

HOW TO **RESOLVE CONFLICT**



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HOW CONFLICT IMPACTS YOUR COMPANY

Conflict is bound to arise—in leadership meetings, team discussions, or employee interactions. If left unresolved, conflict can breed distrust and a lack of confidence. It can discourage open communication and stunt growth.

In short, poorly-handled conflict can kill your company's culture and your company's future.

Conflict, when managed well, can improve trust and innovation.

RULES TO RESOLVE CONFLICT

To resolve conflict in an open and healthy manner, you can guide your company to embrace these ground rules:

Rule 1: Go to the source.

When conflict arises between two parties, the one with the issue will first attempt to go directly to the person with whom they have the conflict. Complaining to someone in HR (or coworkers in the lunch room) is ineffective and spreads negativity. It also doesn't advance a resolution. Resolving conflict starts at the source.

Rule 2: HR (or another third party) can offer counsel, not judgment.

Too often, people in conflict look to a third party for a solution or decision on who is right (and who is wrong). That approach takes the power away from the people involved, and breeds dissatisfaction with the outcome.

Sometimes a third party is needed—but their role should be strictly to counsel or clarify. A third party can be helpful when they act as a confidential sounding board.

Third party responsibilities:

- Counsel and clarify
- Encourage the person seeking counsel to follow Rule #1
- Never share information about a conflict with others, including the other parties involved in said conflict.
- Remain objective.

Rule 3: Tackle one issue at a time.

Resolution will be elusive if, in raising one issue, an aggrieved party opens the flood gates and drowns the discussion with a dozen other perceived slights or unresolved issues. Stay focused. Address one issue at a time.

Rule 4: Commit to listen.

Too often, conflict arises when parties lack a full understanding of each person's position. Listen with sincerity. And then acknowledge the other person's point of view.

Rule 5: Ask questions.

Listening isn't always enough. Ask questions to tease out a better understanding.

Rule 6: Speak only for yourself.

It may be tempting to bolster your position by referencing other people's perceived opinions or grievances. When you hijack someone else's voice, you've robbed them of their role. And speaking for others is rife with pitfalls—you may over-simplify someone else's position—or misunderstand their position entirely. If it's your conflict, speak only for yourself.

Rule 7: Ask for permission before giving feedback.



Rule 8: Look for a win/win.

When you're dealing with conflict in the workplace, recognize that these are people who will be working together and pulling together for months or years to come. If you push to win the battle, you will most certainly lose the war. Instead, search hard for a resolution that offers a win for all parties involved.

Rule 9: Confirm acceptance.

Few people relish conflict, and most are eager to escape it. This may result in someone agreeing to a resolution, not because they are satisfied with the outcome, but because they simply want to be done with a challenging process. By asking each party to confirm their acceptance of the resolution, you can ensure the resolution is sound.



WATCH THE HEALING BEGIN

Years of unresolved conflict can create deep chasms and unhealthy dynamics. But if your company has the courage to embrace a conflict resolution process, you'll witness a dramatic change for the better. People will begin to more freely share ideas. Teams will pull together. Innovation and growth will increase.

**Learn more about conflict resolution at
www.missionfacilitators.com**

A photograph of two elderly men in dark suits and white shirts, seen from the side and back, embracing each other warmly. They are standing in a city street at sunset, with warm golden light and blurred buildings in the background. The man on the left is wearing glasses.

**We can help
your company
adopt a conflict
resolution plan.**

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