

Resolving Conflicts for Corporate Success

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Corporate teams share the same interpersonal dynamics athletic teams do, that is, both have to set goals, motivate team members, overcome adversity, and perhaps most importantly – learn how to resolve conflicts between varying opinions. Positive growth in life only comes with change, and change ultimately requires people to re-think and re-do things they previously became comfortable with. Oftentimes people do not respond well to change or to different opinions and consequently go into “defense mode” instead of looking for proactive and professional ways to resolve conflicts. In other words, the human emotion wins out over the levelheaded brain, resulting in two people who end up being blind to the other person’s point of view and instead focused exclusively on winning the argument. In these cases rarely does any positive growth occur and the end result is usually void of any true cooperative effort or support between team members.

Perhaps the most basic rule when communicating with fellow human beings (especially your teammates) is to understand that when you are arguing with another person the other person believes that he or she is right just as you believe you are right! So many times we lose sight of this and instead gauge where the other person is coming from through our own eyes using our own beliefs and experiences when we evaluate their position. Sadly, this can be a fatal mistake when trying to resolve conflict with others.

When working in a team environment you can expect communication breakdowns and various conflicts that will need to be resolved. If you cannot accept this fact you may want to seriously consider working at a job that allows you to operate in complete solitude. If solitude isn’t an option, then please consider the following thoughts and suggestions when working toward a harmonious workplace:

- When working toward a mutual goal it is human nature for people to begin to take ownership of their efforts and get close to their work. Because of this, it should come as no surprise that when there is a difference of opinion between co-workers many times the two conflicting people never make it past the emotional element of defensiveness, leaving both to be incredibly subjective, narrow-minded to the other’s opinions, and ultimately in a fight to win the argument. Try instead to step out of your shoes and into the others,

so to speak, by looking at the issue only through their eyes and see if you still feel the same as you did. Chances are you won't, and it's quite likely your ability to resolve the conflict will be much better.

- If possible, let some time pass if you do get into an argument with a co-worker before you go back into the discussion again. Even better, when you do once again bring up the matter try to find at least one point the other person has made that you agree with and verbally make it be known to that person. Finding common ground is invaluable to resolving conflicts.
- Once you begin what looks to be an argument on the horizon, immediately step back and collect all the facts. This means you must shelve your emotions and genuinely try to collect as much of the other person's views as possible, even going to the point of asking for clarification if necessary. End by paraphrasing what you heard and get the other person's approval that you are clear on the message. This approach will not only allow you to make a worthy opinion of the other person's point of view, but you will also win over their trust in that you are genuinely interested in hearing their side.
- Always end by looking for a win-win instead of a win-lose. Nobody likes to lose an argument and everybody likes to know that the other person finds some value in his or her position. While this type of truce is not always easy, it is possible and very much worth the effort.

Remember, human beings are not necessarily logical creatures and don't operate like machines. Conflict is natural when working with others, but resolving conflicts is the key to improved ideas, creativity, relationships, and ultimately business and life success.

