

### Conflict Management Presentation

“Conflict is neither good nor bad. Properly managed, it is absolutely vital.” – Kenneth Kaye

Conflict is an inevitable part of work. We've all seen situations where people with different goals and needs have clashed, and we've all witnessed the often intense personal animosity that can result. If conflict isn't handled effectively, it can quickly turn into personal dislike, teamwork can break down, and talent may be wasted as people disengage from their work and leave.

Conflict management is the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict while increasing the positive aspects of conflict. The aim of conflict management is to enhance learning and group outcomes, including effectiveness or performance in organisational setting.

The implications of shunning confrontation range from a breakdown of communication and damaged relationships to lowered organizational productivity and morale. Here are some questions to consider when evaluating your ability to effectively confront employees during times of conflict. Have a think about these...

- On a scale of 1-5, how comfortable are you with having tough conversations?
- What is your go-to method for handling conflict with employees? E-mail, phone, face-to-face or other?
- Is it hard for you to manage your emotions effectively when talking about a challenging or fear-inducing situation?
- How do you create an open dialogue with your team, regardless of difficult circumstances?
- How do you exhibit poise and self-control in the presence of confrontations?
- How comfortable are you with giving what might be perceived as negative feedback?

If your answers to the above are less than appealing, there are some tips that can assist in building a healthy way to manage conflict with courage and confidence.

Understand your pre-disposition to conflict management.

Number of different models can be used:

- Blake and Mouton (1964)
- Khun and Poole model (2000)
- DeChurch and Marks Meta-Taxonomy (2001)
- Rahim's Meta-Model (2002)

Globally, the most renowned is Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI)

**Activity: WHICH CONFLICT RESOLUTION STYLE IS YOURS?**

#### TOOLS / TIPS

1. **Identify the opportunity.** Shift the lens through which you view conflict. By adopting a positive outlook on confrontation, you'll discover that every conflict is a new opportunity for both the other party and you to grow, develop and learn. After all, if you have tended to avoid conflict, the underlying topics and details are likely things that you have rarely, if ever, discussed, representing growth opportunities and innovative approaches you have yet to uncover.
2. **Build a culture that encourages giving and receiving feedback.** Ask your team for their frequent, healthy feedback, and you will begin to show boldness and encourage transparency through your example. Allowing unpleasant truths to trickle out gradually fosters a sense of camaraderie and understanding within your organization, in turn reducing the risk of future conflict. What's more, creating honest dialogue lets your employees know their opinions are valued, raising their level of engagement. Finally, when confrontations do arise, they will feel far more inclined to receive your concerns with an open mind and an appreciation of your opinion instead of reflexively thinking the sky is falling.

3. **Be proactive, but resist jumping to conclusions.** Prevent problematic behaviour from escalating beyond repair by taking swift action, but do not jump to conclusions before reaching a full understanding of the situation. Assume positive intent to immediately activate a spirit that diffuses the situation. Another way to be proactive is to measure your words to avoid being the source of conflict in the first place. Saying, "I need to see you in my office at 3 p.m." has the potential to spiral reactions that "Can we prioritize the risks on your project in my office at 3 p.m.?" would otherwise sidestep.
4. **Do not use e-mail for conflict.** If e-mail is your go-to to manage conflict, it is time to get comfortable with uncomfortable conversations. Let your level of fear be your compass. The more emotion you are feeling, the more the situation is likely to be faced in person. If you don't, you are subjecting yourself to the gravitational forces that pull these types of situations southward. Effective conflict management will require real-time awareness of the facts and your undivided attention.
5. **Engage productively using storytelling.** Before any confrontation, consider that the other person may be right from the beginning and question your own opinion. When you do present your concerns, start with storytelling if you can, rather than headlining with any abrupt, premature summaries of your stance on the matter(s) at hand. We experience our lives through stories, which are entertaining and engaging. Make your case and then create space for the other person to process and respond to you, and truly listen to them.

### WRAP UP WITH PREVIOUS LEARNING

When conflict arises, it's easy for people to get entrenched in their positions and for tempers to flare, voices to rise, and body language to become defensive or aggressive. You can avoid all of this by using the Interest-Based Relational (IBR) approach. To use the IBR approach effectively, everyone involved should listen actively and empathetically, have a good understanding of body language, be emotionally intelligent, and understand how to employ different anger management techniques. In particular, you and the conflicting parties need to follow these six steps:

1. Make sure that good relationships are a priority. Treat the other person with respect. Do your best to be courteous, and to discuss matters constructively.
2. Separate people from problems. Recognise that, in many cases, the other person is not "being difficult" – real and valid differences can lie behind conflicting positions. By separating the problem from the person, you can discuss issues without damaging relationships.
3. Listen carefully to different interests. You'll get a better grasp of why people have adopted their position if you try to understand their point of view.
4. Listen first, talk second. You should listen to what the other person is saying before defending your own position. They might say something that changes your mind.
5. Set out the "facts." Decide on the observable facts that might impact your decision, together.
6. Explore options together. Be open to the idea that a third position may exist, and that you might reach it jointly.



## Which Conflict Resolution Style Is Yours?

There are four conflict-resolution styles: Avoidance, Competition, Adaptation, and Cooperation. Each of these four styles may work in different situations, but people are generally more comfortable using one style over another. This exercise is an opportunity to determine which style you are most comfortable with.

### WORKSHEET

The four conflict resolution styles to be used in the worksheet are identified as follows:

**Avoidance:** where people withdraw to avoid conflict. They believe it is hopeless to try to resolve conflict, and easier to step back from a conflict situation. The avoidance style leads to a “lose-lose” approach.

**Competition:** where one disputant tries to overpower another disputant by forcing his or her own solution on the other person. This style is considered a “win-lose” approach.

**Adaptation:** where people feel that the relationships are more important than their own goals. They want to be liked and accepted, and harmony is the most important thing. These people are choosing a “lose-win” approach.

**Cooperation:** where disputants highly value their own goals and relationships. They consider conflicts as problems to be solved, and want both parties to achieve their goals. These disputants are not satisfied until an acceptable solution is found for both parties. They have chosen a “win-win” approach.

The following worksheet contains 23 statements and a score sheet to help you identify your predominant conflict-resolution style.

Read each statement and indicate on the scale how typical each statement is of your feelings about conflict.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Almost never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
1. I try to get along with the person I am in conflict with.					
2. For me, conflict situations are either win-win or win-lose. I plan to win.					
3. I try to stay away from situations that might be confrontational.					
4. For me, it is important that both parties' needs are met. I look for ways to make that happen.					
5. I use whatever tactics are necessary to win.					
6. I believe it is hopeless to try to resolve conflict.					
7. My goals are more important to me than the relationship.					
8. I want to be liked and accepted by others.					
9. To me, conflict is a "lose-lose" approach.					
10. My goals are important to me, but so is the relationship.					
11. Acceptance by others is not important to me. Winning is.					
12. I will do whatever I can to ignore issues that might lead to conflict.					
13. I try to find things we both agree on.					
14. I try to be with people I get along with and avoid relationships I think may result in conflict.					
15. My goal is to find a solution where both parties win.					
16. I often find I am trying to smooth things over for the sake of the relationship.					
17. I am unwilling to change what I want.					
18. I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings.					
19. I'm willing to go along if it makes you happy.					
20. I am not satisfied until an acceptable solution is found.					
21. Not only do I not like to engage in conflict, I don't want to be around others who might engage in conflict.					
22. I am direct about what I want, and I expect to get it.					
23. I am willing to give up if it makes the other person happy.					

### SCORE SHEET

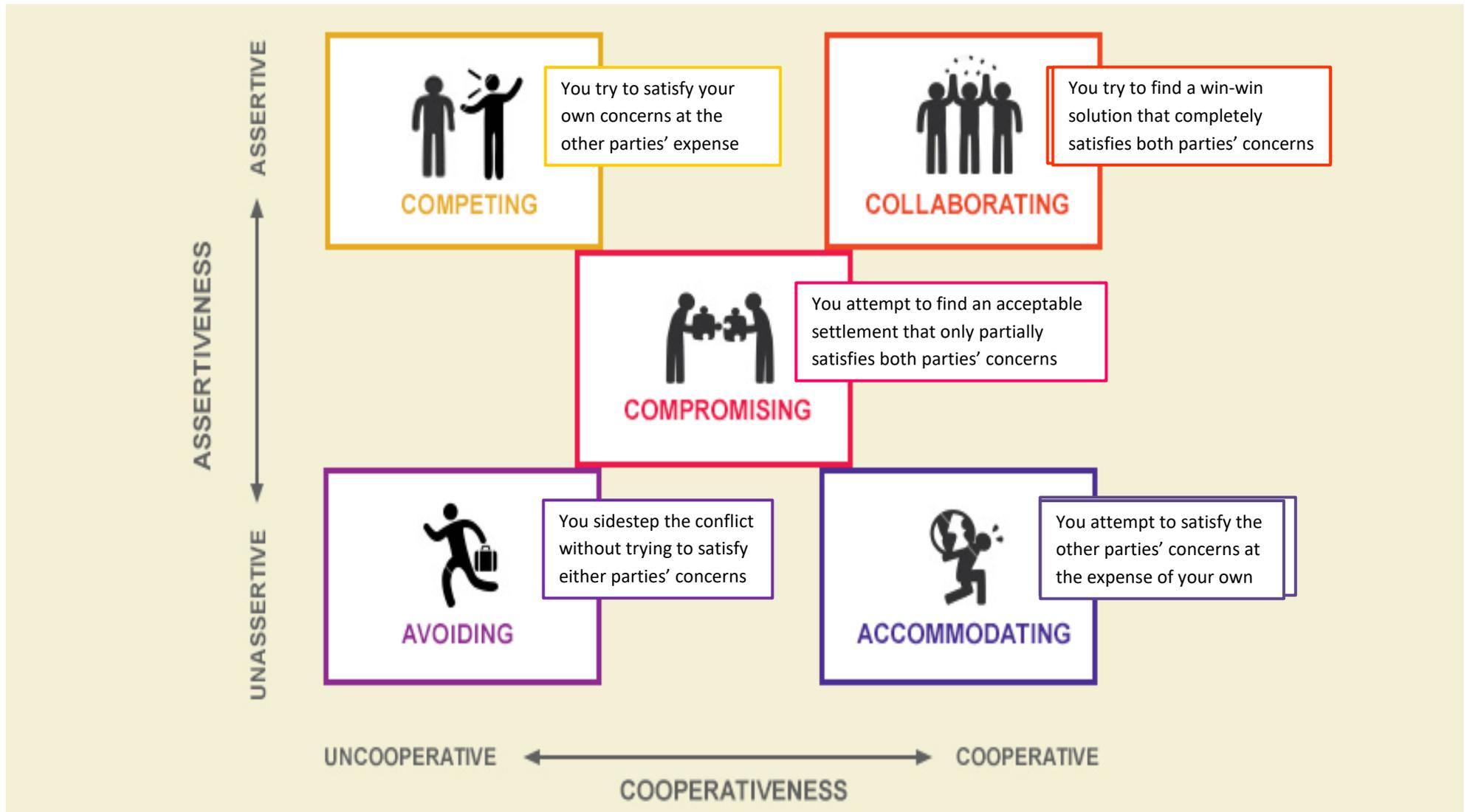
Next to each statement number below, list the ranking (1-5) that you selected for each statement. Then total your scores in each column. The column with the highest score indicates your predominant style.

STYLES			
Avoidance	Competition	Adaptation	Collaboration
3	2	8	1
6	5	16	4
9	7	18	10
12	11	19	13
14	17	23	15
21	22		20
<b>TOTALS</b>			

### SUMMARY

The score sheet above can help you determine which style might be your strongest. Of course, most people are comfortable with more than one style, so use the above questions and chart to think about your predominant style and those occasions when another style might be more appropriate.

# TKI CONFLICT MODE INSTRUMENT



# CONFLICT HANDLING INTENTIONS

