

GD Interview Group Discussion: GD Group Discussion Tips and Tricks for Freshers

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Have you ever seen a football game?

Or been a part of a football team?

These questions might seem awkward and absurd when talking about How to crack a Group Discussion to get into a top B-School.

But they are relevant to understand the nuances of a Group Discussion.

Just reiterating the cliché that a Group discussion, or Group Discussion, as it is commonly called, is a group process or a team building exercise does not help students.

As in a football game, where you play like a team, passing the ball to each team member and aim for a common goal, Group Discussion is also based on team work, incorporating views of different team members to reach a common goal.

A Group Discussion at a B-School can be defined as a formal discussion involving ten to 12 participants in a group.

They are given a topic. After some time, during which they collect their thoughts, the group is asked to discuss the topic for 20 to 25 minutes.

B-Schools use the Group Discussion process to assess a candidate's personality traits.

Here are some of the most important personality traits that a candidate should possess to do well at a Group Discussion:

1. **Team Player** B-Schools lay great emphasis on this parameter because it is essential for managers to be team players. The reason: Managers always work in teams. At the beginning of his career, a manager works as a team member. And, later, as a team leader. Management aspirants who lack team skills cannot be good managers.
2. **Reasoning Ability** Reasoning ability plays an important role while expressing your opinions or ideas at a Group Discussion. For example, an opinion like 'Reduction in IIMs' fees will affect quality' can be better stated by demonstrating your reasoning ability and completing the missing links between fees and quality as: 'Reduction in IIMs 'fees will result in less funds being invested on study material, student exchange programmes, research, student development activities, etc.' Moreover, it costs money to attract good faculty, create good

infrastructure and upgrade technology. 'With reduction in fees, less money will be available to perform these, activities which will lead to deterioration in the quality of IIMs.'

3. Leadership There are three types of situations that can arise in a Group Discussion:

- A Group Discussion where participants are unable to establish a proper rapport and do not speak much.
- A Group Discussion where participants get emotionally charged and the Group Discussion gets chaotic.
- A Group Discussion where participants discuss the topic assertively by touching on all its nuances and try to reach the objective. Here, a leader would be someone who facilitates the third situation at a Group Discussion. A leader would have the following qualities:
 - S/he shows direction to the group whenever group moves away from the topic.
 - S/he coordinates the effort of the different team members in the Group Discussion.
 - S/he contributes to the Group Discussion at regular intervals with valuable insights.
 - S/he also inspires and motivates team members to express their views.

Caution: Being a mere coordinator in a Group Discussion does not help, because it is a secondary role.

Contribute to the Group Discussion with your ideas and opinions, but also try and steer the conversation towards a goal.

4. Flexibility You must be open to other ideas as well as to the evaluation of your ideas: That is what flexibility is all about. But first, remember: Never ever start your Group Discussion with a stand or a conclusion. Say the topic of a Group Discussion is, 'Should India go to war with Pakistan?' Some participants tend to get emotionally attached to the topic and take a stand either in favour or against the topic, i.e. 'Yes, India should' or, 'No, India should not' By taking a stand, you have already given your decision without discussing the topic at hand or listening to the views of your team members. Also, if you encounter an opposition with a very strong point at the 11th hour, you end up in a typical catch-22 situation:

- If you change your stand, you are seen as a fickle-minded or a whimsical person.
- If you do not change your stand, you are seen as an inflexible, stubborn and obstinate person.

5. Assertiveness You must put forth your point to the group in a very emphatic, positive and confident manner. Participants often confuse assertiveness with aggressiveness. Aggressiveness is all about forcing your point on the other person, and can be a threat to

the group. An aggressive person can also demonstrate negative body language, whereas an assertive person displays positive body language.

6. Initiative A general trend amongst students is to start a Group Discussion and get the initial kitty of points earmarked for the initiator. But that is a high risk-high return strategy. Initiate a Group Discussion only if you are well versed with the topic. If you start and fail to contribute at regular intervals, it gives the impression that you started the Group Discussion just for the sake of the initial points. Also, if you fumble, stammer or misquote facts, it may work against you. Remember: You never ever get a second chance to create a first impression.
7. Creativity/Out of the box thinking An idea or a perspective which opens new horizons for discussion on the Group Discussion topic is always highly appreciated. When you put across a new idea convincingly, such that it is discussed at length by the group, it can only be positive. You will find yourself in the good books of the examiner.
8. Inspiring ability A good group discussion should incorporate views of all the team members. If some team members want to express their ideas but are not getting the opportunity to do so, giving them an opportunity to express their ideas or opinions will be seen as a positive trait. Caution: If a participant is not willing to speak, you need not necessarily go out of the way to ask him to express his views. This may insult him and hamper the flow of the Group Discussion.
9. Listening Always try and strike a proper balance between expressing your ideas and imbibing ideas.
10. Awareness

You must be well versed with both the micro and macro environment.

Your awareness about your environment helps a lot in your Group Discussion content, which carries maximum weightage.

Caution: The content or awareness generally constitutes 40 to 50 percent marks of your Group Discussion.

Apart from these qualities, communication skills, confidence and the ability to think on one's feet are also very important.

A group discussion can be categorically divided into three different phases:

1. Initiation/Introduction
2. Body of the group discussion
3. Summarisation/Conclusion

Let's stress on the initiation and summarisation:

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