

Conflict Management



Module 14 Topic 5

Definition of Conflict

- Common themes
 - Perception of conflict
 - Opposition or incompatibility
 - Interaction

“ A process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect, something the first party cares about”



Types of conflict

- Inter-personal and intra-personal
- Inter-group and intra-group
- Competitive and Disruptive



Types of Conflict

Task Conflict

- Conflicts over content and goals of the work.

Relationship conflict

- Conflict based on interpersonal relationships.

Process conflict

- Conflict over how work gets done.



Functional vs. Dysfunctional

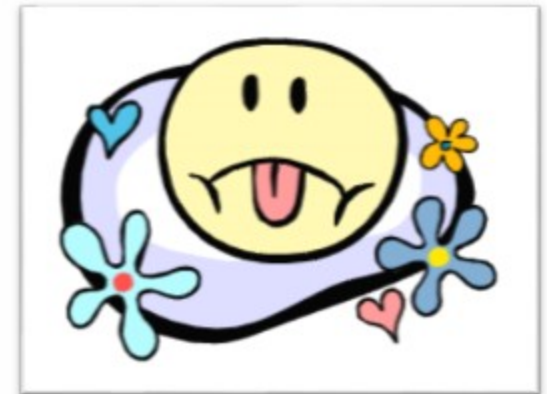
Functional Conflict

- Conflict that supports the goals of the group and improve its performance



Dysfunctional Conflict

- Conflict that hinders group performance



3 Schools of Conflict Thought

- Traditional View
(1930's and 1940's)
- Human Relations View
(late 40's to mid 70's)
- Interactionist View (current)



The Traditional View of Conflict

- The traditional view is the early approach to conflict which assumed that all conflict was bad and to be avoided
- The conflict was treated negatively and discussed with such terms as violence, destruction, and irrationality to reinforce its negative implication
- The conflict was a dysfunctional outcome; resulting from poor communication, lack of transparency and trust between people, and the failure of managers to be responsive to the necessities and aspirations of their employees



The Human Relations View of Conflict

- The human relations view of conflict treats conflict as a natural and inevitable phenomenon and, so can't be eliminated completely from any organization
- Here, the conflict was seen in a positive light as it was suggested that conflict may lead to an improvement in a group's performance



The Interactionist View of Conflict

- The interactionist view indicates that conflict is not only an encouraging force in a group but also an absolute necessity for a group to perform effectively
- While the human relations view accepted conflict, the interactionist view encourages conflicts on the grounds that a harmonious, peaceful, tranquil, and cooperative group is prone to becoming static apathetic and non-responsive to needs for change in innovation
- So the major contribution of the interactionist view is encouraging group leaders to sustain an ongoing minimum level of conflict enough to keep the group viable, self-critical and inspired



!CONFLICT!

It's Inevitable...and necessary

- Causes of team conflict
- When to call the boss
- Conflict management styles



Causes of Team Conflict: External Issues

- Competing for scarce resources
- Lack of information sharing
- Lack of clear direction
- Others working on same issue
- Lack of buy-in with recommendations



Causes of Team Conflict: Team Member Issues

- Performance issues
 - Behavior problems
(absenteeism, late work, not doing what promised)
 - Work quality problems



Causes of Team Conflict: Team Member Issues

- Interaction/
Communication Issues
 - Schedule conflicts
 - One member taking over
 - Conflict between members
 - Disagreeing over responsibilities
 - Differing values, attitudes, or personalities



Conflict: When to call the boss

- External issues - almost always
- Team performance issues
 - use strategies for conflict management and attempt to resolve
 - if no immediate and sustained improvement, ask the boss for facilitation assistance



Conflict: When to call the boss (contd)

- Team interaction/communication issues
 - require **immediate** facilitation, inform boss and discuss next steps together

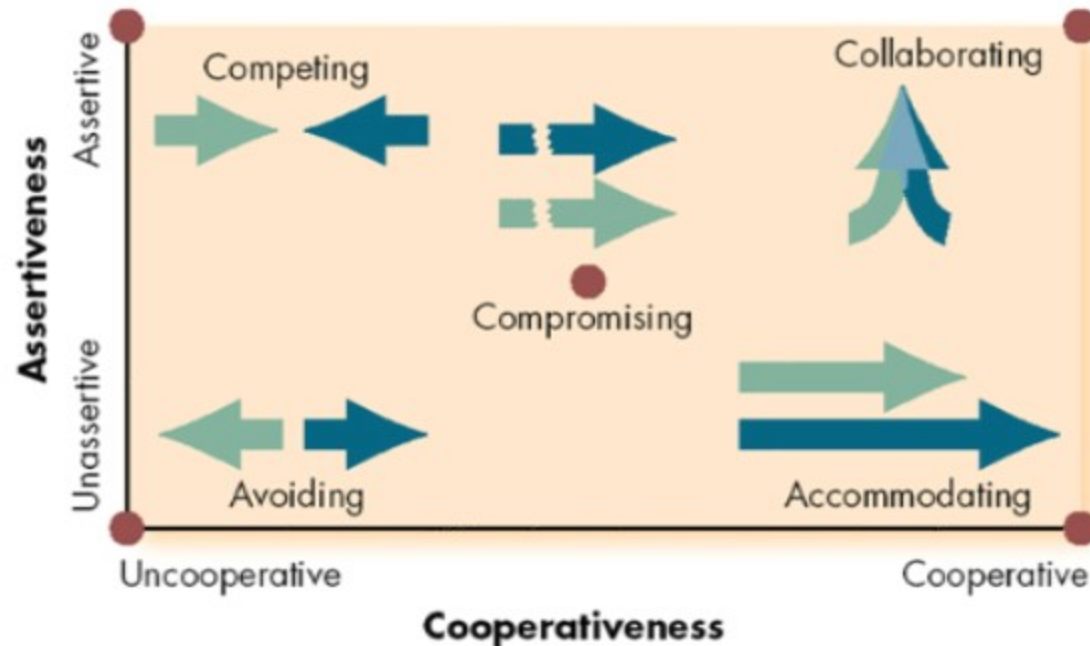


Effects of conflict in organizations

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



Conflict Management Styles



Source: K. Thomas, "Conflict and Negotiation Processes in Organizations," in M. D. Dunnette and L. M. Hough (eds.), *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 2nd ed., vol. 3 (Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press, 1992), p. 668. With permission.

Which Conflict Style Is Best?

Use avoidance

- When an issue is trivial
- To temporarily delay, allow emotions to cool

Use accommodation

- When you find you are wrong
- As a favor, build relationship

Use competition

- When quick, decisive action vital
- When don't trust opponent

Use compromise

- When goals are important but not worth the effort/disruption of more assertive approach

Use collaboration

- When concerns are too important to be compromised
- When objective is to merge insights, gain commitment
- When have the time



Conflict Table

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



Conflict Management Techniques

- Focus on compromising, collaborating styles
- Focus on (superordinate) shared goals requiring cooperation
- Use communication skills
- Use problem solving/ decision-making skills



Conflict Management Techniques (contd)

- Expansion of resources
- Smoothing
- Altering human variable
- Altering structural variables
- Bringing in outsiders
- Restructuring the organization
- Appointing a devil's advocate
- Authoritative command



Conclusion

- Conflict is unavoidable
- Complexity of organizational relationship
- Interaction among workers
- Dependence of workers on one another
- Conflict is a healthy sign not a negative process
- It reflects dynamics



Conclusion (contd)

Poorly managed conflicts

- Unfavorable with counter productive results
- Problems and negative attitude

Well managed conflicts

- Stimulate competition
- Identify legitimate differences
- Powerful source of motivation

