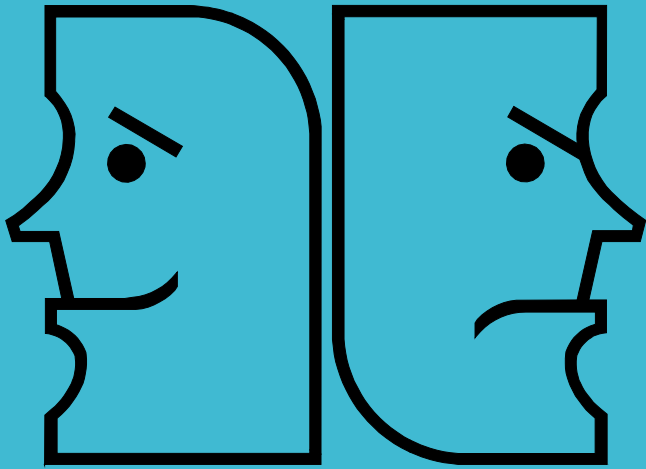


Conflict Management in the Workplace



Conflict Management Approach

- To recognize that *conflict is inevitable*; it cannot be completely avoided,
- Conflict generates *behavioral responses*, and those responses can be positively changed,
- The goal of successful conflict management is not its elimination, but to reduce its harmful effects and maximize its useful ones.



Conflict is...

Any situation in which people have *apparently* incompatible opinions, goals, interests, principles or feelings.

Costs of Organizational Conflict

Cost factors:

#1: Wasted time	<u>\$30,000</u>
#2: Opportunity cost of wasted time	<u>\$15,000</u>
#3: Lowered job motivation and productivity	<u>\$12,000</u>
#4: Lost performance due to conflict-related absenteeism	<u>\$1920</u>
#5: Loss of investment in skilled employees	<u>\$72,000²</u>
#6: Conflict-incited theft, sabotage, vandalism, damage	<u>0¹</u>
#7: Restructuring around the problem	<u>0¹</u>
#8: Health costs	<u>\$1200</u>
#9: Degraded decision quality	<u>0¹</u>
Total:	<u>\$132,120</u>

¹ Illustration makes conservative assumption that this factor did not incur cost.

² Assume one of the \$40,000 employees resigned; conflict played average role

Conflict Management

- What do you feel when you hear the word *conflict*?
- What do you feel when you are *experiencing* conflict?
 - What *physical reactions* happen?
- Conflict doesn't just impact our thoughts. There is a *tremendous impact* on our brains and bodies as well.

Often people feel:

- Sweaty palms
- Nausea
- Dry mouth
- Shaking
- Tense muscles
- Increase heart rate
- Warm, reddening face



Physical Impact on Brain

- Conflict produces Cortisol; shuts down our thinking Center
- More reactive and sensitive
- Reduce conversation IQ (C-IQ)
- Effects last for 26 hours
- Brain making chemical choice to Fight, Flight, Freeze, Appease

Physical Impact on Brain

- Positive comments/interaction/conversations produce Oxytocin
- Oxytocin= the 'feel good' hormone
- Elevates ability to communicate, collaborate, and trust others
- Increases Conversation Intelligence (C-IQ)

How do you rate?

- Name, your primary professional work?
- Something you learned about conflict as a child....
- Rate your conflict management skills (1-10). Ineffective vs. Effective?

Path of Conflict

Precipitating Events and/or Hot Buttons

Initiate Conflict

CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONSES

Behaviors which keep conflict to a minimum

CONFLICT DE-ESCALATES

- Open & honest communication of feelings
- Win / Win or Both Gain Solutions
- Both parties' needs are met
- Improved communication
- Actively resolving conflict
- Team performance improves

DESTRUCTIVE RESPONSES

Behaviors which escalate or prolong conflict

CONFLICT ESCALATES

- Feelings of anger and frustration
- No resolution
- Getting even and keeping score
- Closed channels of communication
- Refusing to deal with issues
- Team performance decreases

Conflict Management Exercise

- In small groups, separate listed behaviors into Constructive and Destructive responses.

Active and Passive Responses to Conflict

- **ACTIVE**

- Behaviors which involve overt responses, taking action, or making an effort. Outcome can be either constructive or destructive.

- **PASSIVE**

- Behaviors which involve withholding a response, not taking action, or not making an effort. Outcome can be either constructive or destructive.

Conflict Management Exercise

- Now organize previous listed behaviors into:
 - Active Constructive and Active Destructive.
 - Passive Constructive and Passive Destructive.

Constructive Responses

Are behaviors which research has demonstrated to be highly effective in keeping the harmful effects of conflict to a minimum

Constructive responses emphasize:

- Task-completion and focus on problem-solving
- Creative problem-solving & focus on exchange of ideas
- Expression of positive emotions & optimism
- Not provoking the other person

Typical Outcomes of Constructive Responses

- Win-win solutions (Both Gain)
- Open & honest communication of feelings
- Both parties' needs are met
- Non-judgmental actions
- Not sticking adamantly to one position
- Actively resolving conflict (not allowing conflict to continue)
- Thoughtful responses (not impulsive)
- Improvement of team performance

Destructive Responses

Are behaviors which research has demonstrated to escalate or prolong conflict

Destructive responses emphasize:

- Displaying negative emotions
- Trying to win, no matter what
- Lack of respect for the other person
- Avoiding conflict rather than facing it

Typical Outcomes of Destructive Responses

- Feelings of anger and frustration
- Judgmental actions
- Getting even and keeping score
- Other party does not have needs met
- Closed channels of communication
- Refusing to deal with issues
- Decreased self-confidence
- Tasks not completed
- Decreased team performance

Conflict Response Categories

	Constructive	Destructive
Active	<p>Perspective Taking Creating Solutions Expressing Emotions Reaching Out</p>	<p>Winning at All Costs Displaying Anger Demeaning Others Retaliating</p>
Passive	<p>Reflective Thinking Delay Responding Adapting</p>	<p>Avoiding Yielding Hiding Emotions Self-Criticizing</p>

What behaviors by others can *trigger* negative responses in you?

Said another way, what are your *HOT BUTTONS*?

Hot Buttons

*People or situations which may **irritate** you enough to **provoke** conflict by producing destructive responses*

- The “hotter” the hot button, the more likely it is to produce:
 - Strong negative emotions
 - Feelings of personal provocation
 - Automatic and impulsive responding
 - Increased tension

What Are Your Hot Buttons?

Take a moment to identify
and predict which
Hot Buttons
will be your *hottest*.

Hot Button Categories

- Unreliable
- Overly Analytical
- Unappreciative
- Aloof
- Micro-Managing
- Self Centered
- Abrasive
- Untrustworthy
- Hostile



Nonverbal Communication

Repeated studies reveal that more than **90%** of communication is transmitted nonverbally

- People use nonverbal cues to determine how they *feel* about others
- They *believe* nonverbal behaviors more than words
- People *pay more attention* to nonverbal messages, particularly when in conflict
- Nonverbal behaviors can *trigger* our Hot Buttons

Nonverbal Communication

Pay special attention to your own nonverbal cues

- What are people reading from your facial expressions
 - Eye contact / Eye rolling
 - Smirking / Smiling
- What are people seeing from your tone of voice
 - Yelling
 - Hostile
- What are people interpreting from your body language
 - Are you defensive
 - Disengaged

Nonverbal Communication

What *types* of nonverbal communication have the biggest negative *impact* on you?

**Now
What ?**

Try to Recognize the Emotion

What is their emotion:

- Angry, Happy, Embarrassed, Calm,
- Confused, Frustrated, Nervous, Pleased/Positive
- Unhappy, Worried

What is your emotion:

- Angry, Calm, Bitter, Concerned
- Frustrated, Positive/Happy, Hopeful
- Stressed, Tired, Worried

W-Why A-AM I-I T-Talking

- Listen to the words, not just the tone.
- Take a breath before responding.
- Can you rephrase your response.
- If I “win” fights with you today, I will lose you tomorrow.
- Intent compared to impact.

Identify Interests: Why is this Important to them?

Ask yourself:

- What are they trying to accomplish?
- Does this solve the issue?
- What if.....? (suggest a solution).
- What are you most concerned about?
- What would be the best possible outcome for you both in this situation?
- If we had to do this again, what would you change or do differently?
- OK to say: I need your help.....

Proactive Conflict Resolution

- Teach and model *perspective taking*
 - Consider the other person's opinion/point of view
- Focus on the *issue* not the person
 - Maintain professionalism
- Work *together* to identify solutions

Proactive Conflict Resolution

Recognize and Re-Frame:

- Situation: Define the where and when
- Behavior: Describe the specific observable behaviors that you want to address
- Impact: Use 'I' statements to describe how the other person's action has affected you or others

(Differentness is not a threat).

Proactive Conflict Resolution

- Create a **trusting** environment where people feel they can talk freely about difficult issues.
- **Model** open and transparent communication
- Address the **Sign** before it becomes a Situation
- Practice reaching out
- Coach your team to talk through issues as they **arise**

Proactive Conflict Resolution

Now....Knowing what you know now about your own constructive and destructive behaviors

- What *behaviors* might you be doing that has made the conflict *worse*?
- What might you do now to *resolve* the conflict?

Conflict Management Quote

Peace is not the **absence** of conflict, but the **presence** of alternatives for responding to conflict.

Dorothy Thompson

Thank You



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