

# Team solutions for conflict management assignment

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According to Jim Theme et al. 1995), " Teams must set their own goals, make decisions, and solve problems" (Theme, Katz, 1995, Para. 5). The most common ways conflicts arise are from the " struggle between incompatible and opposing needs, wishes, ideas, interests, or people" (Decrease, Dodd, Schneider, 2001 p. 243). Other forms of conflict arise when team members have different values, attitudes, needs, expectations, perceptions, resources, and personalities (Capitol, 1995, Para. 9).

Many employers do not offer sessions on how to handle conflicts, so employees are not aware of effective strategies available to help team members deal with their differences. Conflicts can come in almost any type of communication. Understanding different types of conflicts and how to resolve them is the best first step. Positive and Negative Conflicts There are both positive and negative conflicts, Conflicts are mostly associated with " quarreling, fighting, anger, and hostility" (Englander, Wynn, 2006, p. 147). Not all conflicts need to become negative.

A conflict can be positive when managed or resolved effectively (Capitol, 1995, Para. 5). These conflicts help co workers and can lead to better results. They can lead to increased involvement, cohesion, innovation, and creativity from team members. They can also show positive personal growth, change, and clarify both values and key issues (Decrease, Dodd, Schneider, 2001 p. 244). Through positive conflicts, the " quality of decision making improves as opposing viewpoints and concerns are discussed" (Englander, Wynn, 2006, p. 149).

Groups who are committed to positive conflicts share similar principles such as members being able to disagree and still respect each other (Englander, 2006, p. 49). They are also not afraid to disagree with higher ranked group members, know that their disagreements will not be punished, and have an agreed-upon approach for resolving their conflicts and making decisions (Englander, 2006, p. 149). Negative conflicts can lead to employees feeling as though they have lost sight of the team's goal because of constant bickering or arguing among team members.

This type of conflict also results when groups “engage in behaviors that create hostility and prevent achievement of the group's goal” (Englander Wynn, 2006, p. 148). As Dianna Brother (1999) explains, “conflict can be a burdensome sparring match leading to continued friction and even loss directorship and business” (Brother, 1999, Para. 14). “The quality of group decision making deteriorates when members are inflexible and not open to other points of view. [Negative] conflict has the potential to permanently disable a group” (Englander, 2006, p. 48). When team members are given different options on how to handle their conflicts, many of those conflicts may become a learning experience where the team is able to grow and be more productive.

**Strategies for Solving Conflicts** There are many different methods available to help teams learn how to handle their differences. Donald Weiss suggests a four step approach where teams listen, acknowledge, respond, and resolve their remaining differences (Weiss, July 1997, Para. 1). He observes that nonverbal cues show 90 % of what someone is saying.

To listen effectively, teammates must clear their minds and pay attention to these nonverbal gestures (Weiss, 1997 Para. 4). Paraphrasing the issue back to the other person can help to show that both individuals are getting closer to solving their differences. Responding takes both the acknowledgement piece and combines it with the individual's thoughts Weiss, 1997, Para. 9). This moves both team members toward resolving their differences. When resolving differences they are both able to define the problem and look at what is causing the disagreement (Weiss, 1997, Para. 12).

They are able to then come up with solutions and find an agreement (Weiss, 1997, Para. 12). Thomas K. Capitol presents a similar approach where the first step is to explore the reasons for the disagreement (Capitol, 1995, Para. 11). He suggests in this phase that all team members step away when emotions are high and come back together later to discuss the disagreement (Capitol, 1995, Para. 12). Like Weiss listening stage, Capitol suggests that after emotions are stable the team must actively listen to each other and understand all views and perceptions (Capitol, 1995, Para\_ 14).

The team is then able to offer alternate solutions and agree on the most appropriate one (Capitol, 1995, Para. 16). Once the team has found a better solution, they must agree on it and put it into action. This is where it is lawful to write out the solution so there is a clear understanding by all team members (Capitol, 1995. Para- 17). Dianna Brother Offers four approaches to handling team conflict once identified. Accommodation occurs when a team member gives in to the other person's ideas (Brother, 1999, Para. ). This is helpful when the issue is not that important to one team member. It can also

show that those who are accommodating another team member are concerned with appearing as the “ nice” one in the group (Decrease, Dodd, Schneider, 2001 p. 248). Compromise is another strategy where two team members combine what they want into a solution both can agree with, This is best when the issue is important to both team members and “ not worth fighting over” (Brother, 1999, Para. ), Brother also suggests that overpowering can be used when someone truly wants to get their way, or there is a tight deadline (Brother, 1939, Para. 7), This is viewed as an “ I win, you lose” strategy used by some salespeople to get higher commissions and can make others feel uneasy (Decrease, Dodd, Schneider, 2001 p, 248), In a team environment, overpowering can happen when one co worker demands that everyone see the outcome in his way and doubtfully refuses to consider any one else’s suggestions.

The final option occurs when team members collaborate and make long term decisions that will benefit the team (Brother, 1999, Para, 7). This is found to be a “ win, win” strategy that is effective when the issue is important to all members on the team (Decrease, 2001 p. 248). Conclusion The different methods to handling conflicts described above may help to encourage team members to share their differences and seek out solutions. When team members do not become victims of their arguments they are able to be more productive and show better results. Managing conflict is one Of the toughest yet most rewarding skills to acquire” and “ is a skill that does not come naturally” (Decrease, Dodd, Schneider, 2001 p. 242). Teams should learn to be comfortable with handling conflicts and become familiar with the different methods available to solve differences. References Brother, D. (1999).

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