Conflict Resolution

-- be prepared to deal with it when it happens

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Three Things To Take Away from this Session

- Recognize conflict as an opportunity and not something to be feared
- There is no one size fits all approach to addressing conflicts
- Managing the environment can lower the bar for conflict resolution
Perspective on Conflicts
Myths & Truths*

- Conflict is dysfunctional in the workplace
- It represents communication breakdown
- Conflict will occur
- All conflicts can be resolved
- It can help build relationships
- Conflict always results in a winner and a loser
- If avoided, it will eventually go away
- Most conflicts can be managed
- Conflict can be a motivator for change

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*2007, Bill Withers and Jerry Wisinski, Resolving Conflicts on the Job, American Management Association, p 2 - 4
Overview

Definitions
- Opposing forces
- Dramatic action/friction

Types
- Positive
- Negative

Examples
- Disagreement
- Confrontation
- Heated discussion
- Vested interest
Sources

- **Interpersonal Conflict**
  - Different personalities
  - Varied value systems

- **Organizational Conflict**
  - Change
  - Conflicting goals and objectives
  - Limited resources
  - Domino effect
Conflict Scenarios

Authoritarian

Resource Contention

Prioritization

Road Rage

Generational/Cultural
Addressing Conflicts
5 Conflict Handling Methods*

Assertiveness - the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns
Cooperativeness - the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy the other person’s concerns

- **Avoidance**
  - Low Assertiveness
  - Low Cooperativeness
  - Withdrawal
  - Cool off period

- **Compromise**
  - Low Assertiveness
  - High Cooperativeness
  - Tradeoffs
  - Competing goals

- **Collaboration**
  - High Assertiveness
  - High Cooperativeness
  - Win / Win
  - Resolve root cause

- **Accommodation**
  - Low Assertiveness
  - High Cooperativeness
  - Yield Position
  - Issue not critical

- **Competing**
  - High Assertiveness
  - Low Cooperativeness
  - Power Based
  - Decisive action

Applications

Authoritarian
- Competing
- Road Rage
- Avoidance

Resource Contention
- Prioritization
- Collaboration
- Generational/Cultural
- Accommodation

Compromise
Confronting the Conflict

Three Part Conversation*

• The “What Happened” Conversation
  • Focus on perceptions, interpretations, and values; not what is the “truth”
  • Focus on interests, not positions
  • Don’t assume the intention of others

• The Feelings Conversation
  • Conflicts don’t just involve feelings, they are at their core about feelings
  • Occasionally let sleeping dogs lie

• The Identity Conversation
  • Internal “what does it mean to me?”

Facilitated by an Approach Model

# Approach Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| DESC  | D – Describe the situation  
       | E – Express your feelings  
       | S – Specify what you want to happen  
       | C – Consequences |
| AEIOU | A – Assume the other person means well  
       | E – Express your feelings  
       | I – Identify what you would like to happen  
       | O – Outcome expected  
       | U – Understanding on a mutual basis |
| DREAD | D – Define the problem  
       | R – Reframe emotions  
       | E – Elicit facts  
       | A – Assist/offered solutions  
       | D – Decide on a solution |
Common Pitfalls

- Talking more than listening
- Using “you” more than “I”
- Not being constructive
- Choosing the wrong method
- Assuming it will get better with time
- Ignoring the emotion
Managing The Environment
Conflict Prepared Environments

Establish Structures
- Issue and Risk Management
- Status Meetings
- Escalation channels

Manage the Community
- Stakeholder Management
- Networking
- Rapport Building
  - Team Building
  - Formal one-on-ones
  - Walk the aisles
  - Make eye contact and greet people in passing
  - Get off email
Stakeholder Types

Power Interest Grid

- **Low Power, Low Interest**: Monitor (minimum effort)
- **Low Power, High Interest**: Keep Satisfied
- **High Power, Low Interest**: Keep Informed
- **High Power, High Interest**: Engage Closely and Influence Actively
Stakeholder Management

Identify and Categorize

- Power
  - Dormant Stakeholder
  - Dominant Stakeholder
  - Definitive Stakeholder
  - Dangerous Stakeholder
  - Dependent Stakeholder
  - Demanding Stakeholder
  - Non-Stakeholder

- Legitimacy

Urgency

Prioritize and Plan for

- Low Power, Low Interest: Keep Informed
- Low Power, High Interest: Monitor (minimum effort)
- High Power, Low Interest: Keep Satisfied
- High Power, High Interest: Engage Closely and Influence Actively

For further reading

- Eric M. Eisenberg, H. L. Goodall, and Angela Trethewey, *Organizational Communication: Balancing Creativity and Constraint*, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009
Questions and Discussion

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