



# Workplace Conflict Resolution

Conflict Management Styles

**Strategies for Leaders**

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## Introduction:

I am Gina Jones, President of Principle Source HR, a Division of GJ Enterprises. I am pleased to introduce workplace conflict resolution concepts for leaders. There are many facets of what we do in Principle Source HR. Most people identify the work of human resources in two main ways: How Much I get paid and How Soon? Quite frankly, I don't blame you. Outside of the obvious, the human resources umbrella handles quite several functions; we establish a position, fill the position, secure the selection through the security clearance process, deliver the benefits, ensure the person can perform and develop in the position, and administer the termination of employment (retirement, transfer, or removal). All this is for a possibility of up to 30 years or more just for one position. That is a lot, and we love what we do. I am here to discuss that one part of what we do is often untapped, and that is an honest discussion about what we ALL can do to improve our work atmosphere through a better understanding of human dynamics. After all, we spend 40 hours a week minimum with people whom we have to work with (and we had no choice in the matter). So let me share some facts with you.

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## Facts

- 85% of employees experience conflict and spend an average of 3 to 4 hours/ a week dealing with it.
- 65% of performance related issues results from strained relationships between employees - not from a deficit in individuals employees' skills or motivation.
- It cost 1.5 times the position salary to replace an employee.
- 31% of managers think they handle conflict effectively while 75% of employees disagree.
- 27% of employees witness personal attacks in the workplace.
- 25% of sickness/absences is related to conflict in the workplace.
- 75% of employees report positive outcomes when workplace conflicts are addressed in a productive manner.

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Drake Beam Morin, 2013

- **85% of employees experience conflict and spend an average of 3 to 4 hours/ a week dealing with it.**
- **65% of performance-related issues result from strained relationships between employees – not from a deficit in individual employees’ skills or motivation. (We will talk more about that later)**
- **It costs 1.5 times the position salary to replace an employee.**
- **31% of managers think they handle conflict effectively, while 75% of employees disagree.**
- **27% of employees witness personal attacks in the workplace. Emotional violence is more damaging than physical violence.**
- **25% of sickness/absences are related to conflict in the workplace.**
- **75% of employees report positive outcomes when workplace conflicts are addressed productively.**

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## WHAT IS CONFLICT ?

Real or perceived threat to one's interest, principles, concerns, or security.

## WHAT IS WORKPLACE CONFLICT ?

Strong differences, both large and small in the office.



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What is conflict?

The real or perceived threat to one's interest, principles, concerns, or security in the workplace.

What is workplace conflict?

Big differences, both large and small, in the workplace.

How many employees does it take to start a conflict in the office ?



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The answer is:

1 person – Yes, you come into the office with your own set of interpersonal conflicts – the rest of us participate with our own set of interpersonal conflicts. *Yes, we all have agendas we didn't share during the interview. On purpose!*

We will discuss how we chose to participate in this conflict more today.

## Conflict Management Styles

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Competing </p>  | <p>Collaborating </p>  |
| <p><small>©GJ ENTERPRISES LLC</small></p> <p>Use formal authority or power to satisfy personal needs and concerns without regard to the concerns of others.</p>                      | <p>Cooperating with the others to understand their concerns while expressing your own concerns in an effort to find a mutually satisfactory solution for everyone.</p>                      |

### **Shark Competing, I win, you lose.**

Sharks try to overpower opponents by forcing them to accept their solution to the conflict. Their goals are highly important to them, and relationships are of minor importance. They seek to achieve their goals at all costs. They are not concerned with the needs of others and do not care if others like or accept them. Sharks assume that conflicts are settled by one person winning and one person losing. They want to be a winner. Winning gives sharks a sense of pride and achievement. Losing gives them a sense of weakness, inadequacy and failure. They try to win by attaching, overpowering, overwhelming, and intimidating.

**Advantage: If the shark's decision is correct, a better decision without compromise can result**

**Disadvantage: May breed hostility and resentment toward the person using it**

#### **Appropriate times to use a Shark style**

- when conflict involves personal differences that are difficult to change
- when fostering intimate or supportive relationships is not critical
- when others are likely to take advantage of noncompetitive behavior
- when conflict resolution is urgent; when decision is vital in a crisis
- when unpopular decisions need to be implemented

### **Owl Collaborating, I win, you win.**

Owls highly value their own goals and relationships. They view conflict as a problem to be solved and to seek solution that achieves both their goals and the goals of the other person.

Owls see conflicts as a means of improving relationships by reducing tensions between two persons. They try to begin a discussion that identifies the conflict as a problem. Owls maintain the relationship by seeking solutions that satisfy both themselves and the other person. Owls are not satisfied until a solution is found that achieves their goals and the other person's goals. They are not satisfied until the tensions and negative feelings have fully resolved.

**Advantage: both sides get what they want and negative feelings eliminated**

**Disadvantage: takes a great deal of time and effort**

**Appropriate times to use an Owl Style**

when maintaining relationships is important

when time is not a concern

when peer conflict is involved

when trying to gain commitment through consensus building

when learning and trying to merge differing perspectives

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## Conflict Management Styles

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Compromising </p>  | <p style="text-align: center;">Avoiding </p>  |
| <p><small>©GJ ENTERPRIZES LLC</small> Resolve conflict by identifying a solution that is partially satisfactory to everyone, but not completely satisfactory to all.</p>  | <p>Not paying any attention to the conflict and not taking any action to resolve it. <span style="float: right;">6</span></p>  |

### **Fox Compromising, You bend, I bend.**

Foxes are moderately concerned with their own goals and their relationship with others. Foxes seek a compromise; they give up part of their goals and persuade the other person in a conflict to give up part of their goals. They seek a conflict solution in which both sides gain something; the middle ground between two extreme positions. They are willing to sacrifice part of their goals and relationships to find agreement for the common good.

**Advantage: relationships are maintained, and conflicts are removed**

**Disadvantage: compromise may create less-than-ideal outcomes, and game-playing can result**

#### **Appropriate times to use a Fox Style**

- when important/complex issues leave no clear or straightforward solutions
- when all conflicting people are equal in power and have vital interests in different solutions
- when there are no time restraints

### **Turtle Avoiding I zig, you zag.**

Turtles withdraw into their shells to avoid conflicts. They give up their goals and relationships; they stay away from the issues over which the conflict is taking place and from the persons they are in conflict with. Turtles believe it is easier to withdraw from a match than to face it.

**Advantage: it may help to maintain relationships that the conflict would hurt.**

**Disadvantage: Conflicts still need to be solved; overusing the style leads to others walking over people.**

#### **Appropriate times to use a Turtle Style:**

- When the stakes are not high or the issue is trivial
- When confrontation will hurt a working relationship
- When there is little chance of satisfying your wants
- When disruption outweighs the benefit of conflict resolution

when gathering information is more important than an immediate decision  
when others can more effectively resolve the conflict  
when time constraints demand a delay

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## Conflict Management Styles



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Allowing the other party to satisfy their concerns while neglecting your own.

♪ Because I'm Happy ! ♪ 7  
from the Happy Song

### **Teddy Bear Accommodating, I lose, you win.**

To Teddy Bears, the relationship is of great importance, while their own goals are of little importance. Teddy Bears want to be accepted and liked by others. They think that conflict should be avoided in favor of harmony and that people cannot discuss conflicts without damaging relationships. They fear that if the conflict continues, someone will get hurt, ruining the relationship. Teddy Bears say, "I'll give up my goals and let you have what you want, for you to like me." Teddy Bears try to smooth over the conflict out of fear of harming the relationship.

### **Advantage: Accommodating maintains relationships**

### **Disadvantage: Giving in may not be productive, and the bear may be taken advantage of. Appropriate times to use a Teddy Bear Style**

- when maintaining the relationship outweighs other considerations
- when suggestions/changes are not crucial to the accommodator
- when minimizing losses in situations where outmatched or losing
- when time is limited or when harmony and stability are valued

**Accommodators make you think they are happy, but they are not.**

## Managing Conflict in the workplace

| Proactive-Informal   | Reactive-Formal  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Identify conflict at the early stages by staying engaged with your coworkers.</li><li>▶ Use your knowledge of conflict management style to settle disagreements early before they become major conflicts.</li><li>▶ Do what you can to create a positive work atmosphere for your coworkers.</li><li>▶ Seek opportunities to attend training in communication, leadership, and effective problem-solving to enhance your conflict-resolution skills.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Progressive discipline is the official application of work performance corrective measures by increasing degree and can lead to discharge of employment.</li></ul> |

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There is something we all can do to contribute to a productive, proactive, progressive workplace for everyone. In conflict resolution terms that means a win/win solution. The consequences of excessive conflicts in the workplace could lead to worst than hard feelings, it could let to a loss of employment from talent that could use skills and abilities to build the organization.

In some cases issues can escalates and the only answer is progressive discipline measures. Whenever I get to that place with a managers/supervisor I always ask the question is “Do you believe you did all you could do informally to help this person get better?” Most times the answer is yes, but the underling question is, “Did we (as an organization) do all we could to make things better for that individual?” We are only as strong as our weakest link.



According to the (2022) Gartner Research Report, Human Leadership is the next evolution of leadership. Yet, only 29% or 1-4 employees recognize their managers/supervisors as "human leaders."

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## Conflict Management styles survey



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This survey was given to a large staff in the legal field.

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## Human Leadership



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Leaders must be close enough to relate to others but far enough ahead to motivate them.  
John Maxwell

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Questions?

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Be the leader you wish you had – Simon Sinek

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