

Groupthink

Symptoms

- * Overestimation of own strengths, rights and wisdom
- * Stereotyped views of the other parties
- * Shared illusion of unanimity
- * Self-censorship of deviations from group consensus
- * Collective efforts to discredit those who dissent and to discount warnings
- * Emergence of self-appointed "mindguards"

Consequences

- * Incomplete consideration of objectives and alternatives
- * Failure to examine risks of preferred choices
- * Poor search for potentially relevant information
- * Selective perception in processing available information
- * Failure to work out contingency plans

Remedies

- * Legitimize dissent explicitly
- * Involve outsiders
- * Set up parallel planning / review teams
- * Establish clear breakpoints to step back and review events
- * Purposely discuss weaknesses of one's own case

According to: Michael D. Watkins, *Diagnosing and Overcoming Barriers to Agreement*, Harvard Business School, Note # 9-800-333, Rev. May 8, 2000