Dealing With “Difficult” People – A Guide to Conflict Resolution

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Session Objectives

At the end of this session you should be able to:

• Recognize the effects of conflict
• Identify causes of conflict
• Deal with “difficult” personalities
• Communicate effectively to avoid conflict
• Resolve and manage conflicts
Conflict – a disagreement; a dispute;
the clash of interests, ideas or
personalities
What Is Conflict?

- Within groups or between individuals
- Personal or work-related
- Can be productive
- Can be resolved
The Good News

Conflict Can Be Constructive

- Creativity
- Innovation
- Diversity
- Healthy Competition
- Customer Satisfaction

Conflicts

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Time to grow.
The Bad News

Conflict Can Be Destructive

- Harassment and Violence
- Reduced Productivity
- Widespread Dissension
- Customer Dissatisfaction
- Lower Morale
- Damaged Relationships
Common Causes of Conflict

- Poor communication
- Different work styles
- Incompatible personalities
- Conflicting goals
- Customer interactions
Common Causes of Conflict

People have different:

- Needs
- Functions
- Perceptions
Why Are “Difficult” People Difficult?

Start with yourself: Could YOU be the problem?
Recognizing “Difficult” Personalities

- The “Bulldozer” - Abusive, abrupt
- The “Exploder” – Outbursts filled with rage
- The “Complainer” – Finds fault with everything
- The “Clam” – Silent, “yes” or “no”, grunt
- The “Wet Blanket” – “It won’t work”
- The “Know-It-All” – Expert on all matters
- The “Staller” – Habitually indecisive
Dealing With “Difficult” People

The “Bulldozer”

- Time to run down
- Don’t worry about being polite
- Forcefully; no apologies
- Don’t cut down
- Negotiation
Dealing With “Difficult” People

The “Exploder”

• Gain self-control
• Neutral phrase
• Serious
• Private setting
Dealing With “Difficult” People

The “Complainer”

• Listen
• Don’t argue or apologize
• State the facts
• Put in writing
• “How do you want the discussion to end?”
Dealing With “Difficult” People

The “Clam”

- Open-ended questions
- Wait for response
- Extra time
- Comment on what is happening
Dealing With “Difficult” People

The “Wet Blanket”

• Be alert
• Optimistic but realistic
• Don’t argue
• Don’t offer solutions
• Raise questions
Dealing With “Difficult” People

The “Know-It-All”

- Be prepared
- Listen and paraphrase
- Don’t over-generalize
- Watch your responses
Dealing With “Difficult” People

The “Staller”

- Be open
- Acknowledge past problem
- Give support
- Assign responsibility
Effective Communication

Sending Clear Messages

- Think first
- Make “I” statements
- Avoid “you” statements
- Practice difficult messages
Effective Communication

Sending Clear Messages

- Be honest
- Inform
- Be positive
- Avoid negative patterns
Effective Communication

Hearing What Others Say

• Don’t interrupt
• Pay attention
• Be open
• Look for clues
Effective Communication

Hearing What Others Say

• Show you’re listening
• Use your imagination
• Ask questions
• Restate
Resolving Conflict

Five Basic Methods:

• Withdrawal
• Smoothing
• Forcing
• Compromise
• Collaboration
Attitude Check

- Cool down
- Be assertive
- Focus on the issues
- Keep an open mind
- Look for common interests
- Resolve the conflict
- Let go of the past
Resolving Conflict

Process:

- Cease fire
- Respect
- Identify
- Discuss
- Agree
Conflicts With Customers

- Identify problems
- Focus on solutions
- Clarify
- Get help
- Check for satisfaction
- Follow up
Managing Recurring Conflicts

Find underlying causes and break the cycle.

• Take the lead
• Speak to each individual
• Bring everyone together
Mediating Conflicts

- There to help
- Affecting work
- Ask how conflict can be ended
- Win-win solution
- Commitment
Questions?
Thank You!

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