

# Electronic Conflict Management Style Preference Estimator (e-CMSPE) Results

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## Introduction

This report displays your score for each of the five conflict management styles<sup>1</sup>, class and population averages, and your percentile rank among the class and the general population. This information will help you identify your leadership strengths and areas for improvement concerning your use of conflict management styles. Gaining an understanding of which styles you prefer can help you become an even more effective leader by capitalizing on your strengths and by focusing on development needs, experiences, assignments and training and educational opportunities to help overcome weaknesses.

## Understanding Your Results: What Does Your Estimate Mean?

The score next to each style indicates the strength of your preference for using that particular style. The higher the number, the stronger your preference.

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Accommodate:	627.67
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Avoid:	635.33
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Collaborate:	836
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Compete:	757.33
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Compromise:	718
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<sup>1</sup> Averages are derived from all users who have taken the e-CMSPE as of the date of this report.

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## Accommodation

This style involves giving sacrificing your own goals, or giving into the wishes of the other party to mitigate or even eliminate the conflict. People who prefer this style use phrases like: "Whatever you want is fine with me."

When you are involved in a conflict situation where you have stake in the outcome, then this style may be appropriate. However, if this style is the only one you utilize, then you would be wise to learn how to use the other styles to become more effective in handling situations involving conflict.

## **Avoidance**

This style involves behaviors that either ignore or refuse to engage in the conflict. Although some consider this a negative style because the people using it demonstrate little or no concern for the interests of the parties involved, including their own. However, there are times when this style is appropriate and/or prudent. For example, it is appropriate when the relationship between parties is short-term or when the issue is not important. It is also appropriate when you need more information or facts to make a decision. It is prudent to use this style when a situation has the potential to escalate to violence.

Some examples of negative avoidance behaviors include:

- Saying the issue isn't important enough to spend time on or to do the topic justice
- Saying things to gloss over differences so they never are discussed
- Focusing on details to the exclusion of the real issues
- Using evasive remarks to avoid sensitive topic or to shift away from a topic
- Joking to distract from the real issues in a conflict

## **Collaboration**

Collaboration or win/win occurs when all parties cooperatively work together until a mutually agreeable solution is found.

## **Competition**

A win/lose style that some consider negative because party using this style solves the problem at the cost of the other party's goals or feelings. However, there are times when this style is appropriate. For example, when you know you are right, or when the stakes are too high and/or the situation too critical and/or the relationship is not important enough to use collaboration.

Some examples of negative competitive behaviors include:

- Lying, concealing one's own goals and/or interests
- Verbal attacks, while pushing one's own agenda
- Being hostile toward other party (or at least pretending to be)

## Compromise

Compromise is a give and take of resources. The classic compromise in negotiating is to "split the difference" between two positions. When using compromise, each person fails to achieve her or his original goal.

Beyond one's overall style for behavior during a conflict, other matters of individual style also affect perceptions during conflicts. For example, we each have a preferred style of thinking (problem-solving, decision-making, and managing change). When there is a cognitive gap between your preferred style and the other person's style, conflict is almost inevitable. Just by becoming aware of your preferred style of conflict management, you have taken a giant step forward in your ability to mitigate or even prevent conflict.

Although differences in style contribute to conflict, so does either party's degree of verbal aggressiveness, listening behaviors, and other nonverbal or linguistic characteristics.

An effective leader is one who prefer collaboration, but also recognizes that timing or conditions may not always allow for collaboration. In these situations, the skillful leader is adept at matching the right style of conflict management to the situation and in a civilized, do not harm manner.

Most people develop a patterned response to conflict based on their interactions with other while growing up. Your patterned response may fit some situations well, but may be ineffective or even destructive in other circumstances. Therefore, the goal of this instrument and corresponding lesson is to increase your awareness of your own patterns to help you recognize that you have choices in how to respond to conflict and, as a result, reflect on and improve your responses. Since each style has a preferred way of interacting with others in conflict, your newfound awareness can greatly assist you in meeting the needs of the people you live and work with (subordinates, peers, supervisors, family, and community).

## Value of Different Conflict Management Styles

No style is ideal in general, as complex problem solving and creative endeavors require a diversity of Conflict Management Styles for success overall.

## Estimating Your Conflict Management Style Preference

The e-CMSPE was developed by Mr. Rich Rafferty and Dr. Stephen Harris at the Barnes Center for Enlisted Education, United States Air Force. It provides only a general estimate of your preferred style of conflict management. A more specific and psychometrically accurate evaluation of your conflict management style preference can be obtained through any number of fee-based instruments. The Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument, which is considered the gold standard is available on a pay-per-use basis.