

Basic Leadership Qualities

Leading Group Discussions

A leader must interact with other members of the group. For example:

- You may need to transmit information to them.
- You may need input regarding a decision that must be made.
- You may want them to help you make a decision.

Group discussions demonstrate to the membership that you are interested in their ideas. When members realize their importance to you and the group, they will be more committed to the decisions that are made.

The following recommendations are provided to improve your discussion leading skills.

- Do not dominate the group. It is easy for the leader to push his or her ideas through because of their position, but that isn't usually good for the organization.
- Do not compete with members of the group. If competition exists within the group, more time is spent trying to win a personal triumph rather than sharing ideas with the group.
- Be a good listener. Remember to listen for both comprehension and feelings.
- Encourage the group to look at different points of view. Different points of view should be regarded as healthy and should be encouraged.
- Encourage the group to submit ideas that have not been fully developed but that may stimulate additional comments.
- You should always identify the group's goals at the beginning of the discussion so that everyone knows what is expected. Remember that your goal in the group discussion is to accomplish the objectives that were stated at the beginning of the discussion.

- Let the group members know the time constraints of the discussion.
- Always let the group know what they have accomplished. They should know that the exercise was not a lesson in futility but has made a significant contribution.
- Be sure to formulate a plan of action that you will take as a result of your group's discussion.
- Always express your appreciation to the group for participating in the discussion.
- If appropriate, send a copy of the notes taken during the discussion to each member of the group.

Conduct an orderly meeting by using the following rules:

- Don't allow new topics to be introduced while another is being discussed.
- Use corrective feedback effectively.
- Let the group know if a particular topic is not within the purposes of the group discussion.
- Do not allow more than one person to talk at a time.

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