



PROJECT MANAGEMENT CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE

A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department



CONFLICT RESOLUTION PRACTICES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

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2018 Project Management Symposium



Introduction

- This presentation is designed to share practical tools to manage workplace conflict.
- Discuss the benefits of knowing and understanding the conflict styles in the workplace.
- Share information about the federal sector and the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) actions to improve conflict management awareness for the 21st Century.
- Share conflict resolution resources



Agenda

- What is workplace conflict?
- What causes workplace conflict?
- Benefits of knowing the conflict styles.
- Importance of practicing constructive versus destructive conflict.
- Conflict resolution processes, skills and strategies.
- Federal Sector and PMBOK conflict resolution best practices.
- Conflict management internet resources.



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What is Workplace Conflict?





What is Workplace Conflict?

- Conflict in the workplace typically involves differences of opinion, style, or approach that are not easily resolved. These can lead to hurt feelings and altercations among employees.
- Conflict may occur between co-workers, or between supervisors and subordinates, or between service providers and their clients or customers. Conflict can also occur between groups, such as management and labor, or between whole departments.
- Some conflicts are essentially arbitrary, meaning it doesn't matter who "wins," only that the problem is resolved so everyone can get back to work.



What is Workplace Conflict?

- Some workplace conflicts reflect real disagreements about how an organization should function. If the winner of the conflict happens to be wrong, the organization as a whole could suffer.
- Some conflicts involve bullying or harassment of some kind, in which case a fair resolution must involve attention to justice.
- And if one party out-ranks the other, the power disparity could complicate resolution even if everybody concerned means well.



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What Causes Workplace Conflict?





What Causes Workplace Conflict?

- Disrespect
- Exclusion
- Sabotage
- Ignoring
- Authority Issues
- Lack of Cooperation
- Low Performance
- Misunderstandings
- Personality Clashes
- Competition for Resources
- Value or Goal Differences
- Favoritism
- Mobbing
- Unfair treatment
- Unclear Job Roles
- Unpredictable Policies
- Previous Experiences
- Lack of Equal Opportunity
- Poor Communication
- Bulling and Harassment
- Personal Problems
- Difference Over Methods or Styles



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Benefits of Knowing the Conflict Styles.

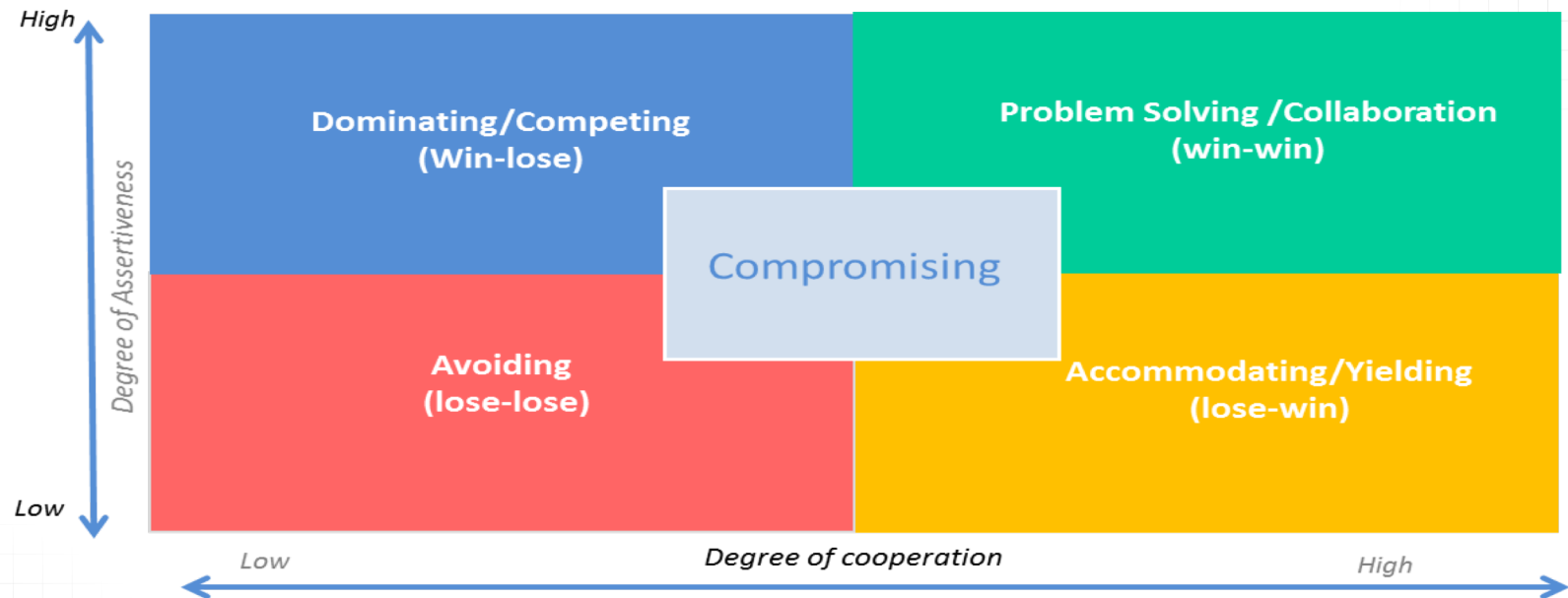




Benefits of Knowing the Conflict and Styles.

- Understanding Conflict Styles (Avoid, Accommodate, Competing, Compromise and Collaborate) increases emotional intelligence.
- Improved interactions with colleagues, stakeholders and team members on team projects.
- Better equipped at handling organizational change.
- Builds leadership skills that develop positive and

Benefits of Knowing the Conflict Styles.



Kenneth Thomas Ralph Killmann created the conflict mode Instrument in the early 1970's. It is widely used by corporations, schools and governments.

Website: <https://www.cpp.com/en-US/Products-and-Services/TKI>



Benefits of Knowing the Conflict Styles.

- Gain a better understanding of how our personal style impacts another person.
- Enables employees to work well together because the parties know how to navigate the disagreement.
- Employees learn how their colleagues feel and think, as well as how to interact with them.
- When involved in conflict employees will take a more thorough look at the situation and consider other possible solutions.



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Destructive versus Constructive Conflict Strategies





Destructive Conflict Strategies

- Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI) is the first organization dedicated to the eradication of workplace bullying.
- Ruth and Gary Namie are the founders of the WBI from June 1997 to the present.
- The web site provides resources to help targets of bullies in the workplace and provide data to support the Healthy Workplace Act.
- **Website URL:** <http://www.workplacebullying.org/history-of-wbi/>



Destructive Conflict Strategies

WBI June 2017 National Survey states that:

- 19% of Americans are bullied, another 19% witness it
- 61% of Americans are aware of abusive conduct in the workplace
- 60.4 million Americans are affected by it
- 70% of perpetrators are men; 60% of targets are women
- Hispanics are the most frequently bullied race
- 61% of bullies are bosses, the majority (63%) operate alone
- 40% of bullied targets are believed to suffer adverse health effects
- 29% of targets remain silent about their experiences
- 71% of employer reactions are harmful to targets
- 60% of coworker reactions are harmful to targets
- To stop it, 65% of targets lose their original jobs
- 77% of Americans support enacting a new law
- 46% report worsening of work relationships, post-Trump election



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Constructive Conflict Resolution Strategies





Constructive Conflict Resolution Strategies

- Practice active listening to understand the conflict.
- Manage your emotions and know your triggers to handle the conflict effectively.
- Be willing to acknowledge your part in the conflict.
- Speak non-confrontationally with I-messages.
- Make it OK to disagree.
- Do not insult, demean, shame, sneer, sabotage, undermine or threaten to resolve the conflict.



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Constructive Conflict Resolution Strategies

I Messages-Asking For Change

1. I feel _____,
2. when you _____.
3. Can you please _____,
4. and then I can/we can _____.

Response-Active Listening

1. You sound _____,
2. that/because _____.
3. Next time I will _____,
4. and I _____.



Constructive Conflict Resolution Strategies

- Teach people how you want to be treated.
- Solve the problem versus blame the person.
- Explain your thoughts and feelings.
- See the conflict as a future collaboration.
- Be assertive without destroying the relationship.
- Understand that nobody cares how much you know until you show how much you care.
- Alternative Dispute Resolution Programs (Mediation, Fact Finding, Ombudsing, Arbitration, Alternative Discipline)



Constructive Conflict Resolution Strategies

- Establish a cooperative atmosphere in the workplace.
- Cultivate Information communication patterns.
- Help colleagues meet their personal and professional goals.
- Give advance notice when help is needed.
- Seek to understand the other persons perspective.
- Reduce and eliminate the use of destructive behaviors.
- Create a climate that includes trust and safety, promoting collaboration and enhancing emotional intelligence.
- Align mission, policies, training programs, performance standards, and reward structures to reinforce the conflict competence model.



Federal Conflict Resolution Best Practices

<http://pmsymposium.umd.edu/pm2018/>





Federal Conflict Resolution Best Practices

- Office of Personnel Management (OPM) provides Core Competency guidelines to all federal agencies and mandatory training requirements.
- OPM currently requires mandatory training for telework, contracting, information management, security and ethics.
- Seeking guidance to request that OPM include conflict management training mandatory for all federal employees.



Federal Conflict Resolution Best Practices

- OPM Supervisory Core Competencies for Supervisory Positions GS-15 and below are:
 - Accountability
 - Customer Service
 - Decisiveness
 - Flexibility
 - Integrity/Honesty
 - Interpersonal Skills
 - Oral Communication
 - Problem solving
 - Resilience
 - Written Communication



Federal Conflict Resolution Best Practices

- OPM Core Competencies for Supervisory Positions that also require technical competencies to successfully perform their role:
 - Conflict Management
 - Continual Learning
 - Creativity and Innovation
 - Developing Others
 - Entrepreneurship
 - External Awareness
 - Financial Management
 - Human Capital Management
 - Influencing/Negotiating
 - Leveraging Diversity
 - Partnering
 - Political Savvy
 - Public Service Motivation
 - Strategic Thinking
 - Team Building
 - Technical Credibility
 - Technology Management
 - Vision



Federal Conflict Resolution Best Practices

- Office of the Chief Human Capital (OCHCO) Council developed the HR University training portal in August 2011 to provide specialized training for HR professionals. The HR University now offers conflict management courses to all federal employees.
- All Federal Agencies are encouraged to implement Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program's which offers free mediation services.
- Federal Agencies encourage employees to participate in the Federal Employee Viewpoint surveys (FEVS) yearly to obtain feedback about the office work culture and climate.



Federal Sector and Conflict Resolution Best Practices

- Several Federal Agencies have developed Community of Practice (CoP) knowledge management portals which are used to engage federal employees, share ideas and forecast solutions to future problems that impact agency mission.
- To ensure Federal employees invest their time to master conflict management skills, I plan to recommend that OPM make conflict management training mandatory for all federal employees once a year.
- Conflict style assessment testing should also be given to all federal employees. Role play practice and coaching sessions should be available once a quarterly for real life application in the work environment.



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PMBOK Conflict Resolution Practices

<http://pmsymposium.umd.edu/pm2018/>





PMBOK Conflict Resolution Best Practice

- Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) discusses conflict management in the 5th edition, chapter 9.4.2 and in the section "Manage Project Team Tools and Techniques".
- PMBOK 5th Edition confirms that Project Managers should know the 5 conflict styles: Avoid; Accommodate; Compromise Collaborate and Compete.
- PMBOK 5th Edition encourages Project Managers to have interpersonal skills that include: communication; emotional intelligence; conflict resolution; negotiation; team building; and group facilitation.
- Since Project Managers work with groups of people on teams they should also know the Bruce Tuckman's Stage of group development (Forming-Storming-Norming-Performing-Adjourning).



PMBOK Conflict Resolution Best Practices

- Project Managers that actively practice the Project Life Cycle (Initiating, Planning, Executing, Monitoring, Closing) will factor in risk management to mitigate problems that could cause conflicts.
- Project Managers who are comfortable with managing conflict will have no problem taken over troubled projects or creating new solutions to projects that fail.
- Project Managers manage conflict when create a new project plan (Stages in a project can create stress)
 - Measure (Where we are and what normally happens?)
 - Determine a path (Stop or fuel)
 - Control (Stop it or Fuel it)
 - Communicate to team
- The word “conflict” is printed 75 times in the PMBOK 5th Edition



Conflict Resolution Quotes

- “Conflict forces us to be fully present because it shatters our ego – stripping away all hope of escape or sugar coating. It removes everything that is nonessential to our authentic being; it removes all superficial layers. Conflict is painful because it wakes us up out of our created illusions. And if we lean into it, conflict can be the catalyst to our enlightenment.”
— *Alaric Hutchinson*
- 10 % of conflict is due to a difference of opinion and 90% is due to delivery and tone of voice. – *Author Unknown*
- Peace is not the absence of conflict, it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means. – *Ronald Reagan*



Conflict Management Internet Resources

- Conflict resolution courses are available to federal employees in HR University (<https://hru.gov/>)
- Healthy Workplace Bill (<http://healthyworkplacebill.org/>)
- Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI)
(<http://www.workplacebullying.org/individuals/problem/being-bullied/>)
- Association for Conflict Resolution
https://acrn.net/ACR/About_ACR/ACR/About_ACR/About_ACR.aspx?hkey=0298c220-bfa5-4290-a2e5-31496cd92c61
- Conflict Resources for Project Managers
<http://projectmanagementhacks.com/conflict-management-resources-project-managers/>



The End

- Thank you for the opportunity to share my research about conflict resolution best practices in the federal workplace.
- Any Questions?
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