

# [Introduction on the project and involved disciplines.](https://assignbuster.com/introduction-on-the-project-and-involved-disciplines/)

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Introduction             The focal point of this report ison developing conflict management strategy to resolve conflict emerged betweenthe project sponsor (PS) and preceding project manager (PM). By developingstrategy through conflict resolution styles, current project manager ensuresthe conflicts are managed and are not repeated in future. The conflicts wereanalysed and identified in CW2A of the coursework. Critical Conflicts             In order toimprove understanding of the analysis its worth to recapitulate the key issuesshown in table 1. These issues were identified in CW2A case study analysis, alongside effects on the project and involved disciplines.   Critical Conflicts Involved Parties Effect on Project Cause Interpersonal conflict Mr Armstrong (PM) Architects (EMBT/RMJM) Ignoring communication channels and workflow processes Architects in direct communication with project sponsor. Poor communication Mrs Doig (PS) Mr Armstrong (PM) Programme Cost Priorities difference lead to ineffective working environment. Delays Mrs Doig (PS) Mr Armstrong (PM) Architects (EMBT/RMJM) Programme Cost Caused by client poor understanding of their requirements, lack of professional advisory.

Incomplete package submittals delivered by architects. Lack of relevant information Mrs Doig (PS) Mr Armstrong (PM) Stage C & D submission Cost Changes to brief and client space requirements. Table 1 Criticalconflicts identification table.            The abovetable clearly shows majority of issues relate to poor communication, ineffective collaborative work environment or both, these factors have negativeimpact on both costs and programme as well as damaged trust relationships. Thisjustifies the requirements for conflict management strategy as improvement inbetter project performance through resolving issues between involved people.

Conflict Management Approaches              Clarification of conflictsrelationship lead us to idea of different approach strategies described byWhetten, et al as suggested in CW2A analysis report (Whetten, et al, 2010).                Whetten, et al, use the TKI (Thomas, et al, 1974)conflict mode instrument, which represents five management styles: 1.    Forcing2.    Accommodating3.    Avoiding4.

Compromising5.     Assertiveness Cooperativeness 0 Collaborating   Figure 1 TKI Conflict Mode Instrument (Thomas, et al, 1975) As described bythe authors these approaches express different levels of cooperativeness andassertiveness as shown in figure 1. Each approach is reflecting high or lowcooperative response by person agreeing with opinion expressed by others. Whereas high or low assertiveness response is reflecting self-assurance of anindividual, which focuses on particular issues. These resolution styles asshown in figure 1 are most favourable ways of resolving project issues asdescribed in table 3 of “ A Review of Conflict Management Techniques inProjects” (Sudhakar, 2015).   1.

Forcing Management Approach             Forcing is assertive butuncooperative approach, focusing on individual achieving their needs, with sacrificeof other individual demands. This is done through organisational authority, physical pressure or psychological manipulation; it all comes to ignoring otherpeople’s suggestions and opinions. It is an egocentric and introvertiveapproach, often relating to senior management staff leadership styles. Thecurrent Scottish Parliament project management falls into this particularcategory, as all parties try to impose their own ways on others; conflict ofinterest cause further relationship issues.

With that said, this approach islimited to single opinion and organisational hierarchy, limitations outweighthe desired conflict resolution in long term. Therefore, the approach isunsuitable for PM to solve issues with other stakeholders in an effective andsustainable manner. 2. Accommodating Management Approach             Incontrast, accommodating approach is cooperative but unassertive, individualignoring their own opinions and concerns to satisfy group/organisationconcerns. In this case managers or even senior members in an organisation may neglecttheir true responsibilities in favour of others demands.

It could help tomaintain agreement between the parties, thus one may be taking an advantageover the other group or individual. Evidently in Scottish Parliament projectit’s the Architects taking an advantage of PS, bypassing communication channelwith PM and putting design concerns over project goals and budget. Subsequently, the approach has limited manoeuvres for group resolution and may lead to regularshort-term agreements, which will affect project programme.

3. Avoiding Management Approach             Theapproach is uncooperative and unassertive, by all means it seems to be leastsuccessful way of conflict resolution. As described by Whetten, et al, conflictis often postponed by managers who are not mentally prepared to cope withassociated resolution stress and confrontations with parties (Whetten, et al, 2010). Repetitive use of this particular conflict strategy will result inunresolved issues, causing frustrations between involved parties. It reflectsprevious situation and the PM frustrations who resigned after being dismissedby the PS. The approach limitations are caused by complexity of the conflictsand confidence skills of individuals leading the conflict solution strategies.

Therebythe strategy should emphasise a collaborative approach to conflict resolutiondelivered by confident individuals, who could agree together on better ways toachieve project goals and improve the overall performance, as well as keep theteams motivated.    4. Compromising Management Approach              It is acompromise approach between cooperativeness and assertiveness, it attempts toobtain a consensus between two parties.

To achieve this approach both conflictparties are asked to sacrifice some of their demands to obtain a positiveresolution. Nevertheless, the approach could be abused by managers for beingfair to both sides and defining a common denominator. It could mean partiesseeking twice as much demands as is required to resolve the issues.

In ScottishParliament project case, being fair to both sides of the conflict may createmore conflicts in future, as people could seek for new goals which arepotentially irrelevant to the project. Although this approach seems to beneutral in conflict resolution, it is not suitable for the current project.    5. Collaborating Management Approach              Lastly, collaborative approach iscooperative and assertive, managers intents are to fully deal with issues bycompromising satisfactory resolutions to involved parties. Blame is not assignedto single individual but it is rather shared so that all people could feel theyhave won equally.

As described by the authors, similar to all listed approachesabove this could not be adequate conflict resolution for all situations; thisapproach could have most beneficial outcome by creating team cooperation, trustand communication. Foremost the approach encourages individual to focus ontheir true problems rather than concentrating anger at personal levels. Itcould be the most appropriate long-term resolution strategy for ScottishParliament project, establishing common language between PS and PM as well asbetween the PM and Architects. Collaboration provides foundation to sharethoughts and ideas helping to tie PM project management skills and PS publicrelations and administrative skills. However, it could mean making decisionswould take longer as all parties would need to discuss and agree.

By doing soPS could also improve her limited expertise in handling large scale and of suchimportance projects.  In comparison, it is wise to take into account Jamsonstrategies in order to select the most appropriate conflict resolution (Jameson, 1999). Jamson suggests newresolution model as alternative approach to effective conflict resolution (Jameson, 1999): 1.    Interest Based 2.    Rights Based3.    Power Based  The construction sector has always been regarded as the mostconflict and dispute industry. One of the traditional conflict resolution was alitigation, which is a long a costly approach for resolving a dispute. Over theyears the methods improved and alternative dispute resolutions – ADR wereintroduced as means of avoiding lengthy and costly traditional procedures (Derrick, 2016).

This point is also sustained by Jamson, as she has simplified the ADRinto three categories and introduced alternatives to established ADR processes. It is worth highlighting, ADR’s are supported and made available to chartedmembers of various professional bodies i. e. RIBA, RICS, CIAT, etc. The threeresolution strategies are combination of formal and informal, and whether thereis a requirement for internal or external mediator.  Interest Based Approach              Thisstrategy is based on negotiations and whether parties are able to settle thedisputes between themselves or they require an external mediator; which couldbe someone from the organisation who is neutral to the conflict or an externalparty.

They will often act as counsellors and speak with single party to act asa middleman or help both parties to see and understand each other’s view. Theapproach can be broken down further into sub-approaches such as negotiation, advising, facilitation and meditation. All these systems focus on solving aproblem by someone who is neutral, the ‘ problem solver’ could use single orcombination of ways to effectively help to resolve the issue.

In addition, these systems are informal way of dispute solving if organization peer act ascounsellors, procedures may become formal if an external provide is used. Thenew manager could be seen as an ideal counsellor to resolve issues that arose betweenprevious PM and PS as well as Architects. However, this may not be feasible asit could create new issues as project proceed. Yet involving a neutral peer orexternal person would bring fresh viewpoint on conflicts and help to makeunbiased decisions between parties, without compromising overall project goalsor timeline. Limitations of this approach could be the process required to beformal, employing an external meditator due to project complexity andimportance. It could also mean that formal decisions may be politicallyinfluenced and followed by the public.  Rights Based Approach              Theapproach is often referred to be a formal way of dealing with grievances by theorganisations.

It means that HR procedures are triggered, arbitrator introducedor the case may end up in court.   Informalapproach could also be utilised in terms of senior staff member or superiorintervention. In formal strategy, the third party only has power to judge whatis right and wrong, but in fact have no authority to change policies or offeralternative solutions. Considering the project high profile brings theattention of the public, hence the approach should be considered as high riskas issues would be easily picked up by press. In this manner, formalproceedings would make the issues more transparent and open for public view. This would have a negative impact on the design and project delivery teams aspressure would come from politicians wanting to resolve issues as soon aspossible, but also damage government creditability.      Power Based Approach              As the name suggests, power basedstrategies involve authoritarian solutions imposed by those who deal with theconflicts between parties. Along these lines, solution is given to disputantsby i.

e. manger, to solve the issues quickly without synergetic consideration ofboth parties’ view. Based on other studies Jamson describe middleperson tend toavoid dealing directly with the conflicts, threatening disputants with theirauthority to manage the issues on their own (Jameson, 1999).

On the other hand, this approach may become convenient when there is limited time frame, broadimpact on conflicts and low interconnection between parties. It is evident inproject organisational hierarchy that PS has higher authority acting as clientrepresentative over PM and architects. For these reasons, power based approachwould not be suitable to effectively manage the conflicts by project manager. Henceintervention of more senior member such as First Minister of Scotland, MrDonald Drewar would be required. At the same time conflicts would be resolvedquickly but not fully to maintain press transparency into the project. Advisory Negotiation Strategy             It can be seen from the aboveanalysis that the negotiations must prioritise the improvement of communicationso that the trust between all parties can be rebuild, especially between PM andthe Architects.

Negotiations also aim to ensure all parties respect the clearroles distinction and follow the organisation communication hierarchy as shownin figure 1 of CW2A; to avoid uninformed decisions. Undoubtedly, this changewill aid to establish project goals and closely monitor project performanceensuring decreased programme delays and improve advice service from the designteam which would help to establish client priorities and requirements.                          It is evident in the preceding analysis that majority of conflictmanagement involve formal approach to conflict resolutions, as discussedearlier it is not suitable for public project. For this reason, informalconflict management is the preferred approach. There are similarities betweencollaborative approach and interest-based, as both involve mediation, negotiation and facilitation, so both would work; despite this collaborativeapproach seems to be easier to understand through TKI illustrative model andsimpler follow (Thomas, et al, 1974).              Lookingat table 1 of conflict interdependence it could be said that effective strategystarts at conflict resolution between PM and Architects.

The new PM has anopportunity to improve the connection with EMBT and RMJM. PM would facedifficulty of developing better communication methods rather than fax ortelephone. Moreover, cultural differences and different locations impose theduty on PM to ensure messages are formulated in a way that is explicit to botharchitects especially by EMBT, and they both receive it at the same time. PMshould suggest taking advantage of email as more convenient form ofcommunication for general discussion and transfer of work in progress drawings.      Live discussion and exchange ofinformation will reduce the interpersonal tensions, and by all means relevantstakeholders could be carbon copied to see project team performance and commentif necessary, improving relationship in general.               Anequally significant aspect of this approach is facilitation.

PM should set upand facilitate regular meetings with all stakeholders to allow face to facediscussion of issues. This would allow the parties to spend some time working’off line’ and communicate through above solution, before collaborativelypresenting solutions at next meeting. Through facilitating the routine meetingsPM, PS and Architects will be up to date with all relevant information’s.

Itwill also enable the project design team to evolve design options and adviseclient on their requirements and help to establish better brief. This wouldpotentially resolve delay and budgeting issues.  Additionally, before each deliverable stagemeetings should be held in Barcelona to ensure attendance of EMBT architects.

Theconflict between PM and PS could be described as intergroup which makes itdifficult for coordination of task activities (Thakore, 2013). Hence, manyfactors affecting both parties cause friction, straight forward resolution inthis case would not be effective. The preceding study suggest PS stepped inbetween Mr. Armstrong and architects conflict, to manage it through forcingapproach, bypassing communication channels and enforcing solutions on PM. Adequateapproach would be the PM to re-build trust between the two through improvedcollaborative work results amongst PM and the architects.

Power of emails andregular meetings will create strong bond between PM and architects, ensuringthat architects always communicate with PM in first instance for technicalqueries which could then be translated further in liaison with PS. Moreover, sporadicallyPM could set up relatively short workshops with the PS on various aspects ofprojects to either discuss potential fixes or present project performance.   Disputantscooperation             Inaddition to conflict resolution strategy it is equally important to considerthe limitations and ways of communicating the strategy to disputants.

Communication improvement executionshould will be driven by the PM and initial cooperation with RMJM, to establishjoint IT requirements for electronic communications; established standards willthen be passed on to other stakeholders. would potentially require the partiesto improve their IT abilities and capacity. This certainly will involve highcosts and could be pushed back by the design team, especially by EMBT and theirlimited resources (Fraser, 2004). Moreover, official documentation issue wouldstill need to follow official postal way. With regards to the regular meetingsarrangement an obvious limitation is the distance of EMBT office in Barcelona. This was apparent in previous study as EMBT representative did not attend all importantmeetings set up by previous PM in Scotland (Fraser, 2004). To ensure highmeeting attendance new PM will need to set up even number of mile stone andcoordination meetings in both Barcelona and Edinburgh; as well as to experiencethe different project delivery approach by Spanish Architects.  During those meetings PS would act as mediatorand support the PM in non-technical decisions making.

Any other minor questionsshould be solved during workshops between PM and Architects, PS would not needto be involved at those stage as PM would utilize their technical knowledgewith other parties. Project performance, budgets andtimeline would need to be summarized in formal reports format by the PM to PSand the further to the client and public. The reports would need to be in asimple, easy to understand format so that they could be quickly analyzed by PSthen discussed with client to take immediate action if necessary, clearlycommunicate back to PM then the team to maintain project program under control. On the other hand, budgets would be under PS control and reporting to theclient so that technical details could be compromised through consolations withPM. In return, this would graduallyrebuild the trust worthy relationship between PS and PM when both would realizethe collaborative approach benefits of successful project.                Conclusion               Conclusivelycomprehensive conflict management strategy analysis and limitations imposed by stakeholder’scooperation, will be passed on to individuals involved in identified conflictsand to others. The collaborative strategy is the most productive way for highprofile public projects, maintaining long term relationships in order toprevent similar issues happening in future.                     References Dr.

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