

Conflict Resolution

From http://www.westbrookstevens.com/conflict_Resolution.htm

Causes of Conflict in the Workplace

Most conflicts stem from poor communication in which one party misinterprets the words or actions of another party. Some of the key issues that can trigger conflict are:

- Values—one's belief systems, ideas of right versus wrong, etc.;
- Relationships—stereotypes, poor or failed communications, repetitive negative behaviours, etc.;
- Externals/Moods—factors unrelated to the conflict, psychological or physiological issues of parties in conflict;
- Data—lack of information, misinformation, too much information, data collection problems;
- Interests—each party's wants, needs, desires, fears, or concerns;
- Structure—limitations on resources like time and money, geographical constraints, organizational structure, authority issues;
- Different work methods;
- Different goals;
- Different perspectives; and
- Stress.

Six critical steps for conflict resolution:

1. ***Identify the problem.*** Through discussion, parties define the things that both agree on, as well as the ideas that have caused the disagreement.
2. ***Brainstorm possible solutions.*** Parties brainstorm potential approaches to the problem without considering the feasibility of the ideas.
3. ***Evaluate each alternative.*** Parties analyze each approach to the problem, considering the pros and cons of each.
4. ***Determine the best solution.*** Parties choose the most mutually acceptable solution, even if it is not perfect for either party.
5. ***Implement the alternative.*** Parties agree on the details of what each party must do.
6. ***Continually evaluate the solution.***

Benefits of Managing conflict

Managed Conflict	Out of Control Conflict
Strengthens relationships and builds teamwork	Damages relationships and discourages cooperation
Encourages open communication and cooperative problem-solving	Results in defensiveness and hidden agendas
Resolves disagreements quickly and increases productivity	Wastes time, money and human resources
Deals with real issues and concentrates on win-win resolution	Focuses on fault-finding and blaming
Makes allies and diffuses anger	Creates enemies and hard feelings
Airs all sides of an issue in a positive, supportive environment	Is frustrating, stress producing and energy draining
Calms and focuses toward results	Is often loud, hostile and chaotic

*Adapted from "Managing Workplace Conflict" – www.mala.ca

Actions to Minimize Conflict

- *Respect others.*
- *Communicate expectations.*
- *Encourage teamwork.*
- *Empower people.*

Task (before November 16, 2011)

1. List the three most important values that you expect to find in a workplace.

2. Describe a workplace situation where one or more of those values was not present.

What happened? How did you feel?

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To my darling husband,
Before you return from your business trip I just want to let you know about the small accident I had with the pickup truck when I turned into the driveway. Fortunately not too bad and I really didn't get hurt, so please don't worry too much about me. I was coming home from Wal-Mart, and when I turned into the driveway I accidentally pushed down on the accelerator instead of the brake. The garage door is slightly bent but the pickup fortunately came to a halt when it bumped into your car. I am really sorry, but I know with your kind-hearted personality you will forgive me. You know how much I love you and care for you my sweetheart. I am enclosing a picture for you. I cannot wait to hold you in my arms again.

Your loving wife

XXX



P.S. Your girlfriend called.