

Managing for Maximum Performance

UCSD Extension Business & Technology

Chapter 16 – Managing Conflict and Stress – Fall 07



Conflict Management

By Stephanie Bercegol

What is conflict?

▪ **Definition:**

Conflict is overt behavior that results when an individual or a group of individuals think a perceived need or needs of the individual or group has been blocked or is about to be block.

• **Assumptions:**

- Conflict is avoidable
- Conflict is the result of personality problems within the organization
- Conflict produces inappropriate reactions by the persons involved.
- Conflict create a polarization within the organization.

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General causes of conflicts

- Needs or wants are not being met
- Values are being tested
- Perceptions are being questioned
- Seeking Power
- Feelings/ emotions
- Assumptions are being made
- Knowledge is minimal
- Expectations are too high/too low
- Personality, race, or gender differences are present
- Poorly define goals
- Lack of cooperation/ trust
- Competition of scarce resources
- Unclear roles/ lack of job description
- Poor communication
- Dissatisfaction with management style
- Weak/ change leadership
- Lack of openness
- Conflict with self

Conflict indicators

- Body language
- Disagreements, regardless of issue
- Withholding bad news
- Surprises
- Strong public statements
- Airing disagreements through media
- Conflicts in value system
- Desire for power
- Increasing lack of respect
- Open disagreement
- Lack of candor on budget problems or other sensitive issues
- Lack of clear goals
- No discussion of progress, failure relative to goals, failure to evaluate the superintendent fairly, thoroughly or at all.

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Stages of conflicts

- **Latent conflict**: Conditions for conflict exist but have not yet been recognized.
- **Perceived conflict**: One or both participants recognize the cause of the conflict.
- **Felt conflict**: Tension is begin to build between the participants.
- **Manifest conflict**: The conflict is apparent to other not directly involved.
- **Conflict aftermath**: Conflict has been ended through resolution or suppression.

Conflict does not always pass through all of these stages.
The parties in the conflict may not be at the same stage simultaneously.

Types of conflict

- **Intrapersonal conflict**: Conflict internal to the individual.
- **Interpersonal conflict**: Conflict between two or more individuals.
- **Intergroup (structural) conflict**: Conflict that results from the organizational structure.
- **Organizational conflict**: Conflict between employees and organization itself.
- **Political (strategic) conflict**: Conflict started is started purposely and is often undertaken with an elaborate plan.

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Positive & Negative conflicts

- **Conflict is destructive when it:**
 - Takes attention away from other important activities
 - Undermines morale or self-concept
 - Polarizes people and groups, reducing cooperation
 - Increases or sharpens difference
 - Leads to irresponsible and harmful behavior, such as fighting, name-calling

- **Conflict is constructive when it:**
 - Results in clarification of important problems and issues
 - Results in solutions to problems
 - Involves people in resolving issues important to them
 - Causes authentic communication
 - Helps release emotion, anxiety, and stress
 - Builds cooperation among people through learning more about each other;
 - joining in resolving the conflict
 - Helps individuals develop understanding and skills

Effects of conflict in organizations

- Stress
- Absenteeism
- Staff turnover
- De-motivation
- Non-productivity

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Conflict Table

	I win	I lose
You win	Win-Win	Lose -Win
You lose	Win-Lose	Lose-Lose

Methods to deal with conflicts

- **Competition:** (win-lose situation)
- **Accommodation:** (win-win situation)
- **Avoidance:** (lose-lose situation)
- **Compromise:** (lose-lose situation)
- **Collaboration:** (win-win situation)

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Steps to manage conflict:

- Assure privacy
- Empathize than sympathize
- Listen actively
- Maintain equity
- Focus on issue not on personality
- Avoid blame
- Identify key theme
- Re-state key theme frequently
- Encourage feed back
- Identify alternate solutions
- Give your positive feed back
- Agree on an action plan

Thank You

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1253 Orchard Glen Circle, Encinitas, California 92024 Ph: 760-519-9360 Fx: 760-753-9380
greg@goatesconsulting.com www.goatesconsultinggroup.com