

Types of group members

Each member of a group will make a contribution to the group's work according to his/her personality. Obviously, it is possible to identify a great many different types of group members. These are some of the individuals who often crop up.

Harmoniser: This person will keep things going smoothly, reducing misunderstanding and reconciling those who have conflicts. A typical statement: "Wait a minute, we've made some progress, let's not lose it, perhaps we can resolve this issue as we go on."

Encourager: Attempts to achieve the full participation of all group members and is generally able to do this by using outstanding interpersonal communications skills. A typical statement: "Joan, we haven't heard from you yet. What do you think about ... "

Clarifier: S/he uses descriptive listening skills to help the group by restating or paraphrasing important points. A typical statement: "That's a good point Jim. Let me be certain that I've got it right. You said"

Questioner: The questioner often brings up issues that the group has overlooked and seeks information that might prove useful in achieving group goals. Typical statements: "Has anyone any information on this that might help?" "Ought we also to think about"

Listener: The larger the group, the more likely it is that it will contain one or more people who are really interested in what the group is doing but who make few verbal contributions. Such people are often viewed negatively. However, we've all been in groups where a few listeners would have been appreciated!

Opinion giver: Is extremely well-prepared and adept at making meaningful comments that have a sound basis. A typical statement: "Considering that 95% of We probably ought to"

(However, there is a difference between this and the person who is voicing their own agenda and has not considered all the relevant facts.)