12 Tips For Forming An Effective Group

Group work is a necessary component of student and professional life for which students need to develop skills. This resource addresses key things to consider when forming a group, partnership or team. It can be used for discussion prior to group assignments and also to help students build career skills.

If you have worked regularly with a group, you know how magical effective group work can be. You have probably also learned that group dynamics can get tricky. Whatever challenges collaborating individuals face, they’re simpler to overcome when partnerships are founded with agreed-upon objectives and ground rules. So, to help groups succeed, I have put together 12 basic questions for prospective members to discuss as they consider whether to team up.

Before you weigh these questions with potential colleagues, do some work together to verify that your abilities and interests match. Also, ensure that all of you come with solid reputations for professionalism (punctuality, preparation, courtesy, and integrity). Within your group, consider which of the following questions are relevant to your situation:

1. What are your individual goals, and how will working with a new group fit your plans?
2. Will your group exist for a finite period or will you collaborate indefinitely?
3. Will you structure yourselves as an egalitarian group, a leader-run group, or some sort of hybrid?
4. What is your mission? That is, what sorts of activities will you undertake, and how will you brand yourselves?
5. Where and when will you work?
6. Where and how frequently will you showcase your work?
7. Do you have commitments that could cause scheduling conflicts?
8. How will you meet any equipment needs?
9. Which of you will oversee things such as your group’s schedule, website, social media, and deadlines?
10. How will you manage bookings, marketing, and travel?
11. If you make money as a group, how will you administer your rights and business affairs?
12. What are some possible names for your group, and who will own the name?

Remember, if you intend to launch a professional partnership but have little experience in your industry, your prospects for success will increase if you consult a mentor during the formative process and as your group matures.