

A/ ASSIGNMENT RECAP

- Write a **2,000 word** (+/- 10%) business report **in the role of an HR consultant** for a **medium-sized company** without conflict resolution policies.
- Provide **recommendations** on **managing workplace conflict**.
- The report should address 3 key questions:
 - **The role of HR, unions, and stakeholders** in conflict resolution
 - **Recommendations** for managing and resolving workplace conflict
- At least **12 scholarly references** and apply RMIT's Harvard referencing style.

Suggested structure:

Executive Summary

- I. Introduction**
- II. The role of HR, line managers and unions**
 - A. The role of HR**
 - B. The role of line managers**
 - C. The role of Unions**
- III. Environmental issues in workplace conflict resolution**
 - A. Legal issue - loophole in arbitration terms**
 - B. Social issue - Gender role**
 - C. Cultural issue - Uncertainty Avoidance**
 - D. Economic issue - Inflation**
- IV. How conflict should be managed and resolved in the workplace?**
 - A. Integrated Conflict Management System (ICMS)**
 - B. Recommendation**
- V. Conclusion**
- VI. Reference List**

B/ KEYWORD EXPLANATIONS

1. **Conflict resolution** - The methods and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of conflict.
2. **Stakeholders** - Individuals or groups with an interest or concern in an organization's activities.
3. **Unions** - Organizations that represent the collective interests of workers.
4. **Workplace conflict** - Disagreements, differences of opinion, or hostile interactions between workplace participants.
5. **Negotiation** - A discussion among parties intended to produce an agreement mutually acceptable to all.
6. **Mediation** - An attempt to bring about a peaceful settlement between disputants through the objective intervention of a neutral party.
7. **Arbitration** - The hearing and determination of a dispute by an impartial referee agreed to by both parties.
8. **Collective bargaining** - Negotiations between an employer and a group of employees aimed at reaching an agreement regulating working conditions.
9. **Industrial action** - Organized refusal by employees to work under their current conditions, meant to force an employer into granting concessions.

10. **Picketing** - The standing or marching near an employer's workplace by striking workers, meant to persuade or coerce employees to join the strike.
11. **Lockout** - An employer's exclusion of employees from the workplace, meant to pressure them into accepting contractual changes.
12. **Injunction** - A court order requiring a party to do or refrain from doing specific acts.
13. **Unfair labor/industrial practice** - Actions by unions or employers prohibited by labor relations legislation.
14. **Due process** - Fair and proper procedures that respect all legal rights when tackling a workplace issue.
15. **Natural justice** - Making decisions untainted by bias, only based on relevant evidence, with a fair hearing.
16. **Procedural fairness** - Applying due process and natural justice when exercising authority over individuals.
17. **Substantive fairness** - Reasonable and just decisions, focused on equity rather than formal procedure.
18. **Unconscious bias** - Prejudice unwittingly affecting understanding, actions and decisions towards others.
19. **Diversity** - Accepting and respecting the characteristics that make individuals different from one another.
20. **Inclusion** - Ensuring all individuals feel valued and respected while having access to equal opportunities.
21. **Cultural awareness** - Sensitivity toward and understanding of cultural differences.
22. **Dispute systems design** - Creating an integrated conflict management system matching an organization's culture and strategic goals.
23. **Power imbalance** - A significant inequality in authority, control or influence between parties.
24. **Toxic culture** - An unhealthy, unproductive organizational culture that condones bad behavior.
25. **Conflict coaching** - Guiding individuals to constructively handle workplace disputes on their own.
26. **Ombudsperson** - An independent, impartial resource providing confidential assistance with conflict resolution.
27. **Peer review** - A form of arbitration where cases are handled by a panel of employees elected by their peers.
28. **Managerial prerogative** - Management's exclusive right to exercise control in the workplace.
29. **Protected industrial action** - Lawful strikes and other forms of industrial action afforded legal protection against retaliation.
30. **Cooling off period** - A period of time when industrial action is suspended to facilitate further negotiations.
31. **Secret ballot** - A private vote held by a union to determine whether to approve industrial action.
32. **Strike pay** - Compensation to striking workers to help cover living expenses during a strike.
33. **Essential services** - Public services like healthcare and policing where industrial action is restricted by law.
34. **Secondary boycott** - Attempting to influence one business by exerting pressure on another with ties to it.
35. **Pattern bargaining** - Using an existing collective agreement as a template for negotiating agreements with other employers.

C/ DETAILED OUTLINE

● Executive Summary

- ❖ Outcome: Summarizes report findings

- **Introduce the Focus on Conflict Management in HR (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Begin by stating the main focus of the summary, which is the strategic approach to conflict management in HR.*
 - **Example:** *"This executive summary focuses on the Human Resources (HR) department's efforts to develop a more strategic approach to conflict management, aligning closely with the company's overall objectives and providing essential support to managers."*
- **Discuss the Role of Line Managers and Trade Unions (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Explain the roles of line managers and trade unions in conflict resolution.*
 - **Example:** *"Line managers play a crucial role in resolving conflicts informally and promptly, while trade unions tend to support their members in legal claims, highlighting different approaches to conflict resolution within the organization."*
- **Highlight Limitations in Current Arbitration Terms (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Mention the existing gaps or limitations in the arbitration process.*
 - **Example:** *"Despite these efforts, there are notable loopholes in the arbitration terms that often prevent conflicts from being conclusively resolved, indicating a need for more effective strategies."*
- **Discuss the Influence of Gender Roles and Uncertainty Avoidance (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Describe how gender roles and uncertainty avoidance can impact conflict resolution styles.*
 - **Example:** *"Factors such as gender roles and the level of uncertainty avoidance significantly influence conflict resolution styles, affecting how conflicts are approached and managed within the organization."*
- **Mention the Economic Impact on Conflict Resolution (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Explain how economic factors like inflation affect conflict resolution, especially regarding external mediation and litigation.*
 - **Example:** *"Economic changes, particularly inflation, pose financial challenges for employers in hiring external mediators and facing litigation, adding another layer of complexity to conflict management."*
- **Recommend an Integrated Conflict Management System (ICMS) (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Conclude by recommending the implementation of an ICMS.*
 - **Example:** *"To address these challenges comprehensively, the adoption of an Integrated Conflict Management System (ICMS) is recommended. This system combines rights-based and interest-based approaches, providing a cohesive framework for conflict resolution rather than relying on isolated instruments."*

● Introduction

- ❖ **Outcome:** Define the key concepts and state the focus, objectives and structure of the report.

- **Introduce the Concept of Workplace Conflict (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Begin by stating the prevalence and inevitability of conflict in the workplace.*
 - **Example:** *"Conflict is an inevitable aspect of the workplace, often arising from differences in perspectives, goals, and interests among employees ([Nash and Hann 2020](#))."*
 - **Define Conflict Management (1-2 sentences):** *Explain what conflict management entails.*
 - **Example:** *"Conflict management involves the strategies and processes used to address and resolve these incompatibilities and disputes, aiming to mitigate their negative impacts on the workplace."*
- **Discuss the Consequences of Mismanagement of Conflicts (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Highlight the importance of proper conflict management.*
 - **Example:** *"Improper handling of workplace conflicts can lead to a misdirection of energy, exacerbate communication issues, and result in missed opportunities, underscoring the need for effective conflict resolution ([Saundry et al. 2021](#))."*
- **Outline the Report's Objectives (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Clearly state the objectives and structure of the report.*
 - **Example:** *"This report aims to (1) critically analyze the roles of HR, unions, and line managers in resolving workplace conflicts; (2) identify the legal, social, cultural, and economic challenges managers face in conflict resolution; and (3) provide recommendations for effective conflict management and resolution in the workplace."*

● **The Role of HR, Line Managers, and Unions**

- ❖ **Outcome: Analyze the roles of HR, line managers, and unions in resolving workplace conflicts.**
- **The Role of HR**
 - **Traditional Role of HR in Conflict Management (1-2 sentences):** *Begin by describing the historical role of HR in conflict management.*
 - **Example:** *"Historically, HR managers were primarily interventionists in conflict management, often stepping in to manage or resolve conflicts. This reactive approach was frequently seen as 'firefighting' ([Currie et al. 2017](#))."*
 - **Recent Advances in HR's Role (1-2 sentences):** *Discuss recent changes in the role of HR professionals in conflict resolution.*
 - **Example:** *"In recent years, there have been two notable shifts in HR's role in conflict resolution. Firstly, HR departments have been developing a more strategic approach closely aligned with the company's objectives. Secondly, they are increasingly offering arm's length advisory services, empowering managers to address challenging issues directly ([Podgorodnichenko et al. 2020](#))."*

- **Explain the Variability in HR's Effectiveness (1-2 sentences):** *Highlight how the effectiveness of HR in conflict management varies across organizations.*
 - **Example:** *"The effectiveness of HR in stepping back from operational conflict management varies widely among organizations. In some cases, managers' lack of confidence or capability leads to continued reliance on HR personnel for conflict resolution ([Van Gambreg and Teicher 2006](#))."*
- **Discuss HR's Continued Vital Role (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Describe the ongoing important roles of HR professionals.*
 - **Example:** *"Despite these changes, HR professionals continue to play a crucial role in developing, maintaining, and ensuring the consistent implementation of workplace policies. They are also often sought for specialized advice on employment law ([Walker 2011](#))."*
- **Elaborate on HR's Role in Coaching and Liaison (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Detail HR's contribution to coaching managers and liaising with unions.*
 - **Example:** *"HR professionals contribute significantly by coaching and mentoring managers during contentious issues and acting as liaisons between managers and union representatives in unionized organizations ([Saundry et al. 2021](#))."*
- **Discuss the Importance of Communication in Conflict Resolution (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Explain the role of regular discussions and informal conversations in conflict resolution.*
 - **Example:** *"Regular dialogues between employment relations specialists and union representatives can help identify potential disputes, while informal 'off-the-record' conversations often lead to finding amicable settlements ([Currie et al. 2017](#))."*

○ **The Role of Line Managers**

- **Introduce the Role of Line Managers in Conflict Resolution (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Begin by stating the importance of line managers in resolving workplace disputes.*
 - **Example:** *"Line managers play a critical role in conflict resolution within the workplace. Their day-to-day engagement with employees places them in an ideal position to act as problem-solvers in disputes ([Teague 2012](#))."* - [Line managers and workplace conflict - John Purcell](#)
- **Explain the Approach of Line Managers to Conflict Resolution (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Describe how line managers typically handle conflicts.*
 - **Example:** *"Ideally, line managers aim to resolve issues informally and quickly, close to the point of origin, striving to achieve resolutions that satisfy all parties involved ([Teague 2012](#))."*
- **Discuss the Relationship between HR and Line Managers (1-2 sentences):**

- Highlight how the role of HR specialists is related to the capabilities of line managers.
- **Example:** "The ability of HR specialists to adopt a more consultative, arm's-length role is contingent upon the skills and confidence of line managers in managing conflicts ([Bennet et al. 2020](#))."
- **Reflect on the Challenges Faced by Line Managers (1-2 sentences):**
 - Mention the difficulties line managers face in conflict management.
 - **Example:** "Despite their pivotal role, line managers often find conflict management and conducting difficult conversations challenging, as indicated by CIPD (2013) findings."
- **Describe Line Managers' Informal Approach to Disagreements (1-2 sentences):**
 - Elaborate on the informal and intuitive methods used by line managers.
 - **Example:** "Traditionally, line managers have tended to handle disagreements informally, relying on intuition rather than strictly adhering to formal procedures, which sometimes leads to operational flexibility ([Bennet et al. 2020](#))."
- **Discuss the Potential Risks of Line Managers' Approach (1-2 sentences):**
 - Explain the risks associated with giving too much discretion to line managers.
 - **Example:** "While flexibility is necessary, granting excessive discretion to managers can open the door to favoritism, discrimination, and potential violations of organizational policies and procedures ([Roper and Higgins 2020](#))."
- **The Role of Unions**
 - **Introduce the Role of Employee Representatives in Dispute Resolution (1-2 sentences):**
 - Begin by highlighting the importance of employee representatives, such as trade unions, in resolving workplace conflicts.
 - **Example:** "Employee representatives, particularly trade unions, play a pivotal role in the resolution of workplace disputes, acting as a critical interface between employees and management."
 - **Discuss the Impact of Reduced Union Organization (1-2 sentences):**
 - Mention the consequences of the decline in union organization on workplace disputes.
 - **Example:** "The decline in union organization has led to a decrease in collective strike actions but has conversely influenced an increase in employment tribunal petitions, indicating a shift in how workplace disputes are addressed ([Van Grambreg et al. 2020](#))."
 - **Explain the Tendency of Unions to Challenge Management (1-2 sentences):**

- *Describe how unions typically interact with management in dispute situations.*
- **Example:** *"In unionized organizations, trade unions often challenge management decisions and are inclined to protect their members, either by preventing disciplinary actions or by assisting in legal claims ([Chaundhry et al. 2022](#))."*
- **Describe the Constructive Role of Union Representatives (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Discuss how union representatives can constructively contribute to conflict resolution.*
 - **Example:** *"Union representatives can play a significant role in constructively resolving conflicts. They manage member expectations, clarify the consequences of disputes, and collaborate with management to address issues and avoid punitive measures (Saundry et al. 2008)."*
- **Highlight Managers' Views on Union Representatives (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Reflect on how managers in unionized organizations perceive the role of union representatives.*
 - **Example:** *"Managers in unionized organizations often appreciate the role of union representatives in identifying problems and exploring potential solutions, which is crucial for effective conflict resolution ([Saundry and Wibberley 2014](#))."*
- **Discuss the Impact of Employer-Union Relationships (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Explain how the strength of the employer-union relationship affects conflict resolution.*
 - **Example:** *"The effectiveness of unions in managing disputes also depends on the strength of the employer-union relationship. Positive relationships can create a virtuous cycle where mutual trust enables informal issue handling, thereby strengthening working relationships and leading to more constructive outcomes ([Chaundhry et al. 2022](#))."*

● **Environmental Issues in Workplace Conflict**

- ❖ **Outcome:** Discuss legal, social, cultural, and economic challenges managers face in conflict resolution.

● Suggested outline to resolve each point of the 'Environmental Issues in Workplace Conflict' part

- **Introduce the Concept** (1-2 sentences):
 - Start by defining the key concept related to the issue and explaining its role or influence on conflict resolution.
- **Expand on the Details** (1-2 sentences):

- Provide more details on the specific aspects or factors related to the concept that impact approaches to conflict resolution.
- **Describe the Link to Conflict Resolution Approaches** (1-2 sentences):
 - Discuss how the key concept or factors connect to certain conflict management styles or strategies adopted by parties involved in disputes.
- **Provide Specific Examples** (1-2 sentences):
 - Use a specific example or scenario to illustrate the concept's effect on behaviors and actions taken during conflict resolution processes.
- **Highlight Communication and Relationship Impacts** (1-2 sentences):
 - Explain how differences in the key concept can lead to issues with communication, relationships, perceptions of appropriateness, or overall social dynamics during conflict situations.
- **Conclude with Reflection** (1-2 sentences):
 - Wrap up by reflecting on how variances or influences related to the key concept can ultimately impact the process and outcomes when resolving workplace conflicts.

○ Legal issue - *Chosen Loophole in Arbitration Terms

Legal Issues

- Review company policies and procedures around conflict resolution - a lack of clear processes points to a legal gap.
- Look for ambiguity in contracts around arbitration terms, mediation guidelines, etc. which can hinder dispute resolution.
- Analyze past lawsuits or complaints - recurring issues indicate unresolved legal problems.
- Example: High rate of lawsuits related to unfair dismissal highlights loopholes in at-will employment clauses.

■ Introduce the Concept of Arbitration in Conflict Resolution (1-2 sentences):

- *Begin by explaining the role of arbitration when conflicts can't be resolved internally.*
- **Example:** *"In situations where workplace conflicts remain unresolved, arbitration often serves as a fallback mechanism. However, in some jurisdictions, the arbitration process is hampered by significant loopholes that impede the resolution of these conflicts."*

■ Discuss Specific Legal Loopholes in Arbitration (1-2 sentences):

- *Describe the nature of the legal loopholes in arbitration terms, using a specific example.*
- **Example:** *"For instance, in Australia, the Fair Work Act allows for arbitration in conflicts, but only if both employer and employee agree. This implies that without mutual consent, the Fair Work Act lacks the authority to enforce arbitration, as highlighted by [Spencer et al. \(2019\)](#)."*

- **Explain the Flexibility in Bargaining Dispute Settlement Terms (1-2 sentences):**
 - Discuss how parties in agreements have the freedom to negotiate dispute settlement terms.
 - ***Example:** "Parties involved in agreements are at liberty to negotiate their own dispute settlement terms. This includes deciding whether to include final arbitration as part of the dispute resolution process."*
- **Highlight Government Stance on Arbitration (1-2 sentences):**
 - Mention the government's stance on arbitration in certain cases.
 - ***Example:** "In some scenarios, like in standard dispute resolution terms for business agreements and federal public contracts, the government tends to support mandatory arbitration, barring the negotiated dispute resolution terms in agreements ([Forsyth 2012](#))."*
- **Discuss the Public Policy Implications (1-2 sentences):**
 - Reflect on the implications of these legal loopholes from a public policy perspective.
 - ***Example:** "From a public policy viewpoint, the lack of a definitive endpoint in effective dispute resolution is problematic. Terms that only offer arbitration as an option, or do not offer it at all, can result in some conflicts never being fully resolved ([Forsyth 2012](#))."*

○ **Social Issue – *Chosen Gender Role**

Social Issues

- Examine demographic data and representation at different levels - large disparities indicate potential bias.
- Survey employee perceptions around psychological safety, trust in leadership, and belonging.
- Assess whether identities like gender, ethnicity, age etc. correlate to differences in employee satisfaction.
- Example: White employees 20% more likely to get promoted than ethnic minorities signals subtle discrimination.

- **Introduce the Concept of Gender Role in Conflict Resolution (1-2 sentences):**
 - Start by explaining the influence of gender roles on conflict resolution styles.
 - ***Example:** "Gender roles, which encompass one's personal identification as masculine, feminine, both, or neither, significantly influence conflict resolution styles in the workplace ([Bordean et al. 2020](#))."*
- **Define Gender Role and Its Influences (1-2 sentences):**
 - Elaborate on what constitutes gender roles and their determining factors.

- **Example:** "Gender role refers to how individuals perceive themselves mentally, regardless of their biological sex, and is shaped by both genetic and environmental factors ([Gbadamosi 2014](#))."
- **Discuss the Link Between Masculinity and Conflict Management (1-2 sentences):**
 - Explain how masculine traits align with certain conflict management approaches.
 - **Example:** "Individuals with masculine orientations tend to correlate with competitive conflict management styles, asserting their interests more aggressively in disputes ([Gbadamosi 2014](#))."
- **Describe Feminine Individuals' Approach to Conflict (1-2 sentences):**
 - Discuss how feminine traits influence conflict management styles.
 - **Example:** "Conversely, feminine individuals often lean towards avoiding conflict management styles, potentially stemming from a reluctance to confront issues related to personal interests ([Gbadamosi 2014](#))."
- **Illustrate the Implications of Feminine Conflict Management Styles (1-2 sentences):**
 - Provide specific examples or implications of feminine approaches to conflict.
 - **Example:** "For instance, those with a feminine orientation might hesitate to assert themselves in conflicts, especially when it involves bargaining for their own interests. This can place them at a disadvantage, as their needs and interests may not be fully represented in the conflict resolution process ([Bordean et al. 2020](#))."
- **Discuss the Consequences of Gender Role in Workplace Conflicts (1-2 sentences):**
 - Reflect on how gender roles impact the resolution and overall workplace dynamics.
 - **Example:** "This tendency can lead to conflicts being resolved in a less comprehensive manner, potentially affecting job satisfaction and organizational commitment, as the concerns of all parties are not equally addressed ([Bordean et al. 2020](#))."
- **Cultural issue – *Chosen Uncertainty Avoidance**

Cultural Issues

- Classify various national cultures represented using models like Hofstede - differences could impact disputes.
- Interview employees to understand culturally-linked values around confrontation, harmony etc.
- Review past conflicts - grievances over issues like workplace etiquette reveal culture clashes.
- Example: German direct style of feedback frustrates indirect Chinese communication norms.

- **Introduce the Concept of Uncertainty Avoidance (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Start by defining uncertainty avoidance in a cultural context.*
 - **Example:** *"Uncertainty avoidance refers to the extent to which individuals in a society are uncomfortable with ambiguous or uncertain situations. This cultural dimension significantly influences how people approach and manage conflicts."*
- **Discuss High Uncertainty Avoidance Societies and Conflict (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Explain how high uncertainty avoidance impacts conflict resolution styles.*
 - **Example:** *"In societies with high uncertainty avoidance, such as Japan, Germany, and Mexico, individuals tend to avoid conflict situations. They prefer more accommodating approaches, prioritizing the interests of others due to their heightened concern for maintaining harmony ([Gunkel 2016](#))."*
- **Explain the Behavior in Low Uncertainty Avoidance Societies (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Describe how low uncertainty avoidance affects conflict management.*
 - **Example:** *"Conversely, in low uncertainty avoidance cultures, people are more comfortable with ambiguity and less reliant on strict rules. They often exhibit a dominant style, engaging in confrontational behavior while potentially disregarding the needs and interests of others (Rahim 1983)."*
- **Discuss the Impact on Relationships and Communication (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Highlight how these cultural differences can impact relationships and communication during conflicts.*
 - **Example:** *"This cultural variance leads to different approaches to conflict resolution. In high uncertainty avoidance cultures, careful and polite communication is valued to prevent offense. In contrast, low uncertainty avoidance cultures might engage in public disagreement and confrontation, which can be seen as offensive and potentially damage relationships ([Gunkel 2016](#))."*
- **Reflect on the Consequences of Cultural Differences in Conflict (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Conclude with a reflection on how these cultural differences affect conflict resolution outcomes.*
 - **Example:** *"These cultural distinctions in uncertainty avoidance can exert pressure in conflict situations, leading to differing perceptions of appropriateness in conflict resolution and affecting the overall outcome and preservation of relationships."*

○ **Economic issue - *Chosen Inflation**

Economic Issues

- Track conflict resolution spending year-over-year - sudden unexplained spikes indicate a problem area.
- Compare employee retention stats before and after budget cuts to mediation/counseling initiatives.
- Audit utilization of conflict support resources - low engagement signals barriers like inadequate access.
- Example: Spike in employees leaving after ombudsman office reduced hours shows underinvestment in conflict resolution.

■ Introduce the Impact of Formal Conflict Resolution Procedures (1-2 sentences):

- *Start by discussing the financial implications of formal conflict resolution procedures.*
- ***Example:*** *"In workplace conflict resolution, formal procedures, often lengthy and contentious, can impose significant financial burdens on employers, a situation exacerbated by inflation. These costs include hiring external mediators and legal expenses associated with litigation."*

■ Discuss Employer Strategies During Inflation (1-2 sentences):

- *Explain how employers respond to the financial burden of conflict resolution during inflation.*
- ***Example:*** *"During periods of inflation, employers, to minimize costs, may opt to appoint an internal employee to manage conflicts rather than engage external professionals, as indicated by [Cutler \(1988\)](#)."*

■ Describe the Use of Professional Mediators (1-2 sentences):

- *Talk about the role of professional mediators in conflict resolution, especially in medium-sized enterprises.*
- ***Example:*** *"In medium-sized enterprises without established conflict resolution policies, hiring professional mediators for employee and manager disputes becomes a necessary, albeit costly, approach ([Cutler 1988](#))."*

■ Explain the Escalation to Legal Counsel (1-2 sentences):

- *Discuss the escalation of unresolved conflicts to external legal counsel.*
- ***Example:*** *"When internal resolution fails, employees may seek external legal counsel, compelling the business to face expensive lawsuits or agree to costly settlements ([Powell and Maoz 2014](#))."*

■ Reflect on the Financial Consequences for Employers (1-2 sentences):

- *Highlight the potential financial repercussions for employers.*
- ***Example:*** *"Lawsuits resolved in favor of employees can result in substantial financial penalties for employers, placing a considerable strain on their resources, particularly during inflationary periods ([Powell and Maoz 2014](#))."*

■ **Discuss the Challenges for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (1-2 sentences):**

- *Conclude by reflecting on the specific challenges faced by smaller companies.*
- ***Example:*** "Small and medium-sized enterprises face many of the same conflict resolution challenges as larger companies but often lack the extensive resources and larger budgets to manage these effectively ([Powell and Maoz 2014](#))."

● **How should conflict be managed and resolved in the workplace?**

❖ **Outcome:** Explain the integrated conflict management system (ICMS) and provide recommendations for effective conflict management.

○ **Integrated Conflict Management System (ICMS)**

■ **Introduce the Concept of ICMS (1-2 sentences):**

- *Start by explaining the increasing interest in alternative conflict management methods like ICMS.*
- ***Example:*** "Amidst growing concerns about workplace conflict and its consequences, there is a heightened interest in alternative conflict management strategies, such as the Integrated Conflict Management System (ICMS)."

TABLE 1
A SUCESSFUL CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS IN 8 STEPS

Stage 1: SIP			Stage 2: DINE		Stage 3: DANCE		
Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8
Select a neutral and suitable location for negotiations.	Identify policy issues for an agenda in the negotiation; select negotiators and the aspirations for individuals, their concerns, and a protocol suited for the types of issues covered.	Prepare preliminary statement and limitation. Determine communication levels clearly. Anticipate areas for mutual understanding, the nature of persuasive arguments, value of others' time, and appreciate cultural values.	Determine areas for deliberation, potential solutions of some issues, and issue with no apparent agreement. Establish bases of trust, recognize risk taking propensity, internal decision-making systems and techniques for persuasion.	Narrow differences to achieve consensus; emphasize common interests, and systematically search for alternatives. Understand limitations of all parties. Use empathy and conflict management techniques.	Direct final negotiations by facilitating a give-and-take bargaining process. Strive for a win-win solution.	Confirm contract terms based on the respective laws of countries involved in the dispute resolution, expectations for agreements, and written documents.	Implement the agreement. Negotiators must be adept at continuous observation, analysis, and evaluation; they must solve problems by adapting the negotiation strategy for the negotiation to be successful.

Sources: [Integrated System Approach to Manage Conflict](#)

- **Explain the Components of ICMS (1-2 sentences):**
 - Describe the elements that make up ICMS, emphasizing the combination of different approaches.
 - **Example:** "ICMS recommends a blend of rights-based approaches, like disciplinary and grievance procedures, and interest-based methods, such as workplace conciliation, integrating these elements cohesively rather than using them in isolation ([Bennet et al. 2020](#))."
- **Discuss the Strategic and Mindset Shift Required for ICMS (1-2 sentences):**
 - Highlight the need for a strategic approach and a shift in organizational mindset.
 - **Example:** "Implementing ICMS requires a strategic approach and a fundamental change in how an organization perceives and addresses workplace conflict ([Gosline et al. 2022](#))."
- **Detail the Attitudinal Shift from Dispute Resolution to Conflict Management (1-2 sentences):**
 - Explain the change in attitude from resolving disputes reactively to managing conflicts proactively.

- **Example:** "As outlined by [Lynch \(2001\)](#), ICMS necessitates shifting from reactive dispute resolution to proactive conflict management, focusing on addressing the root causes of dissatisfaction."
- **Describe the Proactive Nature of ICMS (1-2 sentences):**
 - Elaborate on how ICMS promotes anticipation and early resolution of conflicts.
 - **Example:** "In an ICMS framework, organizations are encouraged to not merely react to conflicts but to anticipate, control, and address them at the earliest possible stage and at the lowest level ([Gosline et al. 2022](#))."
- **Explain the Motivations and Goals Behind ICMS (1-2 sentences):**
 - Discuss the motivations for adopting ICMS, including legal compliance and cost minimization.
 - **Example:** "While the initial push for integrated strategies may stem from crisis response, legal compliance, or cost reduction, they are also driven by the goal of cultural convergence, supporting broader objectives and gaining a competitive advantage ([Williams et al. 2019](#))."
- **Conclude with the Benefits of a Conflict-Competent Culture (1-2 sentences):**
 - Conclude by describing how ICMS fosters a culture where conflicts are safely expressed and addressed.
 - **Example:** "Ultimately, ICMS cultivates a 'conflict-competent culture' where employees feel secure in voicing conflicts, knowing their concerns will be heard, acknowledged, and effectively resolved ([Lynch 2001](#))."
- **Recommendation**
 - **Introduce the Action Plan Based on ICMS Principles (1-2 sentences):**
 - Start by stating the development of an action plan for conflict resolution based on ICMS.
 - **Example:** "Drawing from the principles of the Integrated Conflict Management System (ICMS), an action plan is developed for effectively resolving workplace conflicts."
 - **Detail the Role of HR Managers in the Inquiry Process (1-2 sentences):**
 - Explain the responsibilities of HR managers in investigating conflicts.
 - **Example:** "HR managers play a crucial role in this process, investigating the causes of disagreements and exploring solutions that satisfy all parties involved ([Lynch 2003](#))."
 - **Emphasize the Importance of Identifying Inefficiencies (1-2 sentences):**
 - Highlight the need for managers to identify inefficiencies that lead to conflicts.
 - **Example:** "During this phase, it's essential for managers to pinpoint inefficiencies in existing practices that are likely to lead to conflicts."
 - **Discuss the Need for Organizational Learning and Innovation (1-2 sentences):**
 - Stress the significance of organizational receptiveness to new approaches.

- **Example:** "Organizations open to learning and systematically implementing innovative approaches will be more effective in resolving workplace conflicts ([Gosline et al. 2022](#))."
- **Explain the Decision Process for Mediation and Training (1-2 sentences):**
 - Describe how to determine the necessity of mediation or further training.
 - **Example:** "It's important to assess whether a conflict requires mediation or if it can be addressed through additional training for those involved (Lynch 2003)."
- **Outline the Alternative Approaches if Mediation Fails (1-2 sentences):**
 - Discuss alternative strategies if mediation is insufficient.
 - **Example:** "In cases where mediation is inadequate, managers should be prepared to utilize other techniques, such as early case assessment and peer reviews ([Bennet et al. 2020](#))."
- **Suggest Evaluating the Need for ICMS (1-2 sentences):**
 - Recommend assessing the potential benefit of ICMS implementation.
 - **Example:** "Businesses should evaluate the likelihood of workplace conflicts to determine if implementing an ICMS could contribute positively to their bottom line."
- **Emphasize the Importance of Training (1-2 sentences):**
 - Highlight the need for comprehensive conflict resolution training.
 - **Example:** "Ensuring that team members and managers at all levels are adequately trained and equipped to handle conflicts is crucial ([Williams et al. 2019](#))."
- **Recommend Establishing Conflict Resolution Training (1-2 sentences):**
 - Advise on the establishment of an annual conflict resolution training program.
 - **Example:** "We recommend that businesses establish a conflict resolution training program, with skills that are updated and revised annually, including effective communication, emotional intelligence, and active listening ([Cahn et al. 2014](#))."
- **Discuss the Role of Leadership in Conflict Management (1-2 sentences):**
 - Conclude by discussing how effective leadership can help manage and mitigate conflicts.
 - **Example:** "Properly trained leadership teams, equipped with the necessary tools and approaches, can effectively resolve conflicts with minimal impact on the organization ([Bryant-Smith 2018](#))."
- **Suggest Developing Standard Reporting Procedures (1-2 sentences):**
 - Propose the development of standard procedures for reporting conflicts.
 - **Example:** "Finally, HR should establish a standard operating procedure for reporting disputes, whether through a phone helpline or a direct route to HR or their line manager ([Williams et al. 2019](#))."

● Conclusion

- ❖ **Outcome: Summarize key points on roles of various parties in conflict resolution and emphasize considering environmental factors and implementing ICMS.**
- **Summarize the Role of HR in Conflict Management (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Begin by restating the strategic role of HR in conflict management.*
 - ***Example:*** *"In the realm of conflict management, HR plays a crucial role in developing a strategic approach aligned with the company's goals, while also providing advisory services to managers for handling conflicts."*
- **Mention the Role of Line Managers and Trade Unions (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Highlight the roles of line managers and trade unions in conflict resolution.*
 - ***Example:*** *"Line managers are effectively positioned to promptly and informally resolve issues as they arise. Conversely, trade unions tend to support their members more in legal aspects of conflict resolution."*
- **Discuss the Importance of Considering Environmental Issues (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Emphasize the need for HR managers and negotiators to consider various environmental factors.*
 - ***Example:*** *"HR managers and negotiators must be mindful of environmental issues such as legal loopholes, gender roles, the degree of uncertainty avoidance, and the impacts of inflation when addressing workplace conflicts."*
- **Explain the Benefits of Using ICMS (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Describe the advantages of implementing an Integrated Conflict Management System (ICMS).*
 - ***Example:*** *"Implementing ICMS enables businesses to proactively anticipate, control, and effectively address conflicts at the earliest stage and the lowest level possible."*
- **Conclude with the Concept of a 'Conflict-Competent Culture' (1-2 sentences):**
 - *Conclude by emphasizing the creation of a conflict-competent culture through ICMS.*
 - ***Example:*** *"Adopting ICMS fosters a 'conflict-competent culture' where conflicts are safely expressed and managed, ensuring that employee concerns are not only heard but also acknowledged and addressed."*