



PROJECT MANAGEMENT CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE

A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department



EMBRACING CONFLICT

Using Conflict To Build Constructive Teams

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Overview



When Conflict Is Ignored...



When Conflict Is Embraced...



Conflict Creates Opportunity for Positive Outcomes

Result of disagreement caused by perceived or actual opposition of interests, needs, and value

Sources of Conflict

- Basic needs
- Values
- Resources
- Interests
- Perception
- Love

Negative Aspects

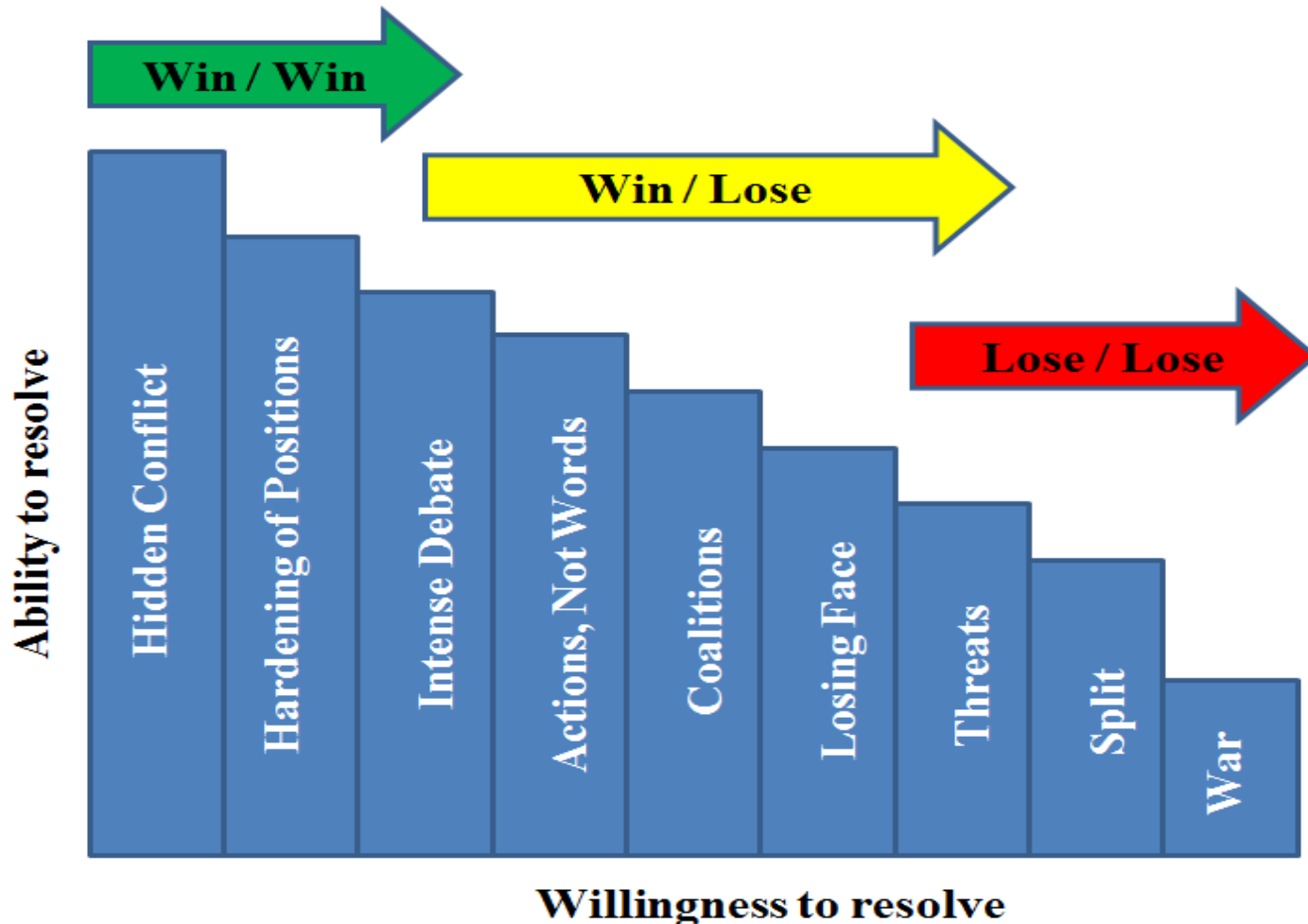
- Lower productivity
- Increased stress
- Time lost
- Reduced trust
- Coalitions
- Win/Lose mentality
- Lose/Lose mentality

Positive Aspects

- Energizes teams
- Increases creativity
- Encourages stronger emotional skills
- Enhances negotiations
- Questions status quo
- Discovers others' needs, values, and perspectives

Addressing Conflict Early Increases Likelihood of Resolution

As conflict grows, the ability and willingness to resolve it often weakens



6 Approaches to Addressing Conflict

Approach	Successfully Use	Backfires
Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care little about the outcome • Less power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resent position after • Appear weak / make other appear strong
Avoidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time is short • Less power • Relationship has no value • Desire to block progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care about the relationship • Use repeatedly • Creates a future expectation • Harms image
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire to preserve relationship • Prefer to cooperate as a strategy • Need a win/win outcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No mutual respect • Time sensitive
Compromise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need a non-optimal solution • Time and resources are limited • Equal power • Only way win/win solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resents later • Negatively impacts relationship • Negotiations take time • If you can still collaborate
Domination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More important to be right • Have the authority • Emergency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used too often • Anticipate adverse response • Haven't attempted to collaborate first
Revenge and Self-Harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek revenge • Opposition wants revenge • Need to win no matter what • Willing to face loses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to collaborate • Losses outweigh gains • Damages reputation, relationship • Need to negotiate with opposition in the future

6 Steps to Managing Conflict

Step	Description	Statement
1. Confirm	Paraphrase to show understanding	“Yes- I understand that...”
2. Empathize	State the other person’s perspective	“I understand why you feel...”
3. Prepare	Pivot from their perspective	“I think that we may need to consider...”
4. Provide reasons	Build a case for an alternative perspective	Outline rationale
5. Deliver negative statement	Show you do not agree	“I think we should...”
6. Offer compromise	Provide an alternative solution	“This is why I feel that we need to....”

Identify Stakeholders to Manage Conflict

Title	Stakeholder	Relationship (1-5)	Influence (1-5)	Notes
Division Director	Sponsor	4	5	Weekly check-in scheduled to review progress
Mission Support	Client	5	3	Provides detailed analysis and anecdotal evidence, not always considered by group
Regional Director	Client	3	4	Meets frequently with Sponsor outside of meeting. Build relationship to be included in discussions
Operations Analyst	Client	2	3	Analysis not always shared, seek opportunities to meet individually and learn what data is available, competing agenda than Sponsor's
Budget Analyst	Client	1	4	Believes change may be outside of scope and budget, competing agenda with Sponsor's
Policy Analyst	Client	1	4	Believes change may require policy overhaul, competing agenda with Sponsor's
Manager	Project Team	4	4	Good relationship with Regional Director and may be able to reach out directly to gain perspective
Senior Consultant	Project Team	5	3	Works directly with Budget and Operations.
Consultant	Project Team	5	2	Works directly with Policy and Operations.
Analysts	Project Team	5	1	Aids project team
SSA	Customer	1	5	Information is shared second-hand from Sponsor and anecdotally from clients
IRS	Customer	1	5	Information is shared second-hand from Sponsor and anecdotally from clients

Prepare Your Team for Conflict

1. **Team Building Activities:** Conversation, Lunch, Happy Hours
2. **Processes:** Ground rules and standard operating procedures that clarify expectations
3. **Just business:** Reminders that this is “business, not personal”
4. **Challenge Events:** Open discussion on status quo
5. **Start - Stop - Continue:** Tools and templates that facilitate feedback

Questions?

