Taking Control of Conflict
How to Resolve and Minimize Workplace Disputes

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Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid
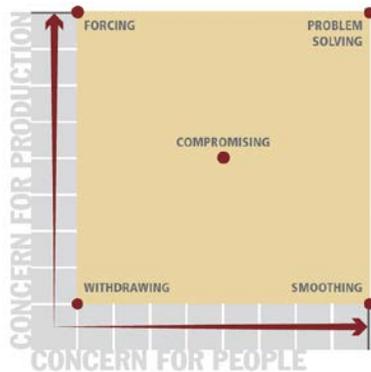
Predominant model describing typical approaches to conflict; developed by psychologists Robert Blake and Jane Mouton in 1964.

Avoiding (Withdrawing)

- Leaves issues unresolved due to withdrawal.
- Can be effective for trivial matters.
- May lead to complacency and unwillingness to challenge processes that need improvement.

Smoothing

- Involves willingly yielding to others.
- Can be effective for matters that are more important to the other party than to you.
- May cause built-up resentment.

Competing (Forcing)

- Disregards the goals of the other party so that your own can be achieved.
- Can be effective when quick action is required.
- May undermine relationships and erode trust.

Compromising

- Involves conceding a need to have another met.
- Can be effective when parties are struggling to move forward.
- May cause all involved to feel dissatisfied.

Integrating (Problem Solving)

- Results in a mutually beneficial outcome that offers objective and subjective satisfaction.
- In general, produces the most optimal long-term solution for managing conflict.

Identify Sources of Conflict

- Conflict of values
- Interpersonal conflict
- Conflict of goals
- Poor performance
- Power struggle
- Limited resources
- Organization-based conflict

Be an Active Listener

- Summarize content and emotions of message.
- Verify understanding, then offer an opening for continued dialogue.

Create Positive Outcomes

- ✓ Address the issue without delay.
- ✓ Use neutral words.
- ✓ Describe the desired outcome.
- ✓ Embrace differences of opinion.
- ✓ Focus on actionable solutions.
- ✓ Be detail-oriented in your solution.
- ✓ Follow up!

Stay Collected If Feelings Escalate

- Take a break before tackling the conflict again.
- Be the first to hold out an olive branch.
- Apologize for your behavior without apologizing for your position or needs.
- Let the other person save face.

Establish Expectations

- *Formal:* In general, these are written down and apply to the entire organization. Examples: Official rules, policies, and procedures; performance management criteria; standard templates, job aids, and checklists.
- *Informal:* These are acceptable or appropriate behaviors and may not be written down. Examples: How to communicate with your boss and employees' level of autonomy.