Human Resource and Diversity Management

Managing conflict & cooperation

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SESSION PLAN

I. Learning objectives

II. Conflict in the workplace (sources and types)

III. Conflict management

IV. Towards cooperation

I. Learning objectives

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understanding the concepts of **conflict** & **conflict management**
- Understanding how to adapt his/her conflict management style to the situation
- Understanding the levers of **cooperation** between diverse people

II. Conflict in the workplace (sources and types)

CONFLICT IN THE WORKPLACE

- Conflict is **pervasive** in our society today.

- According to a study conducted by the *American Management Association*, managers now spend up to **30%** of their time resolving conflicts, antagonisms and rivalries…

WHAT IS CONFLICT?

- **Definition**

- **Conflict is…**

- a normal, inescapable part of life
- a periodic occurrence in any relationship
- an opportunity to understand opposing preferences and values

SOURCES OF CONFLICT

- **Conflicting goals**
- **Scarce resources**
- **Diversity of values**
- **Diversity of styles**
- **Personality conflicts**

➢ By embracing conflict as a part of life, you can make the most of each situation and use it as **a learning opportunity** or a leadership opportunity…

TYPES OF CONFLICT

Cognitive conflict/task-oriented

Differences in information held, in judgment and in perspective that facilitate the exchange of information.

Functional

Movement of the group forward to a better communication and a more effective stage of development

Dysfunctional

Decreased performance, lowered satisfaction, aggression and anxiety

Affective conflict/emotion-based behaviors

Such as personality clashes, incompatibilities and disputes that inhibit effective decision making.

USE COGNITIVE CONFLICTS

Cognitive conflict/task-oriented

Differences in information held, in judgment and in perspective that facilitate the exchange of information.

Functional

Movement of the group forward to a better communication and a more effective stage of development

- Disagreement about ideas and approaches
- Issue focused, not personal
- Characteristic of high performing groups

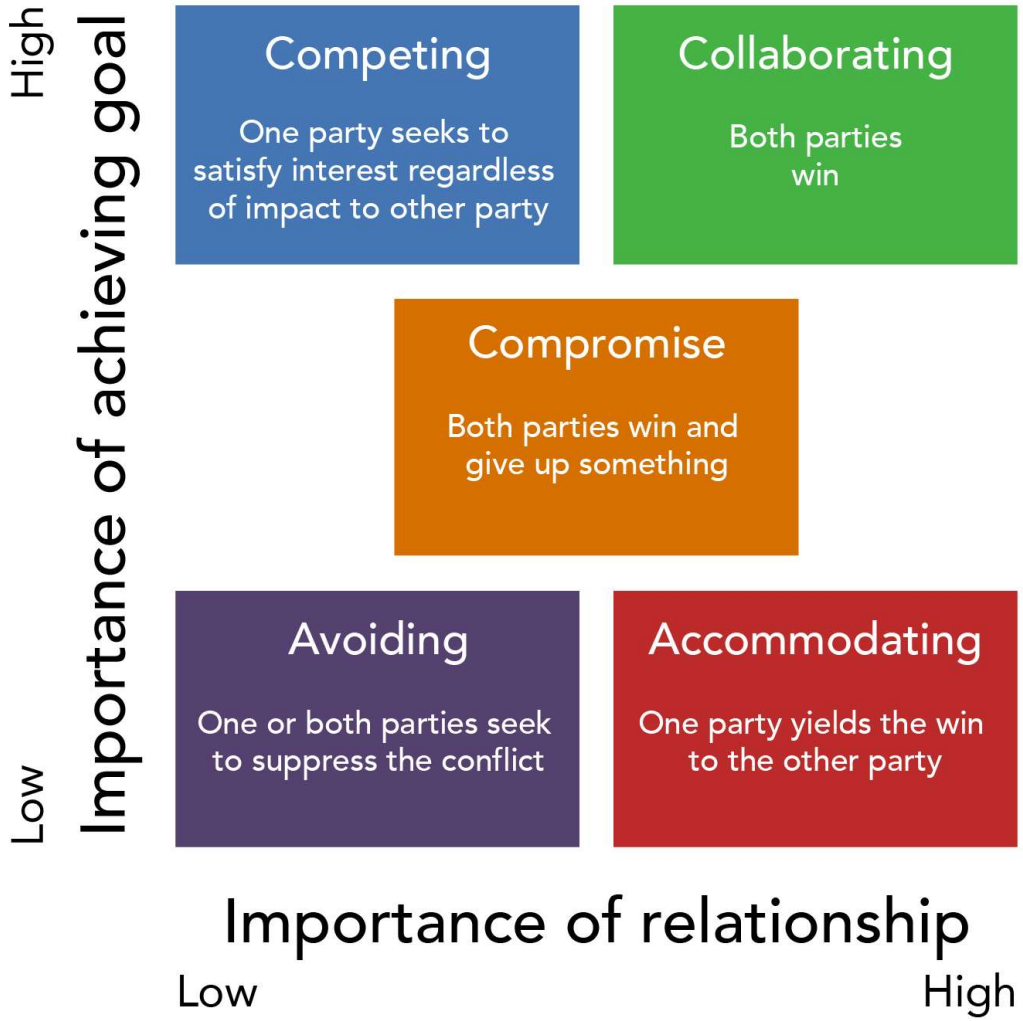
Source: Amason, A.C., Thompson, K.R., Hochwarter, W.A., & Harrison, A.W. (1995). "Conflict: An Important Dimension in Successful Management Teams." *Organizational Dynamics, 24*(2), 22-23.

III. Conflict management

A BIT OF HUMOR

- *The Office (US)* - Conflict Resolution (NBC, 2013)

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES



WHAT KIND OF STYLE SHOULD YOU ADOPT WHEN…?

You have joined a working group within your company to **create new contacts** and increase your network. You have **little interest in the project** of this group. During the exchanges among members, you make a proposal that opposes you to another member. You're sure you're right, but the other person is obstinate...

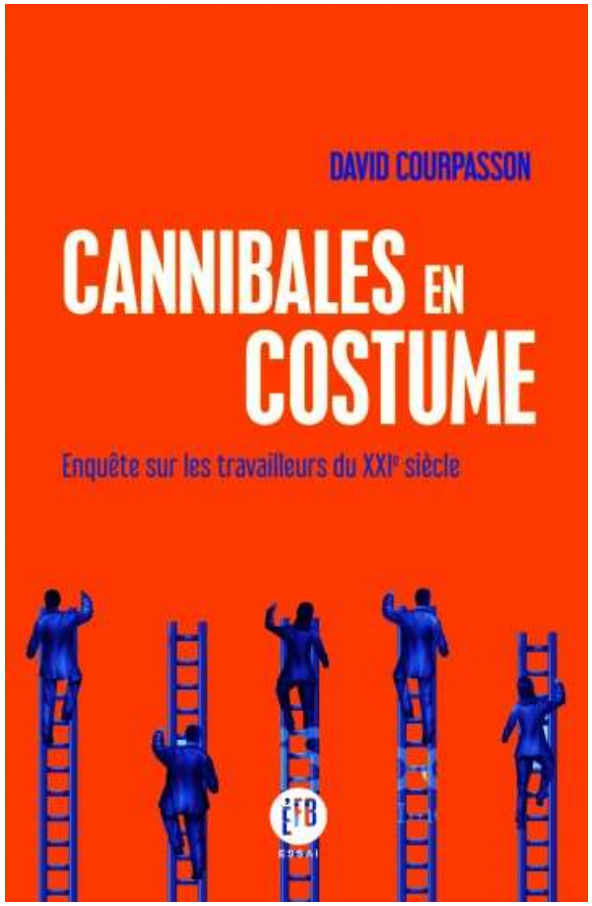
WHAT KIND OF STYLE SHOULD YOU ADOPT WHEN…?

You are in charge of the sales department within your company. Lisa, **one of your best sellers**, is about to close an important sale but you don't agree on the strategy to adopt and have time before making a final decision...

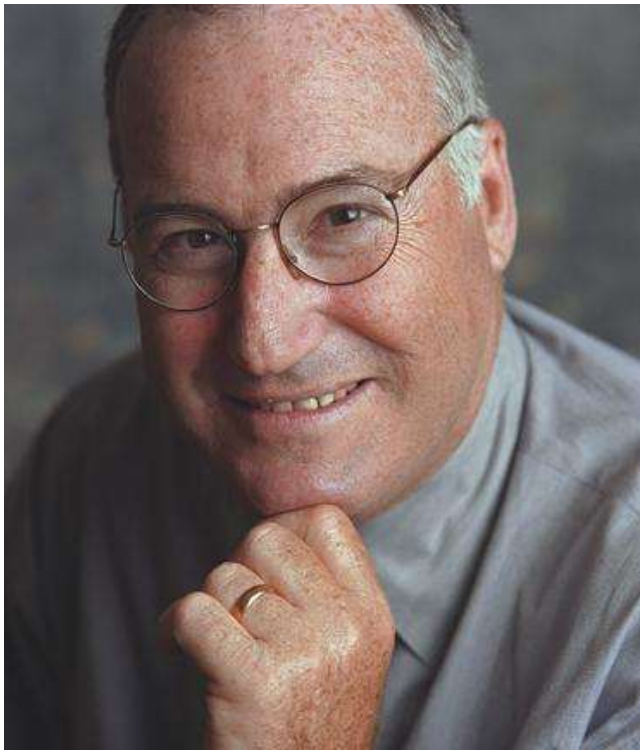
WHAT KIND OF STYLE SHOULD YOU ADOPT WHEN…?

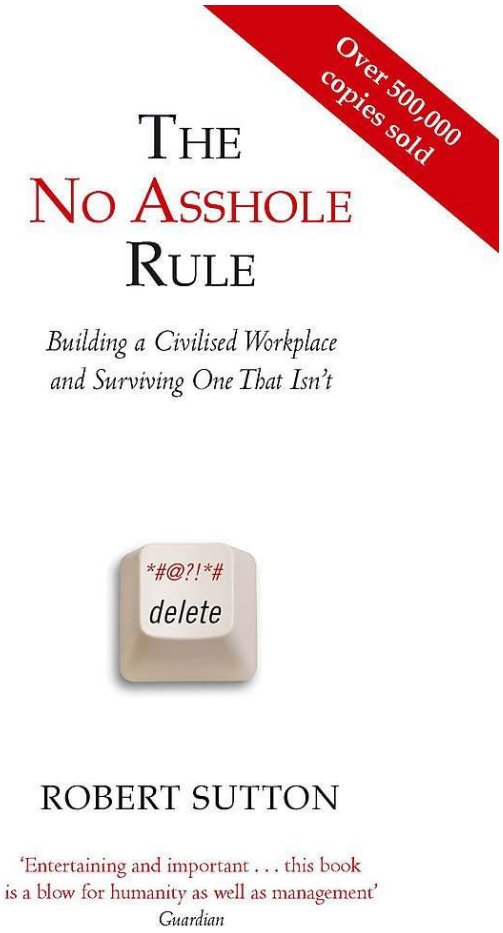
Your company faces temporary financial difficulties. The workload is low and you ask Julia, a competent and committed **assistant**, who is paid by the hour, to **reduce her activity** by leaving work earlier in the next three months. But she refuses: she just bought a house and needs money...

CANNIBALS IN SUIT



DEALING WITH AN ASSHOLE AT WORK





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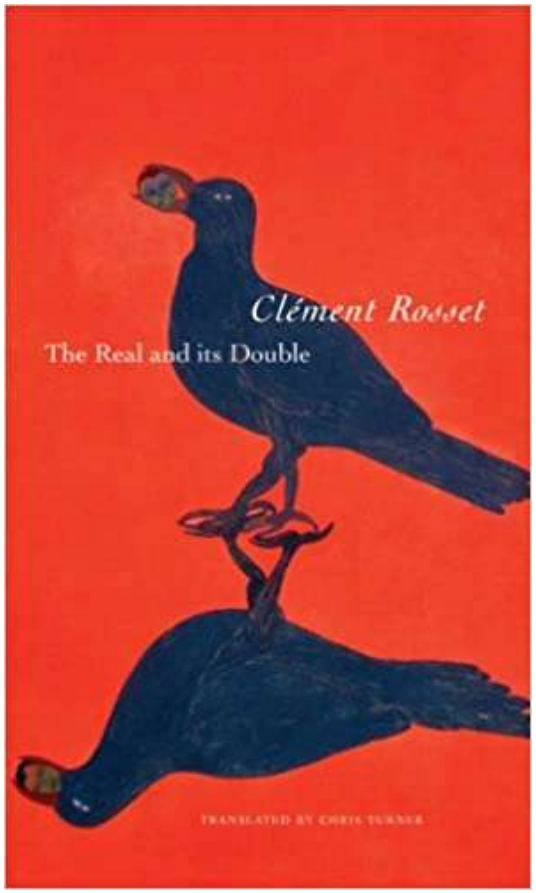


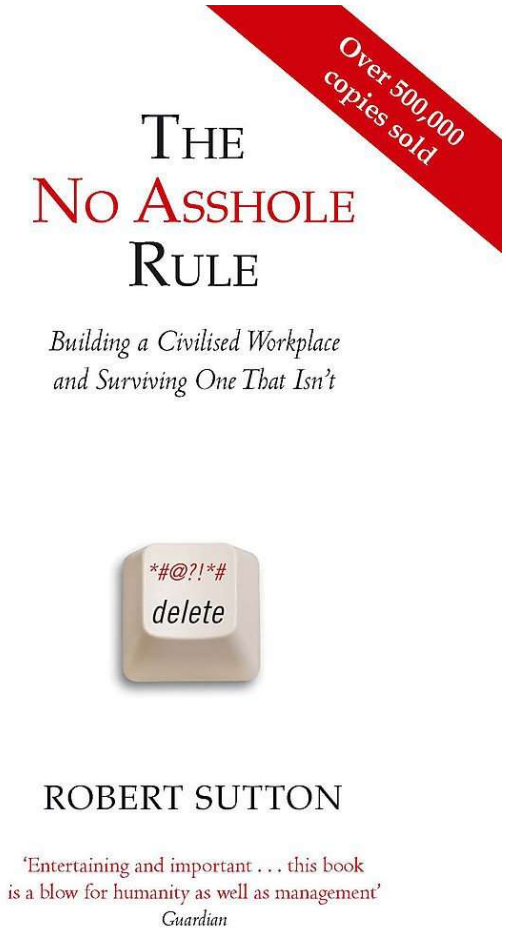
Two forms of stupidity

Primary stupidity

vs.

Second-degree stupidity

DEALING WITH AN ASSHOLE AT WORK



Temporary asshole

vs.

Certified asshole

DEALING WITH AN ASSHOLE AT WORK

- The Asshole Survival Guide: Robert I. Sutton (Rotman School of Management, 2017)

IV. Towards cooperation

ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR (OCB)

- **Definition**

Ex: helping behaviors, loyalty, civic virtue…

→ Managers who are aware of the pros of Organizational Citizenship Behaviors can help employees to contribute optimally to the organization.

- To keep in mind as future responsible managers:

- Organizational Citizenship Behaviors reduce the need for supervision, improve workplace morale and result in cost-saving (free up managerial time).
- Employees who are willing and happy to go beyond formal job requirements will help organizations cope with change and unpredictable circumstances.

MAKING PEOPLE COOPERATE

- **Definition**
- There is an **altruistic inclination** in any human being or a propensity to cooperate.
- Incentive mechanisms and management style affect cooperation that is fragile.
- Importance to promote Organizational Citizenship Behaviors!

When people are self-interested…
Use the carrot & the stick!

When people are concerned by others…
Mobilize values, informal meetings...

MAKING PEOPLE COOPERATE

- What Makes the Highest Performing Teams in the World (Simon Sinek, 2020)

CONCLUSION

- **Key points**

- **Conflict** is a part of organizational life.

- A **cognitive conflict** is not only a positive force in a group, it's an indispensable factor in its effectiveness.

- **Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCB)** must be encouraged in order to establish virtuous relationships.

- **Managerial challenges**

- Try to limit the effects of competition between people (pay attention to **organizational justice**!).

- Create **proximity** between people (not only physical but ideological) to strengthen cooperation and limit sources of conflict… particularly in the current context!

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