# **1. The Design Disagreement: Innovation vs. Experience**

### ****Context:****

A civil engineering team is designing a **new earthquake-resistant bridge**. The lead engineer, **John** (American), insists on using a **proven design** that meets safety codes. A younger engineer, **Aisha** (Middle Eastern), argues for a **novel but riskier method** that could make the bridge **lighter and cost-efficient**.

Tensions rise when John **publicly dismisses Aisha’s proposal**, seeing it as **too risky**. Aisha, feeling unheard, starts **withdrawing from discussions** rather than arguing.

### ****Conflict Elements:****

* **Thomas-Kilmann:** Which styles are they currently using, how can they do differently?
* **Constructive Feedback:** How can John constructively give feedback on Aisha’s proposal?
* **Feedback Style (Erin Meyer – Evaluating):**
* **Decision-Making (Erin Meyer – Deciding):**
* **Negotiation Strategy:**
  + How can Aisha gain John’s support while maintaining **respect and credibility**?

### ****Resolution Challenge:****

How can John give **constructive** feedback instead of dismissing ideas? How can Aisha **push for innovation** while respecting John’s leadership?

# **2. The Late Deliverable: Blame Game Between Teams**

### ****Context:****

A **software** and **hardware** team are developing a medical diagnostic device. The software team, led by **Carlos** (Mexican), is **behind schedule**, delaying hardware testing. The hardware team, led by **Anika** (German), is **furious**—they claim Carlos’s team is **unprofessional**.

When Anika directly **confronts Carlos in a meeting**, he sees it as **aggressive and humiliating**. Meanwhile, Carlos tries to **explain the delays indirectly**, which Anika sees as **avoiding responsibility**.

### ****Conflict Elements:****

* **Thomas-Kilmann:** Which styles are they currently using? How can they improve?
* **Constructive feedback? How can Anika portray her fears to Carlos without being aggressive?**
* **Feedback Style (Erin Meyer – Evaluating):**
  + Germany =
  + Mexico =
* **Scheduling (Erin Meyer – Scheduling):**
  + Germany =
  + Mexico =
* **Negotiation Strategy:**
  + Can they realign expectations without damaging their working relationship?

### ****Resolution Challenge:****

How should Anika adjust her **feedback style**? How can Carlos ensure **transparency** while respecting cultural differences?

# **3. The Safety Violation: Field Engineers vs. Office Managers**

### ****Context:****

A multinational team is **installing wind turbines in Brazil**. The **European engineers** insist on strict safety rules, while the **Brazilian engineers** prioritize **speed and adaptability**.

One day, a **Brazilian technician** skips a **safety step** to meet a deadline. A **French project manager, Louis**, **scolds him in front of everyone**, causing resentment.

### ****Conflict Elements:****

* **Thomas-Kilmann:** LouWhich styles are being used, how can they be improved?
* **Constructive feedback:** How can Louis express his safety concerns in a constructive way?
* **Trust (Erin Meyer – Trusting):**
  + France =
  + Brazil =
* **Disagreeing (Erin Meyer – Disagreeing):**
  + France =
  + Brazil =
* **Negotiation Strategy:**
  + Can they balance **safety and efficiency** without alienating workers?

### ****Resolution Challenge:****

How can Louis rebuild **trust** with the Brazilian team?

# **4. The Client Dispute: Shifting Project Requirements**

### ****Context:****

An engineering team is developing a **smart traffic system** for a **Middle Eastern government**. The client keeps **changing the requirements**, causing stress for project manager **Fatima** (Lebanese) and technical lead **Leo** (Australian).

Leo is **frustrated by the lack of fixed goals**, while Fatima believes **flexibility is crucial** for client satisfaction.

### ****Conflict Elements:****

* **Thomas-Kilmann:** What styles are being used and how can they be improved?
* **Constructive Feedback?** How can Leo and Fatima express their frustration to the client in a constructive way?
* **Trust (Erin Meyer – Trusting):**
  + Australia =
  + Middle East =
* **Decision-Making (Erin Meyer – Deciding):**
  + Australia =
  + Middle East =
* **Negotiation Strategy:**
  + Can they set **clear boundaries** with the client?

### ****Resolution Challenge:****

How should Fatima **negotiate flexibility** while keeping the project stable?

# **5. The International Merger: Leadership Clash**

### ****Context:****

A **U.S.-based engineering firm** has merged with a **Japanese robotics company**. The American engineers, led by **Jessica**, are used to **open debates and fast decision-making**, while the Japanese team, led by **Taro**, prefers a **hierarchical approval process**.

In a key project meeting, Jessica expects everyone to **express opinions openly**, but the Japanese engineers remain **silent, waiting for senior management’s guidance**. Jessica sees this as **lack of engagement**, while Taro sees Jessica’s approach as **disrespectful to leadership**.

Tensions rise when Jessica **criticizes the slow decision-making process** in front of the team. Taro feels **embarrassed and offended**, leading to a communication breakdown.

### ****Conflict Elements:****

* **Thomas-Kilmann Model:** What styles are both using? How can they improve?
* **Constructive feedback: How can Jessica express her frustration in a constructive manner?**
* **Feedback Style (Erin Meyer – Evaluating):**
  + U.S. =
  + Japan =
* **Decision-Making (Erin Meyer – Deciding):**
  + U.S. =
  + Japan =
* **Negotiation Strategy:**
  + How can they create a **hybrid decision-making process** that satisfies both teams?

### ****Resolution Challenge:****

How should Jessica modify her **leadership approach**? How can Taro ensure his team’s **opinions are heard**? What **compromise** could be reached?

# **6. The Budget Battle: Professors at War**

### ****Context:****

A **university research lab** has received a major grant to develop **aerospace propulsion systems**. The two lead professors, **Chen** (Chinese) and **Amir** (Middle Eastern), disagree on how to allocate funds.

Chen wants to **invest in AI-powered predictive modeling**, while Amir insists on **sticking to traditional, tested propulsion technologies**. The conflict escalates when Amir publicly **rejects Chen’s budget proposal**, arguing it is **too risky and unnecessary**. Chen, feeling dismissed, starts **excluding Amir from key discussions**.

### ****Conflict Elements:****

* **Thomas-Kilmann Model:** What styles are each using? How can they improve?
* **Constructive Feedback: How can Amir and Chen express their views in a constructive manner?**
* **Decision-Making (Erin Meyer – Deciding):**
  + China =
  + Middle East =
* **Trust (Erin Meyer – Trusting):**
  + China =
  + Middle East =
* **Negotiation Strategy:**
  + Can they divide funds in a way that supports **both innovation and proven methods**?

### ****Resolution Challenge:****

How can Amir provide **constructive** rather than **dismissive** feedback? How can Chen ensure his perspective is valued without **undermining Amir**?

# **7. The Internship Tension: Direct vs. Indirect Feedback**

### ****Context:****

Max, a **German engineering intern**, joins an **Indian automotive company**. He is used to a **low-context, direct communication style**—giving **honest feedback without sugarcoating**. His Indian colleagues, however, prefer an **indirect approach**, often using **politeness and vague phrasing** to avoid confrontation.

When Max openly criticizes a **design flaw** during a team meeting, his Indian colleagues are **offended and embarrassed**. His manager later tells him, "Maybe it would be better if you could be a little more careful in your suggestions." Max is **confused**—he doesn't understand if this is a serious request or a minor comment.

Over time, his **colleagues start avoiding him**, making collaboration difficult.

### ****Conflict Elements:****

* **Thomas-Kilmann Model:** What style are both using? What do they need to change?
* **Constructive feedback: How can Max and his Indian colleagues improve their feedback to make it more constructive?**
* **Feedback Style (Erin Meyer – Evaluating):**
  + Germany =
  + India =
* **Communication (Erin Meyer – Communicating):**
  + Germany =
  + India =
* **Negotiation Strategy:**
  + Can Max **adjust his feedback style** without feeling dishonest?
  + How can his colleagues be more **explicit** in their expectations?

### ****Resolution Challenge:****

How can Max **modify his approach** to ensure his feedback is **well-received**? What strategies can his Indian colleagues use to **bridge the gap**?

# **8. The Ethical Dilemma: Cutting Corners**

### ****Context:****

Elena, a **Russian mechanical engineer**, discovers that a supplier is using **low-quality materials** in a crucial aerospace component. When she reports the issue, her boss, **Sami** (Saudi), tells her, **“Don’t worry about it. These things happen.”**

Elena is alarmed—her professional ethics demand **strict quality control**, but Sami values **flexibility and maintaining supplier relationships** over rigid adherence to rules.

### ****Conflict Elements:****

* **Thomas-Kilmann Model:** Which style are Elena and Sami currently using? What should they both do to achieve a better outcome?
* **Constructive feedback:** How canElena express her concerns in a constructive fashion?
* **Trust (Erin Meyer – Trusting):**
  + Russia =
  + Saudi Arabia =
* **Negotiation Strategy:**
  + Can they find a way to **meet quality standards without damaging supplier relationships**?

### ****Resolution Challenge:****

How should Elena approach **Sami** without causing a major confrontation? How can Sami ensure **compliance without harming business relationships**?

# **9. The Remote Team Conflict: Virtual Miscommunication**

### ****Context:****

A **global engineering team** with members from **China, the U.S., and Brazil** struggles with **virtual communication**. The U.S. team expects **quick responses to emails and direct communication**, but the Chinese team prefers **longer decision-making discussions**, while the Brazilian team is **more flexible with deadlines**.

A misunderstanding arises when **David (U.S.) sends an urgent email** to the **Chinese team**, expecting a same-day reply. The Chinese team doesn’t respond immediately because they prefer **consulting with their manager first**. David sees this as **unprofessional**, while the Chinese engineers feel **pressured and disrespected**.

Meanwhile, the **Brazilian team often misses deadlines**, frustrating David. They see his **strict deadlines as too rigid**, while David sees their **flexibility as irresponsibility**.

### ****Conflict Elements:****

* **Thomas-Kilmann Model:** What styles are each of the team members using?
* **Constructive feedback:** How can David express his frustrations in a constructive way?
* **Scheduling (Erin Meyer – Scheduling):**
  + U.S. =
  + Brazil =
* **Trust (Erin Meyer – Trusting):**
  + U.S. =
  + China =
* **Negotiation Strategy:**
  + Can they find a **compromise on response times**?

### ****Resolution Challenge:****

How can David **adapt his communication style**? How should the Chinese and Brazilian teams **ensure clarity** while keeping their cultural preferences?

# **10. The Manufacturing Dispute: Factory Delays**

### ****Context:****

An **American aerospace company** has outsourced the production of **engine components** to an **Indian manufacturing partner**. The **U.S. project lead, Sarah**, is frustrated by **frequent delays** in the production timeline. She expects **strict adherence to deadlines** and believes delays indicate **poor management**.

The **Indian factory manager, Raj**, explains that his team prioritizes **flexibility** and **problem-solving** over rigid deadlines. When unexpected material shortages occur, they adjust the schedule **to maintain quality** rather than rushing production.

Tensions escalate when Sarah **sends a strongly worded email demanding on-time delivery**. Raj sees this as **disrespectful and overly aggressive**, while Sarah sees Raj’s **lack of immediate response as avoidance**.

### ****Conflict Elements:****

* **Thomas-Kilmann Model:** Which conflict management styles are both using and how can they be improved?
* **Constructive feedback :** How can Sarah express her concerns in a more constructive manner?
* **Scheduling (Erin Meyer – Scheduling):**
  + U.S. =
  + India =
* **Feedback Style (Erin Meyer – Evaluating):**
  + U.S. =
  + India =
* **Trust (Erin Meyer – Trusting):**
  + U.S. =
  + India =
* **Negotiation Strategy:**
  + Can they develop a **compromise on scheduling and communication**?
  + How can Sarah communicate **urgency without damaging the relationship**?

### ****Resolution Challenge:****

How can Sarah **adapt her communication style** to **motivate Raj’s team** without being seen as overly demanding? How can Raj ensure **better transparency** while still allowing flexibility?