

# Dealing with Office Conflict through DISC

## From PeopleKeys

Conflict with a coworker: It's bound to happen sometime. In an office environment, you're often thrown together with people that you would never normally choose to spend eight hours a day with. Even if you enjoy spending time with your colleagues, working closely with the same people day in and day out is bound to occasionally cause a little friction. Unfortunately, small tensions between individuals can, over time, blossom into full-blown conflicts. The good news is that you can easily resolve most inter-office personality conflicts using DISC theory.

One of the most useful lessons of DISC personality analysis is that DISC can be used to anticipate the way that different personality types will act in stressful situations. When you anticipate a reaction, you can adapt strategies to put that person at ease. At the very least, once you use DISC theories of human behavior to recognize that many of the actions that you dislike in another person are instinctual, it goes a long way to fostering tolerance and understanding. What follows is a simplified guide to how colleagues can work together even when they don't see eye to eye.

### When you have conflict with a D Style

A D Style prefers a straightforward approach, and will respond well to direct confrontation. When problems with a D Style arise, it's best to sit down and have a conversation right away. Since a D Style can sometimes be impatient, don't beat around the bush; Get to the heart of your problem immediately. When discussing the problem, it's best not to bring emotions into the discussion. A D Style rarely frames things in terms of emotion, and will likely not be immediately sympathetic to emotional appeals. Also, because a D Style is task-focused, it's a good idea to spend more time talking to a D Style about solutions rather than the actual problem. The good news is DISC personality type D Style is quick to take action. Once you bring a problem to the attention of a D Style, they won't put off implementing a solution.

### When you have conflict with an I Style

Unlike a D Style, an I Style prefers a more friendly and conversational approach. When problems with an I Style arise, make it clear that the issue you have isn't personal. Also, an I Style will typically understand better if you frame the issue in terms of emotions (*"When this happened, it made me feel..."*). During your conversation, try to keep things relaxed and upbeat. Be sure, too, to give the I Style plenty of time to talk as well. When the I Style is speaking, be a good listener. Don't interrupt, and make it clear that you hear and understand what

they're saying. Understand, too, that DISC personality type I Style is not naturally deadline-focused. When conflict with an I Style is based on time management, be aware that an I Style doesn't place a high priority on keeping to an exact timetable. You might try working on a more flexible timetable, or ask for work to be completed a few days before you need it.

### **When you have conflict with an S Style**

Since they crave harmony in the workplace, you are least likely to have a full-blown conflict with an S Style. An S Style places a strong priority on personal relationships, so when discussing problems with an S Style try to make it clear that despite the problem you still value and appreciate them. Also, an S Style is best persuaded once you can establish personal common ground. Unfortunately, an S Style dislikes direct confrontation and will try to avoid it whenever possible. To counter this impulse, keep things calm when you discuss problems with an S Style. If you push or are overly-aggressive, an S Style will retreat or agree to a solution that they don't plan to implement just to end the discussion. DISC personality type S Style is a very good listener, so as long as you clearly explain your issues politely, they will focus all of their attention on what you have to say.

### **When you have conflict with a C Style**

A C Style can be sensitive, and hates to be criticized. A C Style will often feel resentment when directly confronted. As a result, when discussing problems with a C Style, don't frame things in terms of a personal criticism ("*I Style don't like it when you...*"). Also, try not to make a C Style feel ambushed. When you need to talk about a problem with a C Style, schedule a time to talk later in the day. This will give the C Style time to formulate their thoughts, and will take away the element of surprise. When talking with a C Style, always be sure to explain yourself well. Don't be vague. Allow time for discussion and be ready to answer questions. DISC personality type C Style is very good at problem solving, so once you've explained your issue, the C Style will instinctively want to create a plan to fix it. On a daily basis, be sure to have realistic expectations of the C Style. Personality type C Style is very good at tasks that require precision and organization, but because of their methodical approach they often need to work at a slower pace than some of the other personality types.

The next time find yourself feeling irritation with a coworker or feel like you're struggling to find common ground, draw from your DISC human behavior training to relieve the tension. Once you understand the theories of human behavior that inform DISC, it becomes much easier to work through office conflict.