

# CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

*competency*



## Difficulty



Easy  
Stroll

Tough  
Climb

# Conflict Management

Effective performers recognize that conflict can be a valuable part of the decision-making process. They are comfortable with healthy conflict and support and manage differences of opinion. They thwart destructive competition or friction, and use consensus and collaboration to debate and resolve issues.

Level	Performance Indicators and Behavioral Examples
<b>4</b> Strategic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Uses executive position to personally model a win-win standard of conflict resolution.</li><li>• Creates an organizational environment in which constructive conflict is encouraged and managed to the benefit of the organization.</li><li>• Establishes structures that support healthy debate and discussion over conflicting positions.</li><li>• Establishes rewards and recognition for healthy conflict behaviors.</li></ul>
<b>3</b> Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Successfully mediates conflict between groups.</li><li>• Encourages debate and discussion across functional lines.</li><li>• Models open debate over conflicting opinions.</li><li>• Establishes formal opportunities to air differing opinions and conflicting ideas.</li><li>• Is skilled at turning aggressive conflict into healthy debate of issues.</li></ul>
<b>2</b> Applied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exhibits a collaborative approach; models and supports a collaborative conflict style within the team.</li><li>• Offers opposing ideas in a negotiable manner.</li><li>• Listens to both sides before intervening.</li><li>• Is comfortable working with others with conflicting opinions.</li><li>• Successfully mediates conflict between group members.</li><li>• Promotes healthy conflict to create meaningful discussions.</li><li>• Provides opportunities for differing opinions on the team to be heard and debated.</li></ul>
<b>1</b> Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offers opposing opinions appropriately.</li><li>• Seeks win-win solutions.</li><li>• Enters into debate without personal animosity; avoids personalizing conflict.</li><li>• Recognizes the value of differing opinions to the benefit of the organization.</li></ul>
<b>0</b> Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Takes a “win-lose” attitude with others.</li><li>• Gives in to others’ views to avoid conflict; consistently defers to others.</li><li>• Avoids taking sides or always sides with the majority.</li><li>• Creates unnecessary conflict in the group.</li><li>• Reacts to conflict inappropriately; overreacts to or personalizes conflicting opinions.</li></ul>

## Significance

Conflict is inherent in virtually all environments, and is actually a useful tool when managed constructively. Left unmanaged, though, conflict can destroy an entire organization. Healthy debate comes from good conflict management, and is a valued skill in all walks of life.

## Best Ways To Develop

The first requirement in learning to manage conflict is self-awareness. Use a professional instrument (self-test) to assess your approach to conflict, and seek feedback from others. Learn to monitor your emotional involvement in a potential conflict; expression of emotion can reveal how important a situation is to you. This is critical information, but be aware you might be less willing to collaborate if you are feeling strongly about an issue.

## Improving Your Capacity

Prepare yourself before managing difficult situations; choose the appropriate time and place, ask a neutral third party to help mediate if needed, etc. Find common ground, focus on areas you both want.

Increase your competency in Active Listening to enhance your ability to manage conflict. Listen, paraphrase, even when you disagree.

**Read:** *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss what Matters Most* by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, Sheila Heen, and Roger Fisher.

**Read:** *Fierce Conversations: Achieving Success at Work & in Life, One Conversation at a Time* by Susan Scott.

**Read:** *Work it Out: Clues for Solving People Problems at Work* by Sandra Krebs Hirsch.

**View:** *The Art of Resolving Conflicts in the Workplace: Six Strategies for Resolving Office Conflicts* produced by Kantola Productions.

## Start Today

Investigate and attend a Conflict Management course; ensure that it contains role-playing to practice the competence.

Arrange to be tested with a Myers-Briggs, Thomas Kilmann or other such psychological instrument to evaluate your conflict style.

For the next 24 hours, keep a log of all conflicts you encounter. Look for patterns in people, content, timing, mindset, environment, etc. Begin to analyze your personal role with conflict: Do you avoid? Instigate? Aggravate?

## Tips

- Encourage debate and discussion, but keep it focused on the business, not the person.
- When conflict erupts, step in to manage it before it becomes unproductive.
- Don't let fear of conflict keep you from debating important issues.
- Avoid rigid positions; be flexible.

**Remember, the key to improving competency is not just learning about the skill but choosing a takeaway and developing an action plan to put new behaviors into practice until it becomes a natural response.**

# Development Action Planning Form

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**Step 1:** Choose a competency area to develop.

**Target Competency:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 2:** Describe a positive outcome in the target area of competence; include your vision of a preferred future state.

**Goal Statement:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Vision Statement:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 3:** List the benefits of achieving your desired end state.

**Benefits:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 4:** Brainstorm the actions you might take to achieve your goal. For each, anticipate obstacles and options for overcoming them.

Action Steps	Obstacles	Options
1.		
2.		
3.		

**Step 5:** Finalize your action steps based on your brainstorming in Step 4. Now, list each action you must take to achieve your goal, including time frames and resources you will need.

Action Steps	Time Frames	Resources
1.		
2.		
3.		

Lipscomb's CORE Competency Development Program helps improve the competency areas that are critical to achieving your life and career goals. Through course materials, suggested practice opportunities and personalized coaching, competency-based education focuses on developing a new set of skills you can apply to daily life. Visit [Lipscomb Online](#) for more information on our Certificate, Undergraduate, and Graduate degree programs.