

- 0:05 Hi, it's Margaret Maloney. Let's get ready for conflict. Now I know, some of you when you hear the word conflict you don't love it. Some of you feel completely neutral. And some of you are like, yeah, bring it on.
- 0:19 Wherever you come from, as the project manager, you are gonna help lead your team through conflict. And so, with that thought in mind, let's say you've observed a conflict between some of your team members, and you know that you're the right person to help them reach a resolution.
- 0:37 What you do next is all about moving forward and it's all about the how. As in how to move forward, and the optimal scenario is that you're able to prepare in advance. I know that isn't always true, but what we're going to look at right now is if you can think it through in advance, we're going to look at seven steps that you can take that are going to help you prepare. And to set the stage so that you have a successful conflict resolution on your team led by you.
- 1:11 So the first thing, consider the conflicts and identify if you have a vested interest in the outcome.
- 1:20 So, that might sound silly because you're thinking, well, of course I have a vested interest in the outcome. I'm the project manager, I want the conflict resolved, right?
- 1:29 What I mean by this is, do you already know what you want the solution to be? Do you already have an opinion? If so, okay. So, that makes you human.
- 1:40 Be honest with yourself and about your bias, because it is going to impact how you facilitate this resolution.
- 1:49 You also need to consider whether or not you need to tell the other parties involved about your preference. If you are in a position to just make the decision,
- 2:02 then don't have the parties work together and come up with a resolution if you're going to override their decision unless your goal in conflict is to get them to get along together so they can turn on you. Which is an approach, but not one I'm recommending for us today. So because you are able to make a decision, then you don't really need much of a facilitation do you? What you need then is to take charge and make a decision. If this is really the case, that you already know how you want things to be, then just step and say okay, A and B, you're having a dispute or conflict over this approach or how to do the work. And here's how it's going to be, thank you.
- 2:45 Otherwise, of course, then you're going to consider moving on and how are you going to help these two parties resolve their conflicts. So the first step is consider the conflicts, and identify your bias.
- 3:01 Now the second thing. Do you need a formal conflict resolution session with an agenda and ground rules? Or can you call together a couple of people for a more informal discussion over coffee or lunch. And it really depends on the parties involved, right? And the volatility of the situation.
- 3:26 Let people know what is happening and why. If you decide to go with an informal session, you still want to let the parties involved, you want to give them a heads-up.
- 3:39 Here's what you don't want to do.
- 3:43 The two people in conflict arrive at the same, let's say coffee house, at the same time and they didn't know that they were going to be there together and then it turns out you orchestrated the whole thing. You know what they say? Awkward. Tell them in advance. Say, A, I want you to come meet me at the coffee house at 3:00, I've also invited party B.
- 4:07 To party B you say, party B, please come meet me at the coffee house at 3:00, I've also invited party A. So tell them in advance, and identify your role in the situation and say, I'd like us to sit down for coffee, or tea, and discuss the conflict that seems to be in the air.
- 4:28 In a formal situation, you advise people, I am calling us together for a meeting to discuss this current issue that we are working on, and I am the facilitator.
- 4:44 So number four.

- 4:46 For your formal session, set ground rules. Ground rules could be something along the lines of only one person speaks at a time,
- 4:57 nobody talks over the other person.
- 4:59 Speak for yourself only.
- 5:03 Do not make personal attacks. There's no name calling and keep it only about business. Those are some examples of ground rules. You may already have some of these ground rules in existence Step five. Establish or re-establish roles and responsibilities. A lot of conflict is really about turf wars or perceptions that people are overstepping their bounds.
- 5:36 Confirmation of roles and responsibilities can really set the stage for quicker resolution and avoidance of future issues around the same areas. And if it appears to be conflict over who was supposed to be doing something, then make it clear whose job it is. If it is a conflict around who gets to make a decision or have input to something, make it clear. So number five again, establish or reestablish roles and responsibilities.
- 6:11 Six, ask your participants to be honest and state what they want as an outcome.
- 6:20 You can't promise them their outcome will be achieved, you don't want to make any false promises. But you want it out on the table.
- 6:29 What is their expectation? What do they want?
- 6:34 And that right there sometimes helps to expose what I'll call the true nature of the conflict, and helps us move forward with open and honest conversation. So that's number six, ask participants to really honestly say what they want as an outcome.
- 6:52 Number seven, let's remind everyone of the common goal. This might be the project goal. It could be a reminder about making the customer happy, or about the company goal. Remind everyone that we are all here for that common good. Remind everyone of the damage that comes from unresolved conflict.
- 7:18 And of the benefit that comes to teams and individuals who walk through conflict and come out the other end as stronger and better professionals. Because when we do walk through conflict together,
- 7:30 we do come out stronger with better bonds, we become a better team.
- 7:35 So with that thought, you're ready now to dig deeper into the conflict. You've really set the stage for conflict resolution success.
- 7:46 That's part of your role as a project manager and a leader.
- 7:49 Thanks for being here, and bye for now!