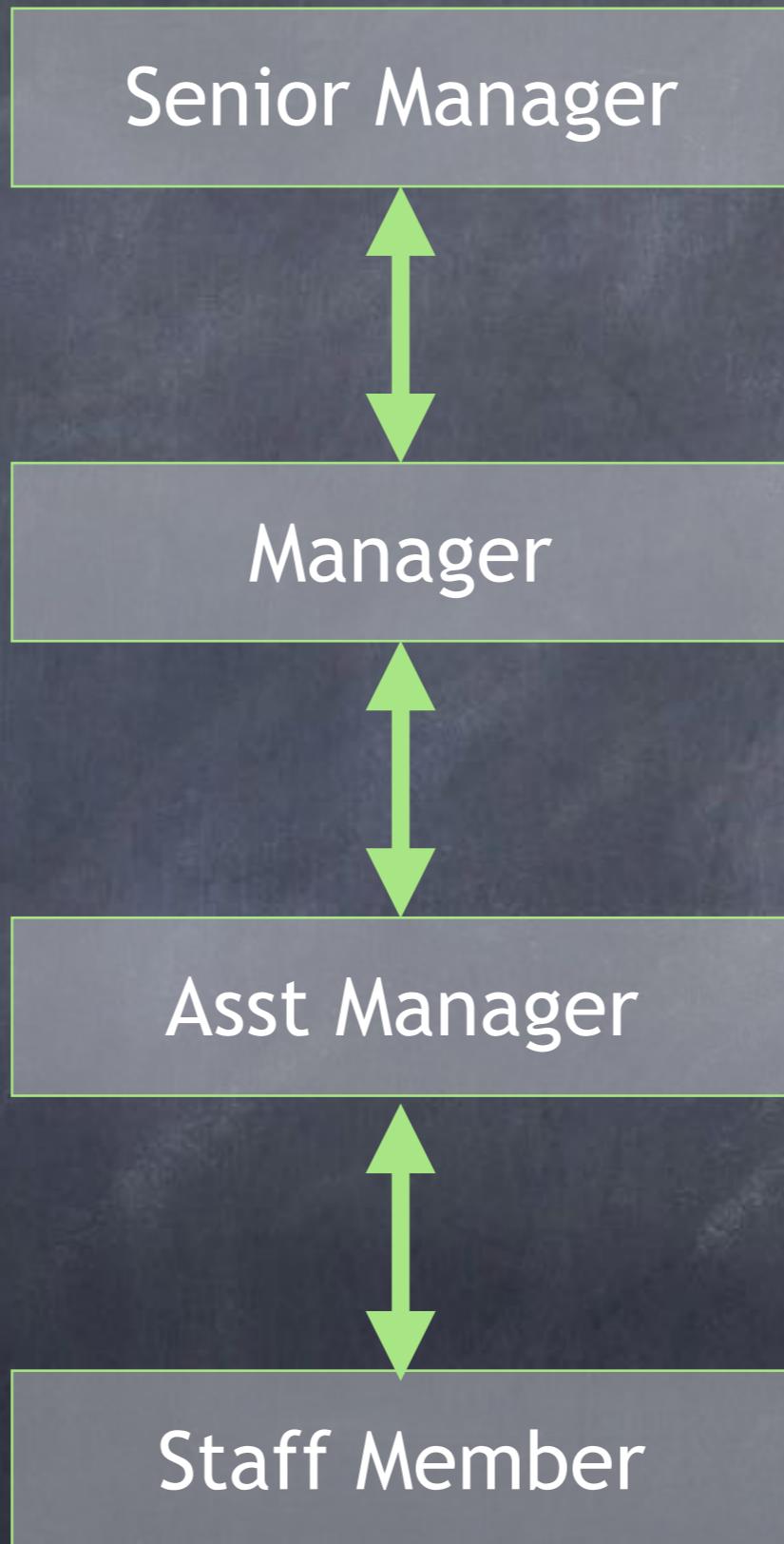
Network Wheel





Network Chain

- Reflects upward/downward communication





**Network
Circle**

Member

Member

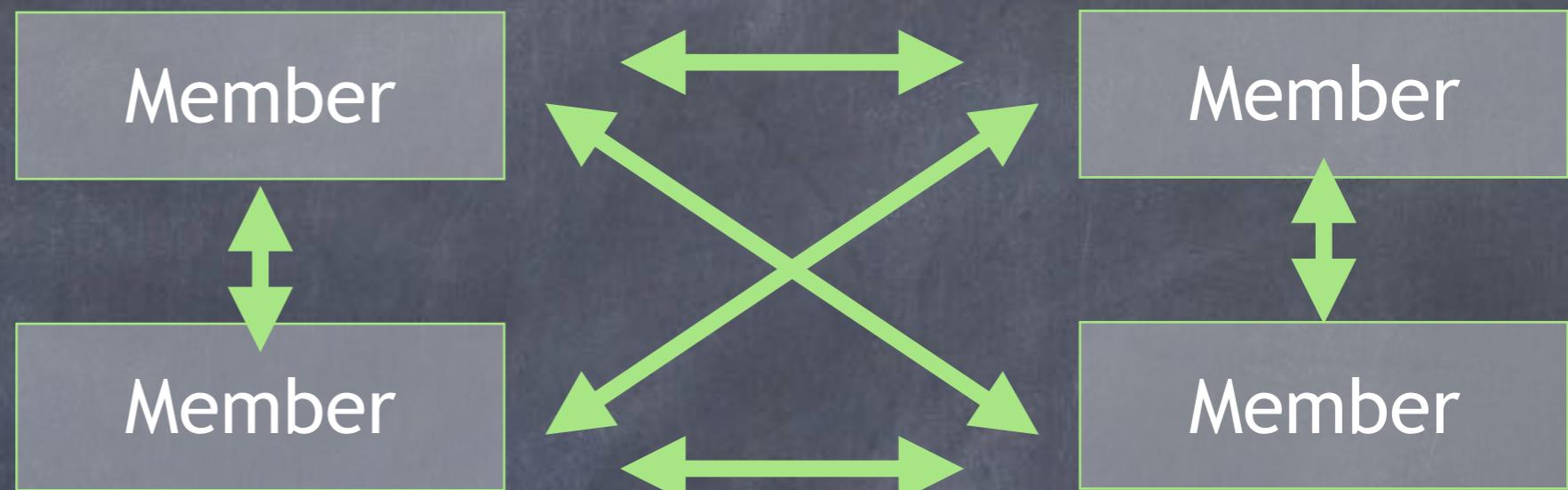
Member

Member





Network All Channel



- All members of the group communicate with all other members
- Available in case of informal groups
- Group member that have no formal structure, leader or task to perform



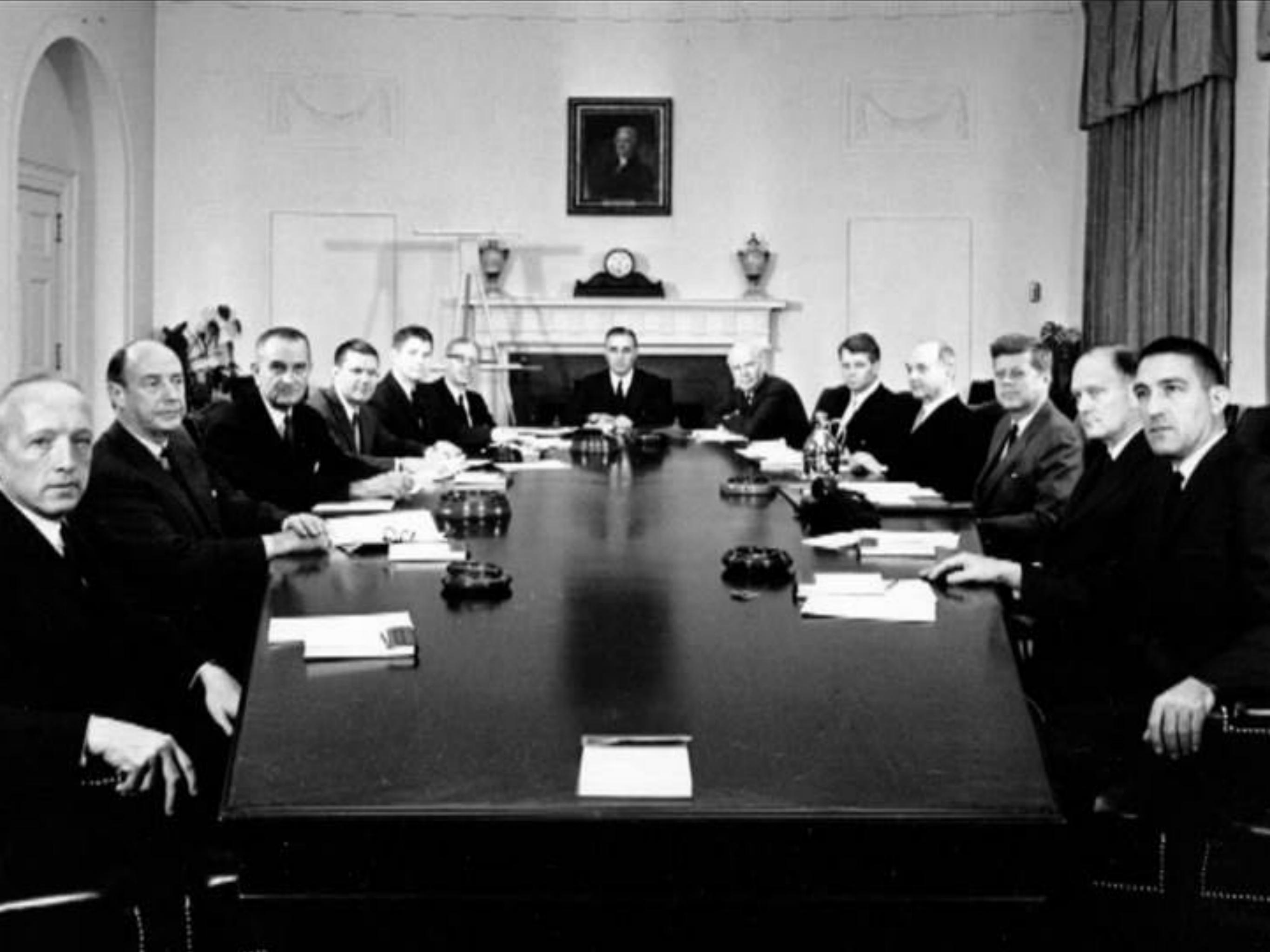
Characteristics

Presence

- Virtual groups are increasingly common
- Groups can be exclusively Face-to-Face, Virtual or a hybrid
- Communication technologies enable groups to have mediated interaction in between physical interactions

What is Group Think?





Characteristics of Groupthink

- Tendency to rationalize or discount negative info
- Group pressure to conform
- Self-censorship
- Illusion of unanimity
- “Mindguards”

“ The opposite of courage in our society is not cowardice, it is conformity.

— Rollo May



Conforming

- Pressure to conform to beliefs/attitudes/behaviors of the majority
- Some times conformity is unconscious
- Desire to fit in and need for approval
- Individual belief versus group mandate