



Managing Conflicts & Negotiations

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The image features three glass chess pieces on a white surface. On the left is a small, clear glass pawn with a rounded top. In the center is a tall, clear glass king with a cross-shaped finial. On the right is a large, clear glass queen with a crown-shaped finial. The pieces are arranged in a line, and the text is overlaid on the central king piece.

Conflict Management

Types and Styles

Paula and John

Consider the following situation that arose between Paula and John, two consultants in the London office of a management consulting firm. They were both pleased to be placed on the case team for one of the firm's new clients, a major European consumer products company. The consulting firm had been hired to reposition a key cosmetics brand. Paula had just finished making an internal presentation (that she had been preparing for some time) to the other consultants and analysts on the case team. Paula had observed that John had spent the last half hour of her presentation reading through some documents. When Paula finished, without looking up from his papers, John asked, "Paula, are you being too conservative? The market potential for this product is much greater." Paula put up the transparency on which her conclusions were outlined and proceeded to reiterate them, quickly summarizing her rationale for each. John, nodded his head up and down and stated, "I still say we are being too conservative. Can't we grow market share faster than that?" Their bantering back and forth became rather heated and John ended up raising his voice.


Conflict

- ❑ Refers to a friction, disagreement, or discord.
- ❑ A process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party.
- ❑ Result of perception.
- ❑ The term 'interest' is used in its widest sense - beliefs, values, and goals, or over differences in desires for esteem, control, connectedness etc.




A close-up photograph of a chessboard with several dark wooden pieces standing upright. In the foreground, a white piece lies on its side. The background is softly blurred with warm, bokeh light spots. The text "Characteristics/ Nature of Conflicts" is overlaid in white, centered across the middle of the image.


Characteristics/ Nature of Conflicts



In a mid-sized tech company, the Development team argues that they need more funds to hire additional engineers and purchase advanced software tools to meet tight project deadlines. On the other hand, the Marketing team insists that without increased funding for a new campaign, they won't be able to generate the leads necessary to drive sales and ensure the company's growth. As the budget is stretched thin, tensions rise, with each department claiming that their needs are more critical to the company's success, leading to heated discussions and a growing rift between the teams.




***Scarcity of Resources* - parties have some mutually desirable goals and resources, which are in short supply.**



Regarding launch of a new software feature, the marketing team, focused on increasing the company's market share, insists that the feature must be released quickly to capitalize on a trending demand. However, the product development team, concerned with ensuring the feature's stability and long-term functionality, argues that more time is needed for thorough testing and refinement. The conflict escalates as both teams feel their needs—marketing's urgency to meet market trends and development's commitment to product quality—are not being fully acknowledged or respected by the other.




***Incongruence* - in the needs and interests of the parties involved.**



In a marketing agency, the creative team relies on the sales department for accurate client briefs to design compelling campaigns, while the sales team depends on the creative team to deliver eye-catching materials that close deals. However, a recent campaign's success faltered because the creative team felt rushed by tight deadlines set by sales, leading to subpar work. Sales, in turn, blamed creative for missing the mark, arguing that their rushed timeline was necessary to meet client demands.




Interdependence – if the parties are independent, no conflict.




In a large manufacturing organization, the Production team, led by a results-driven manager, prioritizes speed and efficiency to meet tight deadlines and maximize output. Meanwhile, the Quality Control department, under the guidance of a meticulous supervisor, insists on stringent checks and precise standards, often causing delays that frustrate the Production team. Tensions rise as both sides argue their case to senior management, with Production claiming that Quality Control's rigidity hampers overall productivity, while Quality Control counters that without their oversight, the company risks releasing subpar products that could damage its reputation.




***Struggle for Dominance* – most of the conflicts are a struggle for dominance, and desire to create influence.**



In a large pharmaceutical organization, the R&D scientists, deeply focused on developing a new drug, perceive the marketing team's push for early promotional campaigns as premature and potentially harmful to the drug's credibility. They believe that marketing doesn't fully understand the scientific nuances and the need for thorough clinical trials before making public claims. On the other hand, the marketing team views the R&D department as overly cautious and out of touch with the competitive market pressures, arguing that early visibility is crucial to the drug's commercial success.



***Perceived Differences* - arises only if there is a difference. The difference may be perceived or real.**



In a consulting organization, two senior consultants, Maya and Alex, are assigned to lead a critical project for a high-profile client. Maya, who has a strong attachment to the client due to years of relationship-building, feels personally responsible for the project's success. Alex, however, is eager to implement innovative solutions that align with his vision, disregarding some of Maya's established methods. Alex unilaterally decides to present a new strategy to the client, making Maya feel sidelined and disrespected. Her frustration boils over in a heated meeting, where she accuses Alex of undermining her efforts and jeopardizing the client relationship.



Emotional component of conflict - Maya's sense of betrayal and Alex's need for recognition

FEW CAUSES & SOURCES OF CONFLICTS

❑ Nature of Issues/Problem-related

- ❖ Interpersonal disagreements on goal, process, or other issues.
- ❖ Role conflict wherein the role of an individual conflict with the role of another.
- ❖ Power struggles/competition to corner resources or status.
- ❖ Misunderstanding, which is the result of interpreting a goal to be achieved or approaching a problem differently.
- ❖ Communication and interaction breakdown due to weak structure.
- ❖ External pressure from stakeholders or the environment, which leads to internal conflicts.

INTERPERSONAL CAUSES FOR CONFLICT

- Perceptual differences - The way one party perceives the goals that the other party sets, perceived differences in status and sharing results and reward.
- Communication - Distorting, misunderstanding, dislike about a style of communication, insults and hostile tone.
- Behavior - Blocking achievement of goals or power and politics.
- Structure - Closeness to the other party, power imbalance, degree of interdependence, differences in status, bias, preferential treatment and symbols that indicate greater authority
- Previous experience - Previous interactions, failure to reach an agreement, history of conflicts and their results.

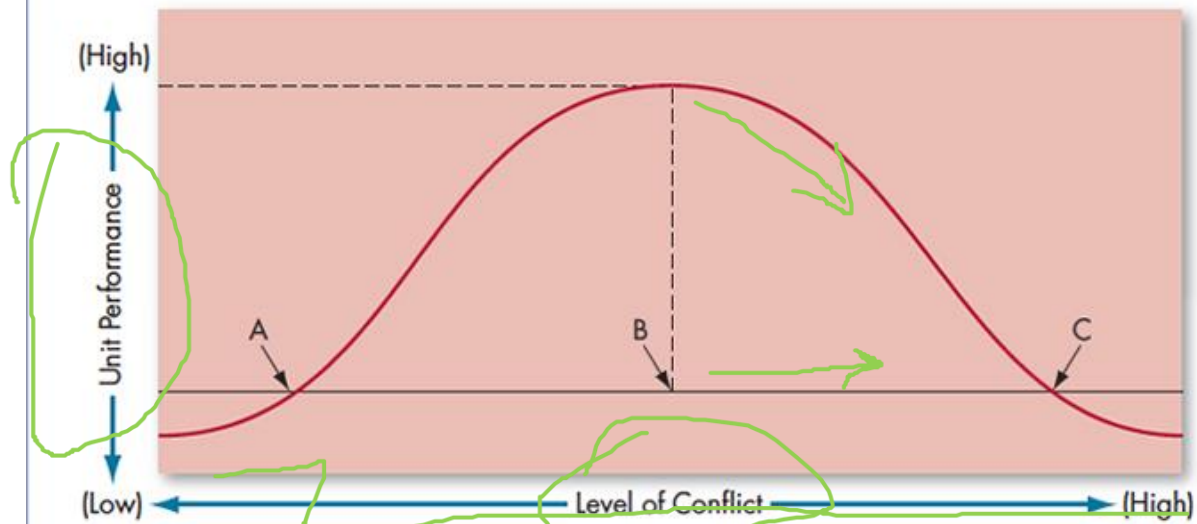


TYPES & CLASSIFICATION OF CONFLICTS



Based on effects/usefulness

- ❖ *Functional or Constructive Conflicts*
- ❖ *Dysfunctional or Destructive Conflicts*



Situation	Level of Conflict	Type of Conflict	Unit's Internal Characteristics	Unit Performance Outcome
A	Low or none	Dysfunctional	Apathetic Stagnant Nonresponsive to change Lack of new ideas	Low
B	Optimal	Functional	Viable Self-critical Innovative	High
C	High	Dysfunctional	Disruptive Chaotic Uncooperative	Low

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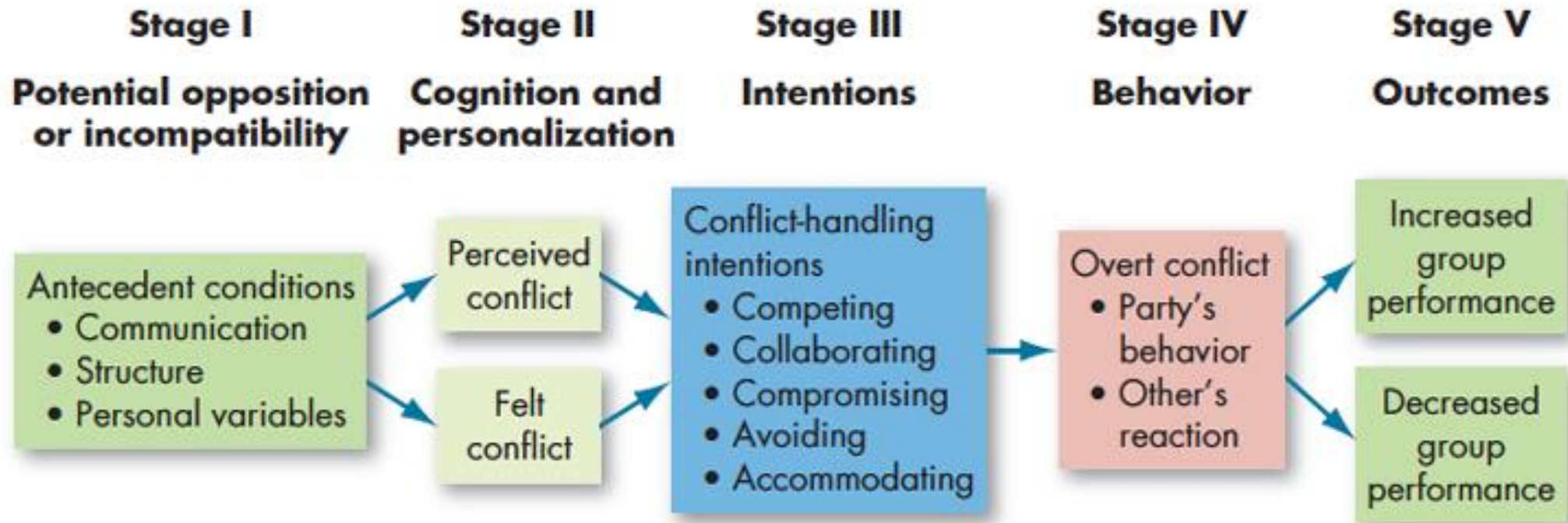
Based on the nature of disagreement

- ❖ *Task Conflicts* – related to goals to be achieved, often considered useful as it brings out many options.
- ❖ *Process Conflicts* – goals are agreed upon, but disagreement on process of achieving them.
- ❖ *Relationship Conflicts* - related to esteem, control, and affiliation - interpersonal.

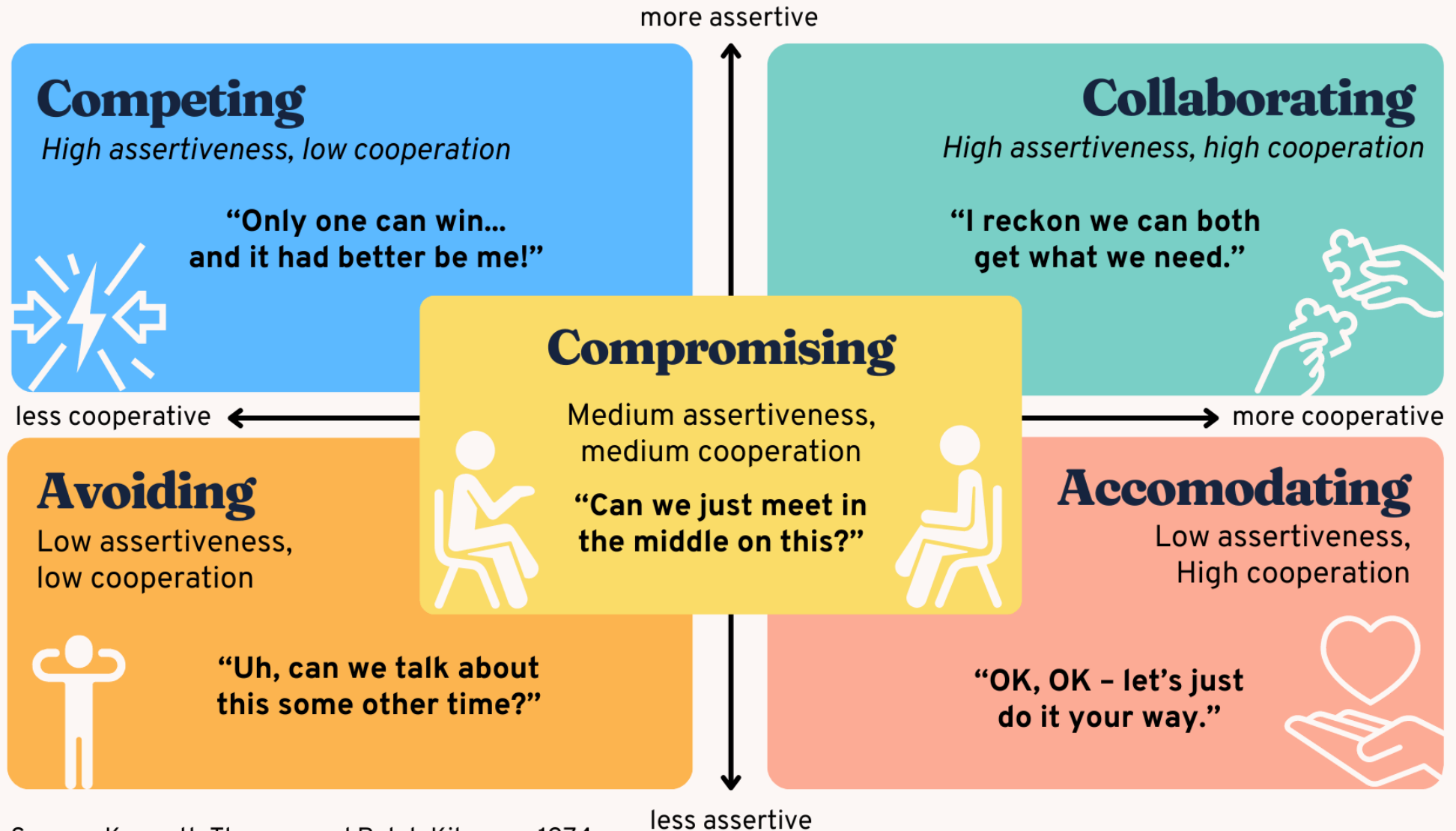
Locus of conflict

- Dyadic conflict (between two people)
- Intragroup conflict (within a group or team)
- Intergroup Conflict (between groups or teams)

Process of Conflict



Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Model



Source: Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann, 1974

Thomas Kilmann Conflict Management Styles

Style	What it means	Advantages	Disadvantages
Avoiding	Lose-Lose strategy. Pretends as if the problems do not exist or laughs it off.	Useful when conflict is trivial or too complex with potentially high dangers. Provides cool off time.	Counterproductive, leads to stress and increase in conflict, does not create solutions and is status-quo in nature.
Competing	Win-lose strategy with selfish motives and uses power.	Leads to creative, decisive and quick solutions in the short run.	Leads to unstable situation, the problem may resurface when power equation changes, bruised feeling and creation of more relational conflict could occur. Less robust and creative solutions and fewer options emerge.

Thomas Kilmann Conflict Management Styles

Style	What it means	Advantages	Disadvantages
Accommodating	One party willing to place the opponent's interests above his/her own	Useful when the issue is more important to one party than the other party. Reduces stress and resolves the issue quickly in the short run.	Quality of decision and creativity suffers. Options generated would be less and solutions may not be robust.
Compromising	Both parties give and take. No winner or loser	Gives a good feeling to both parties. Less residual stress. sense of winning to both.	Creates fewer options, leads to sub-optimal solutions which are often short lived.
Collaborating	Both win. Desire to satisfy the concerns of all parties.	Creates many options, high level of buy-in, creative and lasting solutions.	Complex, time consuming and tends to give a feeling that nothing is happening. This is the most difficult, but the most effective.

Conflict-Resolution Techniques

<i>Problem solving</i>	Meeting face to face for the purpose of identifying the problem and resolving it through open discussion.
<i>Superordinate goals</i>	Creating a shared goal that cannot be attained without the cooperation of each of the conflicting parties.
<i>Expansion of resources</i>	Expanding the supply of a scarce resource (for example, money, promotion, opportunities, office space).
<i>Avoidance</i>	Withdrawing from or suppressing the conflict.
<i>Smoothing</i>	Playing down differences while emphasizing common interests between the conflicting parties.
<i>Compromise</i>	Having each party to the conflict give up something of value.
<i>Authoritative command</i>	Letting management use its formal authority to resolve the conflict and then communicating its desires to the parties involved.
<i>Altering the human variable</i>	Using behavioral change techniques such as human relations training to alter attitudes and behaviors that cause conflict.
<i>Altering the structural variables</i>	Changing the formal organization structure and the interaction patterns of conflicting parties through job redesign, transfers, creation of coordinating positions, and the like.

Conflict-Stimulation Techniques

<i>Communication</i>	Using ambiguous or threatening messages to increase conflict levels.
<i>Bringing in outsiders</i>	Adding employees to a group whose backgrounds, values, attitudes, or managerial styles differ from those of present members.
<i>Restructuring the organization</i>	Realigning work groups, altering rules and regulations, increasing interdependence, and making similar structural changes to disrupt the status quo.
<i>Appointing a devil's advocate</i>	Designating a critic to purposely argue against the majority positions held by the group.

Negotiation

- A method by which people settle differences
- An interactive process between two or more parties seeking to find common ground on issues of mutual interest
- A social process by which interdependent people with conflicting interests determine how they are going to allocate resources or work together in the future (Brett, 2007)



Integrative Negotiation

- Also called as collaborative or problem-solving or interest-based or win-win negotiation.
- The goals of the parties are not mutually exclusive.
- Although the situation may initially appear to the parties to be win-lose, discussion and mutual exploration will often suggest alternatives where both parties can gain.
- Strategy of choice; achieved by managing *context* and *process* both.



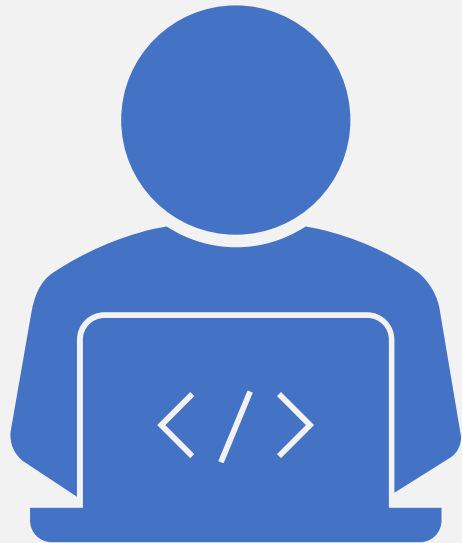


Integrative negotiation process

- Identify and define the problem
- Surface interests and needs
- Generate alternative solutions to the problem
- Evaluate those alternatives and select among them

Link

- <https://psycho-tests.com/test/conflict-mode>



Thank You

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