SMALL GROUP COMMUNICATION
How big is a small group?

- 5-7 is optimum size for productivity
- Highest ever suggested is 20
How big is a small group?

• 5-7 is recommended for greatest productivity
• 20 is largest number ever suggested
Characteristics of a Small Group

• Equal opportunity to communicate
• Concentration on a single task
• Able to function with sub-dividing into small groups
Advantages of Small Group decision-making

• Synergy: the whole is greater than the sum of its parts

• Risky shift phenomenon: you will risk as a group what you won’t risk as an individual
Disadvantages

• GROUPTHINK: may have such a cohesive group that negative thinking is deterred
• Pollyanna-Nietzsche effect: Excessive optimism and belief that the group is superhuman
Ways to combat disadvantages

• **Always** have a Central Negative (devil’s advocate)

• Recognize that cohesion can lead to Groupthink

• EVALUATE any solution as it is implemented (to combat P-N-E)
CONSENSUS DECISION-MAKING

• REQUIRES 100% AGREEMENT, NOT JUST MAJORITY

• Results in
  – Increased cohesion
  – Increased ownership
  – Commitment to course of action
Achievement of Consensus

• Compromise
• Collaboration
Leadership Styles

laissez-faire                       democratic                        authoritarian
ROLES OF GROUP MEMBERS (P. 274-275)

Task Roles
• Initiator-contributor
• Information-seeker
• Opinion-seeker
• Information-giver
• Opinion-giver
• Elaborator
• Coordinator

• Orienter
• Evaluator
• Energizer
• Procedural technician
• Recorder
Maintenance roles

- Encourager
- Harmonizer
- Compromiser
- Gatekeeper
- Standard setter
- Observer
- Follower