



Conflict styles

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Objectives

2.1 Identify the difference between a position and an interest.

2.3 Analyze intent vs impact



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Lesson 1

What are the 5 conflict styles?

How to handle conflict using the appropriate style.

Writing exercise



Conflict Management styles

Accommodating

An accommodating style **forsakes your own needs or desires in exchange for those of others.**

You would be putting the **concerns of others before your own.** This style usually takes place when you either simply give in or are persuaded to give in.

This style could be appropriate to use when **you care less about the issue** than the others, want to keep the peace, feel as though you are in the wrong, or feel like you have no choice but to agree to the other point of view.

Avoiding

An avoiding style completely evades the conflict. You would neither pursue your beliefs nor those of the others involved. Simply, you would **continuously postpone or completely dodge the conflict** whenever it comes up.

This style could be appropriate to use when the **conflict seems trivial**, you don't have the time or need more time to think, you feel as though you have **no chance of winning**, or you're afraid of being met with resentment.

Compromising

A compromising style attempts to **find a solution that will at least partially please all parties.** You would work to find a middle ground between all the needs, which would typically leave people unsatisfied or satisfied to a certain extent.

This style could be appropriate to use when it's **more important to reach a solution than for the solution to be great**, a deadline is rapidly approaching, you're at an impasse, or you need a temporary solution for the moment.



Conflict Management styles

Collaborating

A collaborating style attempts to find a solution that will **meet the needs of all parties**. Rather than trying to find a middle ground solution, you would aim for a solution that actually satisfies everyone and ends up being a win-win situation.

This style could be appropriate when multiple perspectives need to be addressed, there is an important relationship present between the parties, the **final solution is too important for anyone to be displeased**, or the beliefs of multiple stakeholders must be represented.

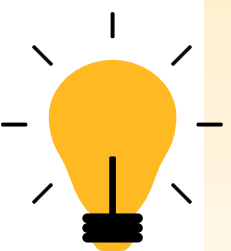
Competing

A competing style takes a firm stance and **refuses to see the perspectives of the other parties**. You would keep pushing your viewpoint at others or keep rejecting their ideas until you get your way.

This style could be appropriate when you have to **stand up for your rights or morals**, need to make a quick decision and force others to get on board, need to end a long-term conflict or have **to prevent a terrible, opposing decision from being made**. Now that you're familiar with the different ways to approach conflict, let's see how these styles can be used in day-to-day conflicts.



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Conflict Resolution Examples

1. Accommodating an Angry Customer

Company policy can often be a roadblock to customer success, and it can put employees in a difficult position when dealing with a frustrated customer.

Imagine that you have a long delay in your bus and at the front is a customer who's demanding you to give them a refund because of a delay to work. The customer's ticket is still valid and you can not give refunds personally which is well past the company's policy. As you unsuccessfully try to explain this to the customer, impatient people waiting at the back of the bus are starting to get angry and impatient as you are even more delayed.

This puts you in a tricky situation where you need to fulfil both the customer's needs as well as the company's. In these cases, an accommodation approach is the best strategy because it **produces a beneficial outcome for all parties involved.**

The customer gets a refund, the other customers on the bus think this is great customer service, and the company doesn't lose any additional money on further delays and receive more complaints. Even though you may need to break company policy, rule-bending for one customer can end up saving time on the further delay and receive less complaints.



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Conflict Resolution Examples

2. Avoiding a Trivial Argument

The customer is always right – at least that's what the customer thinks. Customers like to be right and aren't easily swayed when your business tells them otherwise. Even if the detail is trivial, customers will take the time to argue their point which negatively impacts the [customer's experience](#).

This type of situation occurs regularly with technical support teams who deal with complex or intricate products. *Customers will call support lines claiming a product or feature is broken and the rep will find that the customer simply wasn't using the tool correctly. Support reps will ask customers if they tried following the recommended troubleshooting steps and customers, thinking the rep is being redundant, will say they have. However, when they actually go through the steps with the rep they realize the mistakes they had been making all along.*

Whenever a customer claims your product or feature is broken and you know that it isn't, the best conflict management approach is to avoid it. If your product isn't broken, then there's no need to waste time arguing with the customer over whether or not they completed certain troubleshooting steps.

Instead, go through the steps with them and show them that the product works. The customer will be smart enough to realize that user error may have played a larger role than they originally had thought.



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Conflict Resolution Examples

3. Compromising When Reaching an Impasse

Customers, whether they feel like it or not, are logical humans just like you and me. They're capable of recognizing stressful and difficult situations, and they aren't interested in escalating them either. Customers are willing to come to a compromise so long as it allows them to continue working towards their goals.

One example of this can be seen in the food-service industry. Have you ever ordered a late-night pizza only to be disappointed that the toppings were wrong? Even though you're rightfully frustrated, you're probably not grabbing your keys and driving straight for the store.

Instead, most customers will call the business to report the issue. If it's before closing hours, the restaurant will send a complimentary pizza. But, if it's after-hours, the store will compromise with the customer by offering store credit for a future purchase.

While the customer may still be sad and hungry, they'll often be sympathetic to the employees who are about to clock out. Rather than making employees work longer and deliver another pizza, the company compromises with the customer by offering a free pizza at another time. Both parties had to make a small sacrifice but in the end they each profit from the outcome.



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Conflict Resolution Examples

4. Collaborate With Willing Customers

The best resolutions to conflicts are the ones where **both parties benefit without having to give up anything else** in return. These situations are ideal for building customer loyalty but can be difficult to create and recognize. When your company does find chances to collaborate with your customers, it's important to capitalize on these opportunities and develop mutually beneficial relationships.

A real-life example of collaboration is the HubSpot Ideas Forum. This site operates as an open forum where customers can propose new ideas for HubSpot products. Users can upvote each other's ideas as well as comment on them to further emphasize a point.

HubSpot's developers closely monitor this forum to discover new ideas for product development. If they find an idea they like, they can mark the post to let the community know that the feature is being considered.

This collaboration benefits both HubSpot and its customers because **both sides are profiting from the website**. On one end, the customers have an outlet to voice their continuous needs to the business and potentially receive new products. On the other end, HubSpot is able to collect customer feedback and use it to create effective products and features. Both sides are gaining resources that help them achieve their goals without having to sacrifice anything in return.



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Conflict Resolution Examples

5. Competing for the Right Reasons

Some customers have a **goal in mind and simply won't stop until they achieve it**, regardless of the consequences. While this mindset sounds great for running a business, it can create serious conflicts in other environments.

For example, let's say a disgruntled customer walks into your store and begins insulting other customers, unprovoked. The customer makes offensive comments and actively tries to emotionally or even physically harm other customers.

This is a conflict where the **best course of action is to compete with the customer**. The customer is not only causing a distraction to your business but is creating an atmosphere that makes other customers feel threatened. No matter how much money this customer spends at your business, it will always be worth confronting them because it shows other customers that you value their business just as much.



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Exercise

Writing

Write down an example for each of the conflict styles you have encountered while working.

Think about one specific conflict you have encountered, which was so memorable, that you remember it until today.

Which conflict style have you used?

Would you do something differently?

Would you switch your style?

Why would you do it the same/differently?



Lesson 2

Understanding the differences
between interests and
positions

Negotiators find solutions that
address both parties' interests

Finding the alignment between
the parties' interests creates
value for both sides

Exercise



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Interest vs Position

Understanding the difference between interests and positions is a cornerstone of collaborative negotiation success.

POSITIONS

- What they say they want
- Positions are surface statements of where a person or organization stands, and rarely provide insight into underlying motivations, values or incentives.
- Position Example: Union demands a five-year contract.

INTERESTS

- Why they want it
- Interests are a party's underlying reasons, values or motivations. Interests explain why someone takes a certain position.
- Interest Example: Union wants time for workers to retool their skills before plant closings are implemented.



Interest vs Position

Often people take positions because they believe the position addresses their interests.

Rarely is that position the only way to address their interest. Sometimes their position conflicts with your interest. That Doesn't mean there isn't a position that can address both parties' interests. Your job as a negotiator is less convincing than it is to find solutions that address both parties' interests.

You need to be clear about all your interests before entering a negotiation and try to grasp the other side's interests before and during a negotiation.



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Exempl



The example used by Roger Fisher and William Ury, in their hallmark book "Getting to Yes", of Mary Parker Follet's story serves to illustrate the key difference between a party's position and its interests.

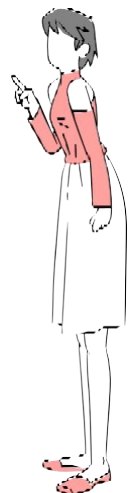
Briefly, Mary Parker Follet tells the story of **two men quarrelling in a library.**

The disagreement concerns a window, the **one man wants the window open** while the **other wants it closed** (here we see the parties opposing positions in respect of the window).

The two men argue back and forth against a seemingly un-resolvable problem. They bargain through various offers in respect of how much to leave the window open: slightly, halfway, three-quarters and so on and so forth.

No solution the parties can come up with seems to be able to satisfy them both.

Enter the librarian....



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Example

She proceeds to **ask the first man why he wants the window open**, to which he replies *"To get in some fresh air"*.

The librarian continues to **ask the other man why he wishes to have the window close**, to which he responds: *"To avoid the draft."*

After applying her mind to either party's interests she proceeds to open a window in the next room, bringing in fresh air without a draft.

Mary Parker Follett's story is a perfect example of how seemingly irreconcilable positions can easily be resolved once the underlying interests of the parties are explored.

It is important to highlight here, **that it is the interests of the parties that define the problem.** **The basic problem** in any negotiation lies not in the party's **conflicting positions** but in the conflict between each side's needs, desires, concerns, and fears.

Exercise - Which conflict style did the librarian use?



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1. Ask why

Here you need to put yourself in the position of the other party or as the phrase goes to put yourself in their shoes. Here you need to take each position they are adopting and ask "Why"?

Let us turn to the classic Employer's claim for delay damages against the Contractor's claim for an extension of time.

The Contractor in assessing the interests of the Employer needs to ask "Why" the Employer is levying delay damages.

The answer is never as simple as "because the Contractor was late". I have seen on many occasions that Employers are willing to negotiate around the levying of delay damages, and having worked for numerous Employer's I can vouch for the fact that a contractual entitlement to levy damages merely due to the late completion of the works is not the underlying interest most Employers are seeking to satisfy.

Contractually the purpose behind a liquidated damages provision is to avoid having to prove a damages claim for the losses suffered as a result of said late completion.

There we have our first interest – potential losses as a result of the Contractor's late completion e.g. claims from other follow on Contractor's.

This is key – it is often the claims from the follow on Contractor that the Employer needs to offset by recovering damages from the late Contractor.

(Delay damage provisions are normally capped at 10% of the accepted Contract Amount and accordingly cannot compensate the Employer adequately for losses in production or otherwise).

**T
I
P** During this stage it is tempting to jump to the creating solutions stage of the negotiation process. However you must guard against this, the time will come for creating solutions to satisfy the needs you have identified.

Where there are numerous defects in the work Employer takes a much harder line on the Contractors in respect of levying delay damages. Where the works are of a high quality with little to no defects Contractors are more likely to negotiate away a large portion of any delay damages claim the Employer may wish to levy. Here our second interest emerges – Employers have an interest in high-quality work done by reliable Contractor on a repeatable basis (once again we do not move on to creating solutions to satisfy this need just yet).



2. Ask why not

Think about their choice

This concerns an analysis of asking what interests of the other party stand in the way of them agreeing to what you have asked for. To change the other parties mind you need to first understand where their minds are right now.

3. Realize that each side has multiple interests

Regardless of whom you are negotiating with, be it the Employer, the Project Manager, the QS, or the Contractor you must realize that all parties will have a constituency to whose interests they are sensitive.

To properly understand a negotiator's interests means to understand the variety of all the different interests that they need to account for.



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4. The most powerful interests are basic human needs

In assessing positions it is useful to consider those basic interests that motivate all people.

If you can satisfy these basic needs you will greatly increase your chances of reaching a mutually acceptable agreement.

The 5 basic human needs are:

Security

Economic well-being

A sense of belonging

Recognition

Control over one's life

Remember what is true for individuals in this sense remains true for groups, nations and corporations.

The failure to meet basic human needs is very apparent in wage disputes where the parties are bargaining over percentage increases but what is really driving the dispute is the failure to recognize and satisfy the employee's basic human needs.



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5. Finally, make a list

In identifying the various interests of the other party it is imperative that you make a list and write down the various interests that you identify. The purpose of this is not just to help you remember all the identified interests but writing them down further serves to improve the quality of your assessment as you learn new information and to place interests in their estimated order and importance.

Conclusion

Assessing the underlying interests that motivate a party's positions is key to creating solutions which satisfying the parties needs as opposed to merely meeting the parties demands.

Without conducting a full interests and needs analysis the parties run the risk of leaving most of the value available on the table is one of the main causes parties leave a negotiation unsatisfied.



1

Ask
Why?

2

Ask Why
not?

3

Realize that
each side
has multiple
interests

4

The most
powerful
interests
are basic
human
needs

5

Make a
list



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Lesson 3

Intent vs Impact



The Problem

Misunderstandings are a part of life. Everyone has a different perspective, lived experience, and set of biases that drive their actions – whether that’s their approach to grocery shopping or how they handle [conflict](#) with a co-worker.

People often try to explain their actions based on their intentions, but others may have a very different perception of the overall impact of those actions.

At best, this can lead to a harmless mix-up. In other cases, though, this disconnect between someone’s intent and the actual impact of their actions can lead to major conflict.

While the issue of intent versus impact often comes up in conflict management and trauma-informed care, it also makes frequent appearances in everyday conversations and conflict.



Intent

If you are intent on doing something, you are determined to get it done.

If you have an intent, you have a motive or purpose.

The intent is an anticipated outcome that is intended or that guides your planned actions.

“His intent was to provide a new translation”

Impact

The noun impact can refer to a physical force (like a collision), an influence (a bad role model or a hero), or a strong effect (a foot of snow will have an impact on driving conditions).

A good teacher might have an impact (influence) on a struggling student. But this versatile word can also be used

as a verb, though many people prefer to use its synonyms

instead: "affect," "bear upon"

Everyday Examples



Your partner makes a joke that upsets you. You know that they didn't mean any harm, but it still stings. Their **intent** was lighthearted, but the **impact** is that your feelings are hurt.



A friend comes to you to talk about an issue they're having at work. You offer them advice, but your friend is defensive and ends the conversation. You later learn that they felt like you were telling them they handled the situation poorly. Your **intent** was to offer an action plan, but the **impact** was that they felt judged.



Your supervisor institutes a new policy at work under the guise of improving the culture, but the staff feels like it's just more work and surveillance, exacerbating the lack of trust in the office. Your supervisor's **intent** was to add processes for efficiency, but the **impact** is a decrease in morale.



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If your impact doesn't match your intent

Ever found yourself saying, “But that’s not what I meant”?

You aren’t alone. Everyone tends to measure their responses based on their own interpretation of a situation, meaning that unintentional harm is bound to happen — none of us are above an accidental “ouch.”

If someone discloses that you hurt or offended them, the remainder of your relationship, whether it’s professional, romantic, or platonic, can depend on how you handle the situation.

Here’s how to get things back on track:



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Your

Impact



Listen with the goal of understanding where they're coming from, not with the goal of defending yourself.

It can help to use the active listening technique of repeating back exactly what you hear.



Center their feelings, not yours. It's normal to feel a little prickly when someone tells you that you did something wrong, and you disagree.

But take a beat and a deep breath, and know that you can talk about your feelings later.



Genuinely apologize or acknowledge the impact that your actions had on them. Steer clear of "I'm sorry if," "I'm sorry you," or "I'm sorry but," as these all lack accountability and put the blame on the one who was hurt.

A simple "I'm sorry for doing that, and I'll do better next time" can go a long way.



Someone's impact

On the other hand, bringing up hurt feelings to someone you care about or work with can be nerve-racking. No one wants to feel like they're overreacting or causing a fuss.

But if you intend to keep this relationship in good standing, it's best to bring up your concerns.

A few pointers:



Focus on your feelings and use "I" statements.

For example, you could say "I felt really hurt when..." instead of "You hurt me when..."

This centres the conversation on the impact the action had on you versus the situation itself or placing blame on the other person.



Be willing to hear their side after you've expressed yours. This doesn't mean you have to agree with it, but it's best to come into the conversation with open ears.



Discuss how the situation could have been handled differently. Is there anything the other person could do differently if this situation happens again?

Now that they know the impact of their action, how can you hold them accountable in the future?



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ONLINE QUIZZ material

You know you have understood the materials when... you answer below!

As a summary try to answer these two questions, write down your answers and compare them with the next slide.

What is the intent? Can you describe it in a

situation? What is the impact? How does it differ

from intent?

What are five conflict management styles? Can you give an example?

What is the difference between position and interest?



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Writer
Swetha
Amaresa
n

Resource Page

Print Resources

<https://blog.hubspot.com/service/conflict-management-styles>

<https://www.watershedassociates.com/learning-center-item/interests-versus-positions.html>

<http://www.odreurope.com/odr-lab/tips/mediation/1090-interests-vs-positions-5-steps-to-identifying-other-sides-underlying-motives>

“Roger Fisher and William Ury - Getting to Yes: Negotiating an agreement without giving in” (2012, Random House Business Books)

<https://www.healthline.com/health/intent-vs-impact>



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