Conflict Management Styles

Discover and Manage Your Conflict Style

Report Prepared For:

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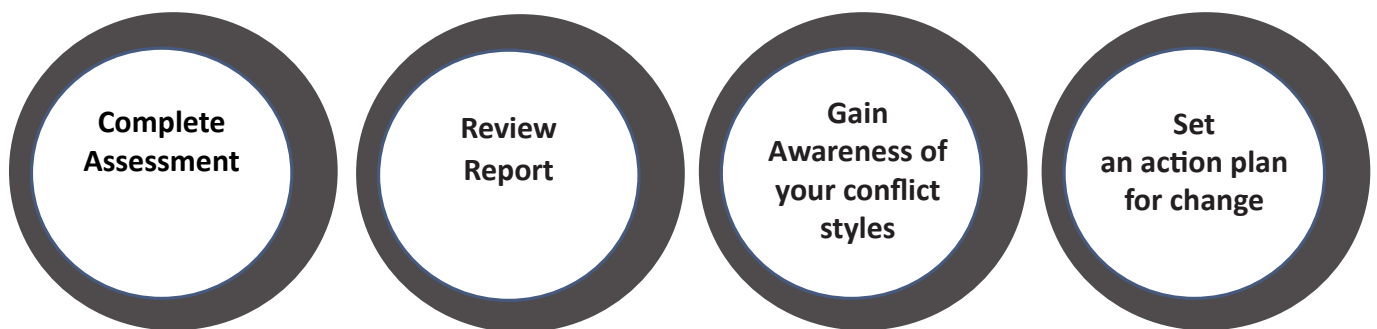December 14, 2023

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ITP METRICS

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The goal of this report is to build awareness and create discussion of Rahim and Bonoma's (1979) personal styles of conflict management. In this report, you will learn about five different styles of conflict management and about your preference for different conflict management styles. Additionally, this report highlights scenarios in which each style would be most effective. You can use this information to gain greater awareness about your personal conflict management style, and how it may influence your interactions with others.

The report begins with a description of five styles of conflict management. Next, your percentile scores, which are based on your assessment scores, will be displayed. Finally, more in depth information regarding how to use each conflict management style more effectively will be outlined.

ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Complete Assessment → Review Report → Gain Awareness of your conflict styles → Set an action plan for change

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1 Rahim, A., & Bonoma, T. V. (1979). Managing Organizational Conflict: A model for diagnosis and intervention. Psychological Reports, 44, 1323 - 1344

CONFLICT

Rahim defines conflict as "an interactive process manifested in perceived incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities (individual, group, organization, etc.)". In other words, conflict occurs when there are perceived incompatibilities between two or more parties. When these parties are dependent on each other, conflict can interfere with goal attainment, leading to increased stress and a potentially volatile or otherwise unhealthy situation. Conflict is a common occurrence and can be considered a fundamental aspect of working with others.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Conflict management can be understood as "the practice of identifying and handling conflict in a sensible, fair, and efficient manner". In order to succeed in resolving a conflict, the conflict must first be acknowledged and understood, the atmosphere must be psychologically safe and free from fear, anxiety, and threat, and the conflict must be dealt with in an appropriate, fair, and mutually satisfactory way. Skills essential to effective conflict management include: listening, hearing, acknowledging, assertiveness, openness, composure, understanding, candor, authenticity, and clarity of communication. Most importantly, self-awareness is key.

The goal is to understand your own objectives and interests, as well as the objectives and interests of others, and to engage in clear communication within a safe environment. Developing awareness and understanding of conflict is central to managing conflict effectively. Often it is best not to avoid conflict entirely, because it can prove to be beneficial when managed constructively. Properly managed conflict can lead to an increased understanding between parties, which in turn leads to improved methods of functioning.

There is no best style for managing conflict in every circumstance, as it depends on your style and dispositions, the other parties involved, and the context of the situation.

In this report, we will focus on 5 different styles as defined by Rahim and Bonoma (1979), which are used extensively in modern organizational training and development. The styles are: Integrating, Accommodating, Compromising, Avoiding, and Dominating. Conflict management styles can be understood with respect to two factors:

Concern for Self

The degree (high or low) to which your personal objectives are met. Having a high concern for self would mean that you are strongly focused on your own personal needs when dealing with conflict.

Concern for Others

The degree (high or low) to which concerns of others are met. Having a high concern for others would mean that you are strongly focused on the needs of others when dealing with conflict.

Concern for Others

	Low	High
High (Concern for Self)	Dominating	Integrating
		Compromising
Low (Concern for Self)	Avoiding	Accommodating
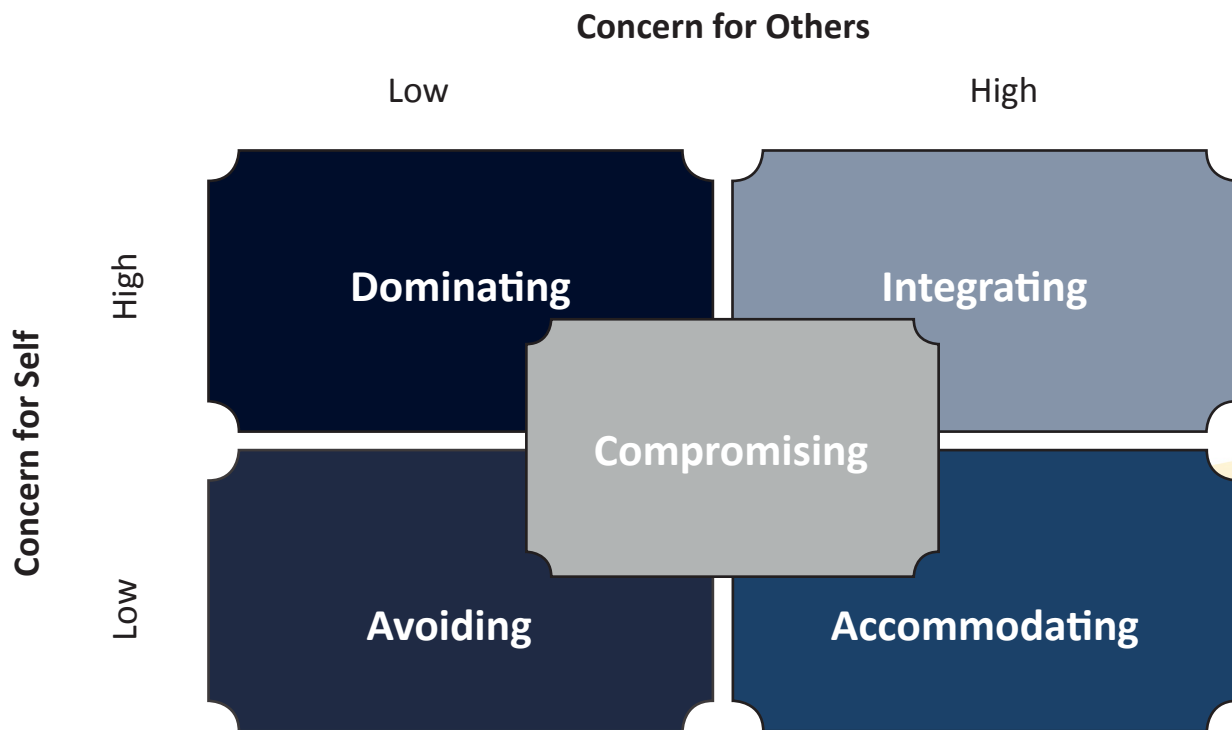
INTEGRATING

Involves a high concern for both your own personal objectives and others' objectives. When managing conflict, people with an integrating approach will try to come up with a solution that satisfies all parties involved.

ACCOMMODATING

Involves a low concern for your own personal objectives and a high concern for others' objectives. When dealing with conflict, people with an accommodating approach will try and agree on a solution that satisfies others' concerns but not their own.

COMPROMISING

Involves an intermediate level of concern for your own personal objectives and others' objectives. When managing conflict, people with a compromising approach might try to find a solution that partially satisfies all group members, but falls short of achieving an optimal outcome for everyone.

AVOIDING

Involves a low concern for both your own personal objectives and others' objectives. When faced with conflict, people with an avoiding approach might have difficulty satisfying their personal objectives and others' objectives, and therefore they may tend to avoid the situation entirely.

DOMINATING

Involves a high concern for your own personal objectives and a low concern for others' objectives. When managing conflict, people with a dominating approach may focus on their own objectives while ignoring the concerns of others.

When reading your report, it is important to remember that each of the five different styles are useful – there is no **best** style. The effectiveness of each style depends on the situation.

You may find that you use a particular style more frequently than others. This may be due to personal characteristics, such as personality, or due to your behavioral habits. It is important to remember that individuals are capable of using all five styles depending on the situation.

Scores from your responses to the conflict management styles assessment were analyzed, and compared to averages gathered from the general population. Your percentile scores are displayed below, with percentages indicating the proportion of people who scored the same, or lower, than you on each style of conflict management.

Scores that fall between 0 – 33 % of the population are considered **low**, and scores that fall between 67 – 100% are considered **high**. Scores falling in between these two ranges are considered **moderate**. A score of 50% indicates you received the average score of the population on that conflict management style.

PERCENTILE %
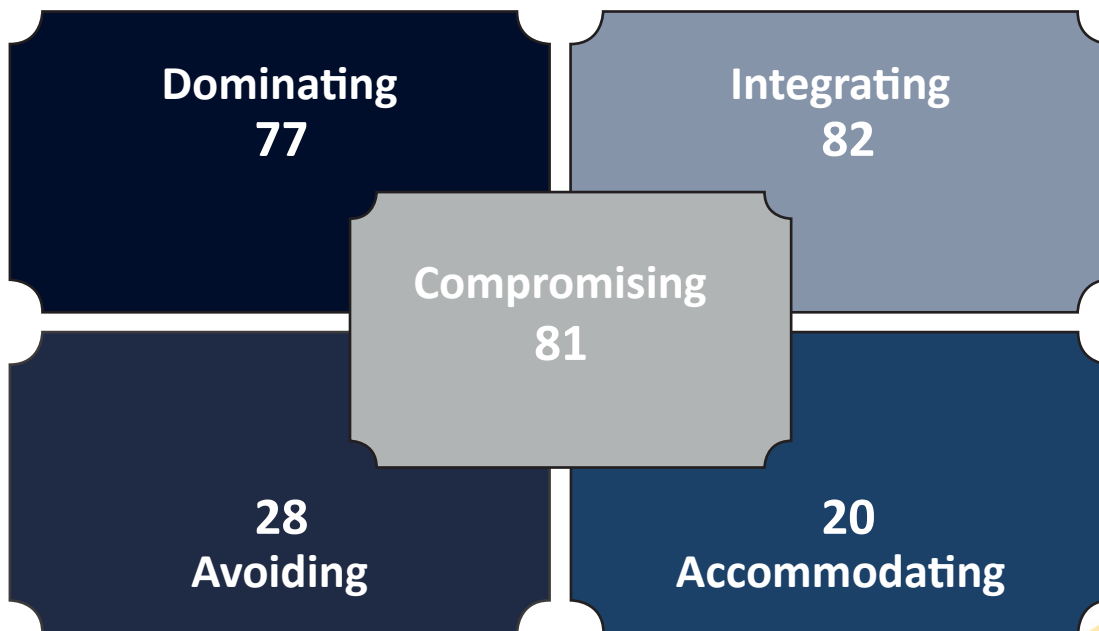
Dominating 77	Integrating 82
Compromising 81	
28 Avoiding	20 Accommodating

Ideal uses:

- When dealing with a complicated problem where it is necessary to obtain input from all team members to arrive at the most effective solution.
- When trying to come up with innovative solutions through a systematic examination and analysis of ideas.
- To gain or maintain commitment from the parties involved by engaging their knowledge and thinking in the decision making process.
- When the outcome is very important and you don't know the solution.

Examples:

- Your team must come up with a creative solution to your department's budgetary shortfall. Your team has a series of information sharing and analysis sessions in which creative thinking is encouraged. The final solution incorporates all perspectives and inputs.
- Your client requires a new design to a complex problem. Your team must use all the skills and expertise available to create a novel and unique solution.

Dominating	Integrating **82**
Compromising	
Avoiding	Accommodating
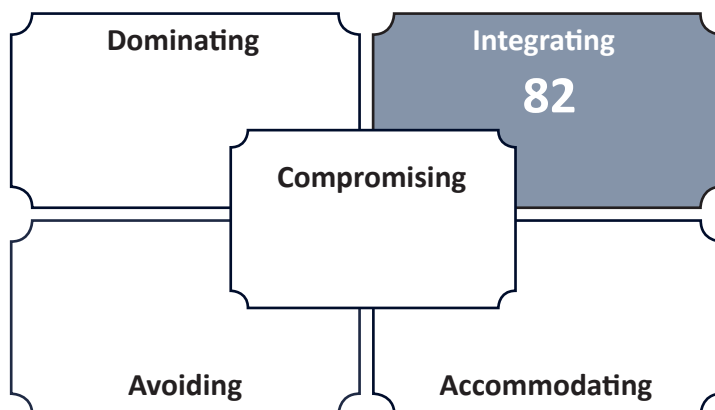
Your score on this style is: High

This style is considered a "problem solving" style because the individual seeks to find a solution that fully satisfies both parties. Integrating consists of all parties sharing their ideas openly, and working to find an effective resolution. **The objective is to learn from, and merge ideas and perspectives of all group members.** You usually have to push harder to be truly integrative, which requires time, energy, and commitment from everyone involved.

You may often find yourself making an effort to incorporate ideas from all group members to generate truly new insights. This may help bolster commitment to the solution and increase the satisfaction of others involved. But sometimes others may disengage or become upset as you continue the search for optimal solutions. When you sense this happening, work to creating a safe environment for others to voice their concerns. As this style requires time to consider all perspectives, it may not be beneficial to use this style when under high time pressure. It may also be difficult when others seem to feel the issue is sufficiently resolved even though you don't know if the best integration has been achieved. Use your judgment to decide if the issue is important enough to push harder for integration, otherwise try a different style.

Ideal uses:

- When the issue is more important to the other person, and you wish to receive reciprocated cooperation in the future.

- When the other person is correct, and you are not the expert.

- In order to avoid prolonged conflict over trivial issues.

- When you are not the expert.

Examples:

- You have been regularly experiencing conflict with a coworker because you have opposing perspectives on how projects should be completed. The issue being raised in the current project relates more strongly to your coworkers' expertise, and thus, you embrace their idea on how to resolve the issue.

- Your team is discussing upcoming renovation projects, and you and your coworker disagree on when the major renovations should take place. You support your coworker's idea in the end because they brought up points that did not occur to you before, and their solution would be more ideal for your department.

Dominating	Integrating
Compromising	
Avoiding	**20** Accommodating
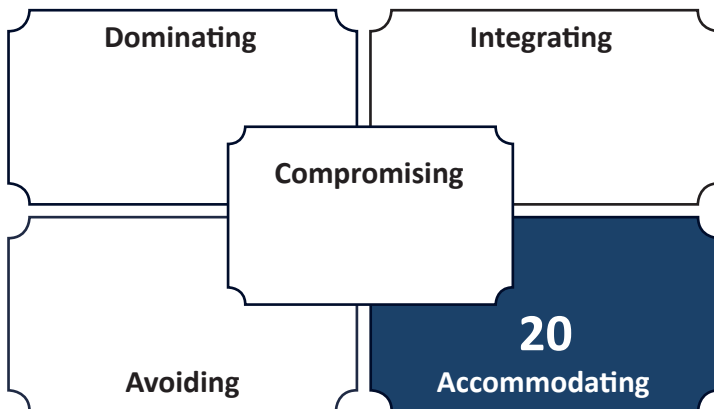
Your score on this style is: Low

This style involves the individual putting the needs of other parties before his/her own. **The objective is to consider others' input and embrace their ideas.**

You may rarely find yourself trying to please other group members. Sometimes others may have more knowledge or be more invested in the issue, so try to use the accommodating style to include them in the decision making process. Also consider using this style when dealing with more trivial conflicts.

Ideal uses:

- When both parties are mutually exclusive or equally powerful.

- When a quick, temporary solution is needed to solve a problem.

- When other styles have proven to be ineffective.

- When a better solution is unclear and not necessary.

Examples:

- You and your coworker are under time pressure to plan a teambuilding event. You and your coworker have conflicting ideas about the best activity. You compromise by suggesting a third activity that is satisfactory for both of you, although it was not the first choice for either of you.

- You and your team are tasked with creating ads for your company's new product. You want to spend more of the remaining time creating and editing the content for the ad, whereas your coworker would like the team to spend more time on polishing the aesthetics. You compromise by allowing the remaining time to be evenly split between the content and aesthetics.

Dominating	Integrating
Compromising **81**	
Avoiding	Accommodating
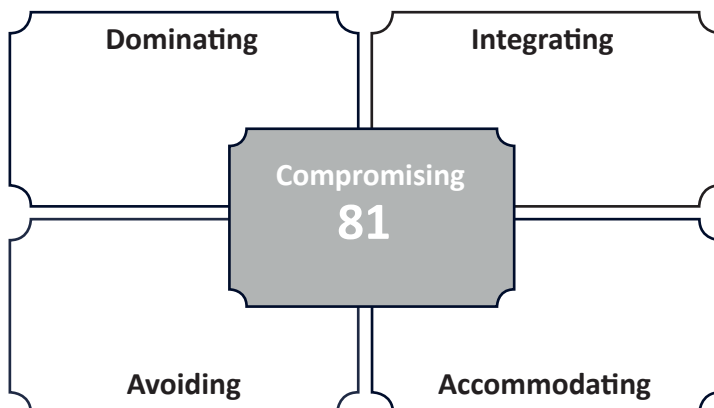
Your score on this style is: High

This style involves both parties giving up something in order to come to a mutually acceptable decision. **The objective is to come up with a solution that is acceptable to all parties involved.**

You often find yourself trying to find a middle-ground solution when faced with conflict situations. This style is effective when all parties involved are willing to be cooperative and it is useful for showing you care about involving everyone's positions. However, make sure you carefully consider whether anyone is giving up something they might later regret as that will result of an ineffective resolution. If there is no time pressure involved, try adopting an integrating style to manage the conflict, which would mean finding a better and more creative solution.
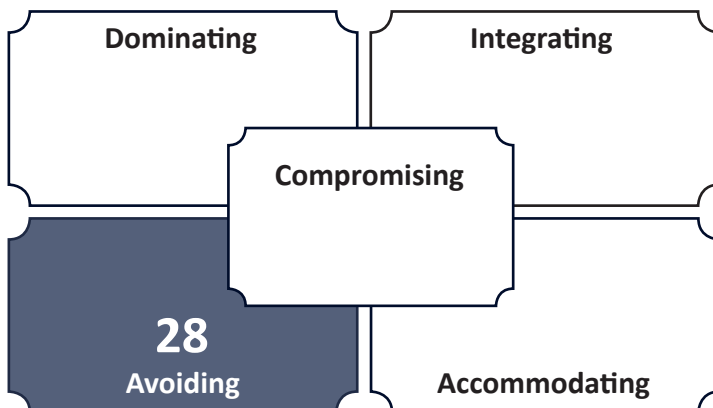
AVOIDING

Ideal uses:

- When confronting the other party would lead to negative effects, which outweigh any benefits of finding a solution.
- When dealing with minor or trivial issues.
- When a cooling off period is necessary before attempting to resolve the conflict.
- The risks of confronting the situation are high and costly.

Examples:

- Your team is working together to pitch a new idea to the CEO. The stakes are high, and it is vital for your team to work together. Your coworker has been making inappropriate comments, and is getting on your nerves. However, as your coworker is completing his/her tasks effectively, you choose to avoid the conflict so your team can focus on completing the project.
- You and your coworker have differing perspectives on the main solution to cutting costs in your department. You get into a heated debate, and you choose to avoid this conflict by withdrawing and discussing at a later time. This allows both of you to cool off before attempting to discuss the issue again.

Dominating	Integrating
Compromising	
28 Avoiding	Accommodating

Your score on this style is: Low

This style can fail to satisfy the needs of either party, although avoiding a volatile and escalating situation is necessary at times. **The objective is to avoid the conflict entirely.**

You are more willing to deal with conflict situations than most and may rarely try to put off dealing with issues. Consider using the avoiding style in situations where the issue is less important to you. In some situations, it may be beneficial to step back avoid a conflict that has little importance to you or that would help show compromise.

Ideal uses:

- If the problem is important to you and the issue affects you significantly more than the others.

- If the decision is routine, or needs to be made in a timely matter.

- When you have the most expertise.

- When you are the leader, and the team cannot come to a resolution.

Examples:

- You are assigned the role of project manager once again due to your experience. You and some members have disagreements on how to best plan the project. You decide to insist on using your approach, because you know from experience the other options are not viable.

- You have been recently promoted and you now have direct reports who were formerly your equals. Although it may be difficult at first, you must use the dominating style for dealing with conflicts when the team can't agree on a final decision.

Dominating 77	Integrating
Compromising	
Avoiding	Accommodating
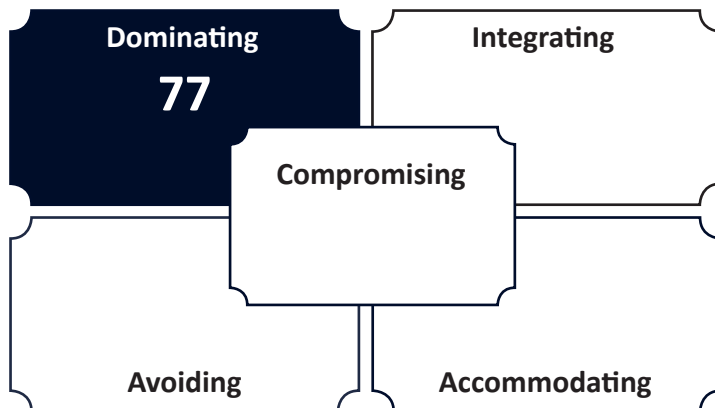
Your score on this style is: High

This style consists of persuading or forceful behavior in order to satisfy your own needs, at the expense of the other party. **The objective is to get your idea accepted by the other parties.**

You may often find yourself pushing hard for your ideas and sometimes this might be at the expense of those contributed by others. You're not afraid to use your power and influence to achieve your own ends. Be aware that you may be overlooking other group members' preferences or needs, which may have a negative impact on your relationships and those you're trying to motivate. When you feel very strongly that your approach is critical and that another approach would have very negative consequences, and when you have influence or power, dominance is effective. But try mixing in other conflict management styles, such as incorporating others' opinions and insights into decision-making so they feel valued and appreciated.

How to Improve

- Reflect on your results, and identify one to three areas where you could take action to improve the outcome of your conflict management experiences with others.

- Take the time to set goals for yourself using the following framework below.

- Think about the information you have learned about yourself and the self-awareness you've gained.

- Think about your team members, and others you may have conflicts with.

- Think about your current use of conflict management styles and how this will affect your ability to succeed and be satisfied. Can the way you currently handle conflict help or hinder your progress?

Smart Goals

Setting smart goals allows you to track your progress more effectively than setting vague goals, or not goals at all. Smart goals require you to consider five components:

Be Specific. "What is my goal specifically?"

Make it Measureable. "How will I measure my progress?"

Create an Action plan. "What steps will I take to achieve my goal?"

Make it Realistic. "Is my goal attainable?"

Create a Time frame. "How much time is needed, and what is my deadline?"

SMART GOALS

	What is my goal *Specifically* ?	How will I *Measure* my goal ?	What *Actions* are required ?	Is my goal *Realistic* ?	How much *Time* is needed ?
Goal 1					
Goal 2					
Goal 3					

S   M   A   R   T