

MANAGING CONFLICT:

Your Survival Guide to Successful Negotiation & Conflict Resolution

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Mountains & Minds

Audience Participation

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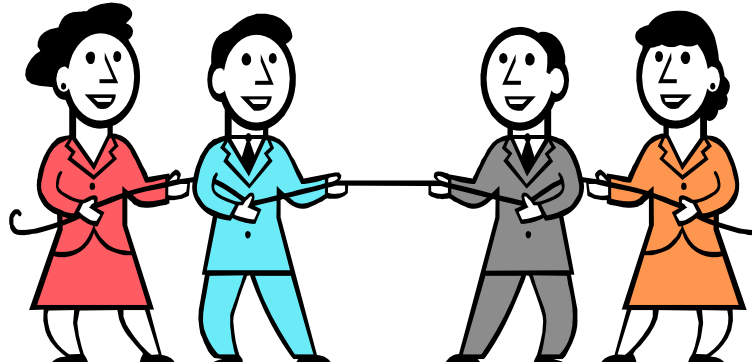
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Opening Discussion



Discussion Results



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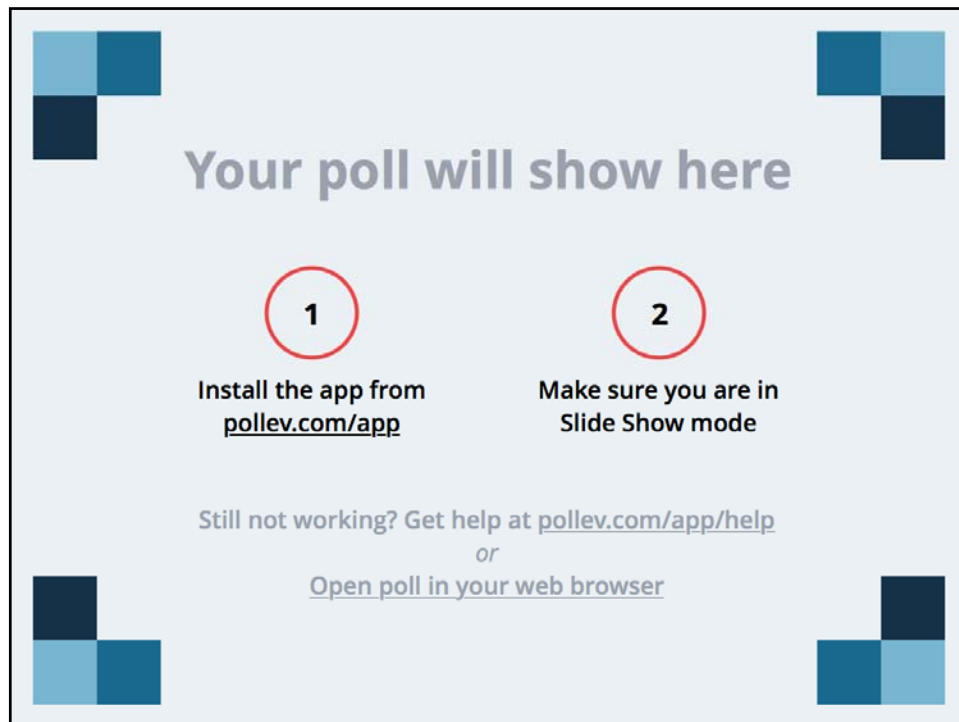
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Overview

1. What is conflict & Where does it come from?
2. Styles of conflict
3. Communication in conflict
4. Practical steps to manage interpersonal conflict
5. Difficult people
6. Scenarios & Practice
7. Takeaways

What is *Conflict* ?



1. Definition
2. Levels
3. Functions & Dysfunctions



Conflict may be defined as a:

"sharp disagreement or opposition" and includes "the perceived divergence of interest, or a belief that the parties' current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously"



Levels of Conflict

1. Intrapersonal or intrapsychic conflict
2. Interpersonal conflict
3. Intragroup Conflict
4. Intergroup Conflict



Functions & Dysfunctions of Conflict

Functions of Conflict

1. Makes employees more aware & able to cope with problems.
2. Promises organizational change & adaptation.
3. Strengthens relationships & heightens morale.
4. Promotes awareness of self & others.
5. Enhances personal development.
6. Encourages psychological development—it helps people become more accurate & realistic in their self-appraisals.
7. Can be stimulating & fun.

Dysfunctions of Conflict

1. Competitive, win-lose goals
2. Misperception and bias
3. Emotionality (uncontrolled)
4. Decreased communication
5. Blurred issues
6. Rigid commitments
7. Magnified differences, minimized similarities
8. Escalation of conflict



THE ABSENCE OF CONFLICT IS NOT HARMONY, IT'S APATHY.

The challenge is to keep constructive conflict over issues from degenerating into dysfunctional interpersonal conflict... to encourage managers to argue without destroying their ability to work as a team (Bourgeois, Eisenhardt, & Kahwajy, 1997).



Where Does Conflict Come From?

1. Sources of Conflict-categories
2. Hot Button work behaviors

Sources of Conflict in the Workplace

1. Organizational Conflict
stems from a disparity between the existing organizational culture and the organization's written mission & value statements
2. Interest-Based Conflict
stems from clashes between different departments, units, &/or functions
3. Informational Conflict
stems from poorly used, formal channels of communication
4. Interpersonal Conflict
stems from poor relationships between managers and employees on the one hand and among peers on the other
5. Cultural Conflict
may stem from differences in racial, ethnic, or gender perspectives and/or communication styles



Top 10 Hot Buttons in the Workplace

1. Passing the buck; not taking responsibility
2. Spreading false rumors about people's personal lives
3. Going over a person's head to complain to the boss
4. Sidestepping issues to avoid conflict; never taking a stand
5. Wasting time at meetings
6. Challenging a person's competence and motivation
7. Failing to deliver on promises; ignoring input
8. Being forced to do more with less
9. Using power to control and playing favorites
10. Overlooking people's contributions because of gender, age, race, ethnicity, physical abilities

How do teams *minimize*
interpersonal & *maximize*
functional conflict?



How do teams *minimize*
interpersonal & maximize functional
conflict?

1. *Gather information & Stick with the facts.*
Teams worked with more, rather than less, information
& debated on the basis of facts
2. *Consider options.*
Teams developed multiple alternatives to enrich the
level of debate
3. *Get on the same page.*
Teams shared commonly agreed-upon goals



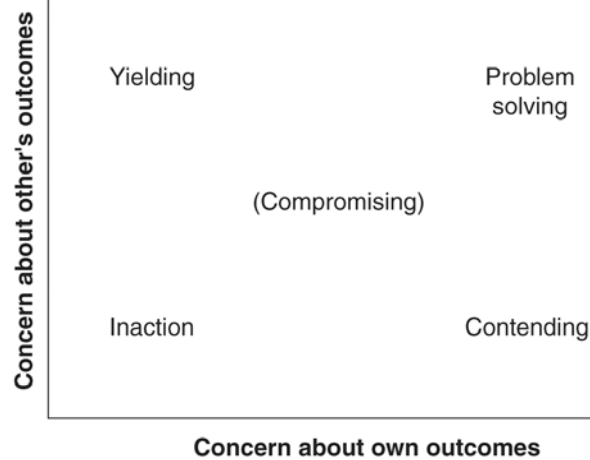
How do teams *minimize interpersonal & maximize functional* conflict?

4. *Laugh.*
Teams injected humor into the decision process
5. *Equal voices, equal say.*
Teams maintained a balanced power structure
6. *No contrived consensus.*
Teams resolved issues without forcing consensus

Conflict Management Styles

1. Dual Concerns Model
2. Conflict Style Profile

The Dual Concerns Model



Styles of Conflict Management

1. Contending

- Actors pursue own outcomes strongly, show little concern for other party obtaining their desired outcomes

2. Yielding

- Actors show little interest in whether they attain own outcomes, are quite interested in whether the other party attains their outcomes

3. Inaction

- Actors show little interest in whether they attain own outcomes, little concern about whether the other party obtains their outcomes

Styles of Conflict Management

4. Problem solving

- Actors show high concern in obtaining own outcomes, as well as high concern for the other party obtaining their outcomes

5. Compromising

- Actors show moderate concern in obtaining own outcomes, as well as moderate concern for the other party obtaining their outcomes

Conflict Style Profile

- This questionnaire will help you to assess your own conflict style.
- *Conflict Style*: "...the collection of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that constitute the way we approach conflict."
- In order to do this,
 - Complete the *Conflict Style Profile*, a 32 item questionnaire that uses a scale from 1–4.
 - Don't spend too much time determining exactly where you fit on the scale. Just indicate your initial reaction.
 - After you have completed the questionnaire, sum your scores for each style.

Conflict Style Profile

A. Cautious Style <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delay the Confrontation • Avoid conflict 	B. Seeking Style <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See potential conflict in many situations • Have thoughts and plan actions anticipating confrontation
C. Strong Style <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value winning conflicts • Take firm position 	D. Peaceful Style <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value peace in conflict positions • Hesitate to express needs
E. Calm Style <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control emotions during conflict • Remain calm in heated situations 	F. Feeling Style <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to express feelings to communicate comfortably • Use strong emotional tone to make convincing arguments
G. Compromising Style <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek a quick middle ground position • Exchange concessions 	H. Solution-Focused Style <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View conflicts as problems to be solved in a win-win situation • Important to satisfy the needs and goals of both parties

Advantages/Disadvantages of Conflict Styles (I)

- **Cautious Style**
Advantage: Issue is too heated and time is needed to cool off and think it through.
Disadvantage: Avoidance can lead to escalation, creating more tension.
- **Seeking Style**
Advantage: Anticipating roadblocks and planning in advance can be an effective strategy.
Disadvantage: Seeing danger when it may not be there can exacerbate the situation.
- **Strong Style**
Advantage: In an emergency, quick decisions may be needed without the luxury of collaboration.
Disadvantage: Strong-arm methods can lead to polarization and demoralization.

Advantages/Disadvantages of Conflict Styles (II)

- **Peaceful Style**

Advantage: Preserving relationships and having other peoples' needs met may be more important than one's own needs in particular situations.

Disadvantage: Gives the other party the impression of weakness and susceptibility to exploitation.

- **Calm Style**

Advantage: Keeps the emotional atmosphere stable, allowing for more rational discussion.

Disadvantage: Gives the other person an impression of being uncaring and aloof.

Advantages/Disadvantages of Conflict Styles (III)

- **Feeling Style**

Advantage: Can help to persuade others that this is a very important issue.

Disadvantage: Can alienate people who are uncomfortable with strong expressions of feelings.

- **Compromising Style**

Advantage: When there is an impasse, it may be best for both sides to give in.

Disadvantage: Making concessions too quickly rules out a truly integrated solution where both sides really feel they have "won."

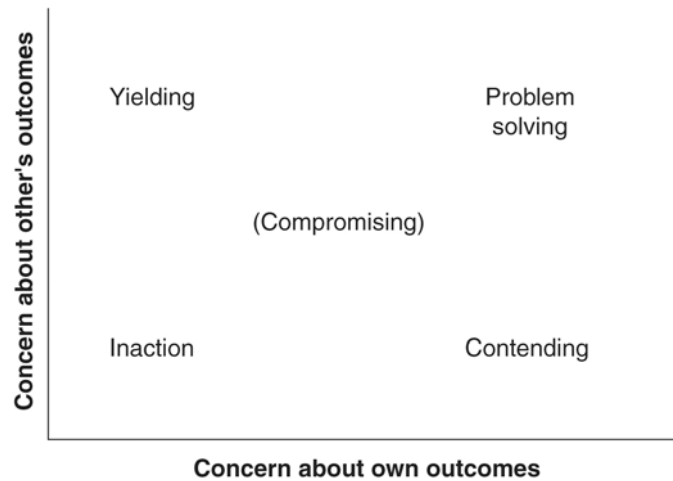
- **Solution-focused Style**

Advantage: This is the settlement that is highly constructive and assists in relationship building.

Disadvantage: It can be too time consuming when the needs and interests of all parties have to be explored.

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**Now you know your style,
but when is it appropriate?**



**WORKPLACE
CONFLICT SCENARIO**

1. Was Dave successful in managing this conflict?
2. Why or why not?

Managing Conflict

1. Think first
2. Gain a better understanding
3. Define the problem
4. Offer your best solution
5. Agree on the Resolution

1. Think First

- Never act or speak before you think.
- Take time to calm down and control your emotions.
- Look at the situation from all perspectives.
- Stay objective when thinking about the conflict.
- Focus on the problem, not the person.
- Think through your conversation, along with likely responses.
- Refrain from taking sides in other people's problems.
- Try to help the other person objectify the situation, rather than make judgments.

2. Gain a Better Understanding

- Never draw conclusions before first speaking to the other person.
- Question the other person in an objective and respectful manner.
- Carefully listen to the response so that you gain an understanding of how the other person views the issue.
- If more than two people are involved, get everyone together and allow each person to tell his or her version of the situation.
- Encourage everyone to use “I phrases” when explaining.
- If someone becomes emotional, pay attention to the nonverbal clues behind the message.
- Listen carefully, and avoid interrupting.
- When it's your turn to respond, control your emotions.
- If someone becomes upset or starts losing control of his or her emotions, acknowledge and offer an assurance. Defer your discussion until the person has had time to calm down.

3. Define the Problem

- When you feel you have enough information, restate the problem from your viewpoint. Then ask others how they view the problem.
- Say something like: “I see it this way.... How do you see it?”
- Before you move on to find a workable solution, everyone must agree on how the problem is defined.

4. Offer Your Best Solution

- After offering your best solution, ask if the other party or parties agree.
- If everyone agrees, then you're ready to move to the final step.
- If they don't agree, ask for other ideas.
- Allow everyone to propose a solution.
- Analyze the consequences of each proposal.
- Be respectful of everyone's opinion.
- Keep the focus on finding the best solution.
- Emphasize that this is not a blame game.
- Try to find common ground by looking for the things on which you can agree.
- Be prepared for give and take. Be the one to offer a compromise.
- If your role is to facilitate conflict resolution that doesn't directly involve you, maintain your objectivity.
- If the discussion stalls, postpone the meeting to give everyone a chance to calm down & look at the situation more objectively.

5. Agree on a Resolution

- Reach agreement through consensus, by taking a vote, or by one person making the call.
- Attempt to reach agreement through consensus, whereby everyone agrees on the final outcome.
- If you resort to deciding by majority rule, explain why the majority feels this is the best decision.
- If you have to make the final call, explain that you listened carefully to everyone's suggestions and made the best decision based on the information you had. Explain why you chose that decision.
- Once you've arrived at an agreement, restate the resolution and give everyone the chance for additional input to ensure that they buy into the final decision.



WORKPLACE CONFLICT SCENARIO

Let's apply these guidelines to Dave's situation:

- What should Dave do?
- What should Dave say?
- How might the team respond?

Difficult People

A poll of several thousand employees asked: *how do you respond to rudeness?*

- 48%** decreased their work effort,
- 47%** decreased their time at work,
- 38%** decreased their work quality,
- 66%** said their performance declined,
- 80%** lost work time worrying about the incident,
- 63%** lost time avoiding the offender, and
- 78%** said their commitment to the organization declined.



Basic Rules for Confronting a Coworker



Basic Rules for Confronting a Coworker

1. Always remain calm, no matter how the other person speaks to you.
2. Always treat others with respect.
3. Don't overreact.
4. Take a wait-&-see approach whenever possible.
5. Get a neutral person's perspective on the situation if you feel it'll help.
6. Always speak in specifics & be prepared to share examples.
7. Don't try to change people; focus only on changing the behavior.



Basic Rules for Confronting a Coworker

8. Avoid complaining about people to others.
9. Not every situation needs to be addressed.
10. Ignoring a situation may sometimes be your best option.
11. Always give the person the chance to make things right; never go over someone's head without speaking to the involved person directly.
12. If the situation can't be resolved after your resolution conversation, then and only then refer the matter to your boss.
13. If the conversation heats up or you feel threatened, end the discussion and get someone else to mediate.

Take-Away Points

1. Effective, healthy & productive groups have conflict!
2. Be aware of your personal conflict style... this will shape your attitude and communication style.
3. It's important to acknowledge your emotions, but to control them.
4. Assess the situation and determine which conflict style is appropriate for that situation, *not all conflict require an intervention, not all conflict require a compromise... use the best conflict style for the situation* (this may require some practice).

Resources

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THANK YOU!

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