

Tips For Resolving Conflicts/Negotiating

What is Resolving Conflicts/Negotiating?

- ❑ Dealing with complaints, resolving conflicts and grievances of others. Encouraging others to come together and reconcile differences.
- ❑ Conflict occurs when people disagree over significant issues, creating friction or tension between the people or groups³.
- ❑ Negotiating is the process of two or more parties reaching a mutually agreeable conclusion³.

Negative Consequences of Conflict³:

- ❑ Losing site of the common goal for winning at all costs.
- ❑ Viewing the “others” only in negative terms and discounting good aspects.
- ❑ Demoralization or demotivation for the “loser” in the conflict.

Types of Conflict³:

- ❑ Interpersonal Conflict: Conflict between two or more persons required to interact.
- ❑ Intragroup Conflict: Conflict within a group over goals and processes to achieve those goals.
- ❑ Intergroup Conflict: Disagreement between two different groups of people.

Conflict Management Style^{3,5}:

- ❑ Rahim and Magner⁵ give five styles of conflict management. Every person will have their own preferred style, as well as others that they are confident in using. The key is to identify which style is appropriate for a given situation and try to utilize it. To see what your primary style is, take the [short self-assessment](#).
- ❑ **Integrating**: Focus on collaboration, openness, and sharing information.
- ❑ **Obliging**: Focusing on the needs of others, while ignoring your own needs.
- ❑ **Dominating**: Focus on your own needs, while ignoring those of others.
- ❑ **Avoiding**: Suppressing, setting aside, or ignoring the issue.
- ❑ **Compromising**: Trying to achieve a middle ground so all parties are happy.

Conflict Management Strategies¹:

- ❑ Identify and understand the triggering events, and avoid or dull them.
- ❑ Set rules for the conflict, for instance attempting to limit when and how conflicting groups interact.
- ❑ Developing coping strategies to help groups to more effectively deal with the consequences of conflict.
- ❑ Attempts to eliminate or resolve the latent issues that eventually are triggered into conflict.

A Method to Resolve Interpersonal Conflict²:

1. Write the positives of the other person and what you would like from the relationship. Share the lists.
2. Write the negatives: Only actual behaviors that have caused problems. Share, then discuss.
3. Contracting: List behaviors you would like to see more, better, less, or not at all from the other person. Share, then discuss. Create compromises. Share.
4. Action Planning

A Method to Resolve Group-Level Conflict²:

1. Group Leaders meet with consultant and agree to search for ways to lessen or resolve conflict.
2. Each group meets separately and creates two lists. One list contains the group's thoughts on the other group, and the other contains what a group thinks the other group will say about them.
3. The two groups meet and read their list of thoughts on the other group with no discussion. They then each read their prediction lists.
4. Groups separate and discuss meeting with the other group. A list is then created of the issues that remain to be resolved.
5. Groups meet again and share their new lists. They create a new list together and prioritize the items. Together they create an action plan to deal with the issues.
6. A follow-up meeting assesses progress on the action plan.

The Organizational Mirror²:

1. A single group receives feedback from a number of other groups concerning how the other groups perceive them.
2. The receiving group would then talk about and clarify the feedback that they just received.
3. Subgroups consisting of both the receiving and other groups' member meet to discuss and identify the most important issues raised.
4. The groups then rejoin, discuss their ideas, and create an action plan.
5. A follow-up meeting assesses the progress of the host group.

Other Conflict Resolution Methods³:

- ❑ Enforcing Rules: May help with trivial conflicts.
- ❑ Separation: Keeps conflicting parties apart, but does not address problem.
- ❑ Clarify Tasks: Uncertainty may be the cause of the conflict, so clarification may help resolve the differences.
- ❑ Increasing resources: Competition for resources may be a cause of conflict, if additional resources are available this may resolve problems.

General Phases of Negotiations³:

- ❑ Preparation: Gather information about facts, issues, and alternatives.

- ▣ Presentation: Discuss initial views with the other party involved.
- ▣ Bargaining: Discuss issues further, making accommodations.
- ▣ Agreement: Reaching an agreement that both parties can accept.

Common Mistakes in Negotiation³:

- ▣ Not giving in on a course of action despite contrary information.
- ▣ Feeling that anything good for the other group is bad for your group.
- ▣ Feeling that the other group is not cooperating if they do not accept your initial offer.
- ▣ Overestimating the correctness of your parties approach.

Negotiation Strategies³:

- ▣ Be creative in looking at the problem.
- ▣ Be flexible and versatile in the course of action when needed.
- ▣ Be aware of what you are in control of and what you are not.
- ▣ Know what your motivations, goals, and limits are before you begin.
- ▣ Be able to say no to an agreement that is not acceptable.
- ▣ Focus on substantive issues.
- ▣ Keep the climate of the negotiation positive.
- ▣ Be aware of power dynamics present in the negotiation.
- ▣ Be prepared.

Principled Negotiation²:

- ▣ Separate the people from the problem.
- ▣ Focus on interests, not positions.
- ▣ Generate a variety of possibilities before deciding what to do.
- ▣ Insist that the results be based on some objective standard.

References

1 - Cummings, T.G., & Worley, C.G. (2001). *Organization Development and Change* (7th edition). Cincinnati, OH: South-Western College.

2 - French, W.L., & Bell, C.H. Jr. (1999). *Organizational Development: Behavioral Science Interventions for Organizational Improvement* (ch. 10). Upper Saddle Ridge, NJ: Prentice Hall.

3 - Nahavandi, A. & Malekzadeh, A.R. (1999). *Organizational Behavior: The Person-Organization Fit* (ch. 13). Upper Saddle Ridge, NJ: Prentice Hall.

4 - Rahim, M.A (1986). Referent roles and styles of handling interpersonal conflict. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 126, 79-86.

5 - Rahim, M.A., & Magner, N.R. (1995). Confirmatory factor analysis of the styles of handling interpersonal conflict: first-order factor model and its invariance across groups. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 80, 122-132.

~ Contributed by Aaron Stehura

[Leader Model Home](#)

[Competency Model](#) • [Competency Assessment](#) • [Development Guide](#) • [Research Reports](#)
[CMU](#) • [Psychology Department](#) • [About Us](#)

©2004