

## Understanding Conflict: Questions to Answer

When you encounter a conflict on your team, these are the questions that you can investigate and answer to gain a clear understanding on the scope, benefits, and consequences of the conflict. As a manager, you need to think strategically about the best approach to resolve the conflict and by answering these questions, you can develop a thoughtful, well-planned course of action.

- **What is the conflict?** This will help you gain a better understanding on the conflict scenario.
- **Who are the players?** This will help you understand more about who is involved in the conflict.
- **If this conflict is resolved, what are the benefits?** What will you positively gain by resolving the conflict?
- **If this conflict is not resolved, what are the payoffs or benefits for me?** What will you positively gain, if anything, if the conflict is not resolved?
- **If the conflict is not resolved, what harm can follow?** What are the negative consequences if the conflict is not resolved?
- **If this conflict is resolved, will the benefit create a better situation than before the conflict arose?** In other words, is it worth the time and effort to resolve the conflict?
- **Whatever the outcome is, can I see that the conflict added a positive dimension to the potential outcome?** You will gain an understanding on if and how having and addressing the conflict improved things amongst the team and the work environment.

### **Tips to Resolve Conflict**

- **Remove all masks:** Be genuine in your approach to people. Be open and honest with them when trying to resolve the conflict.
- **Identify the real problem:** Try to identify the true underlying problem or issue.
- **Give up a must-win attitude:** Your goal should not be to win the conflict; your goal should be to find a solution everyone can agree to.
- **Develop several possible solutions:** Try to find different ways to resolve the conflict.
- **Evaluate options and then select a solution:** Don't select a solution until you've evaluated solution options.
- **Communicate in a manner certain to be received:** Tailor your communication based on who is involved in the conflict and what their needs are so they are receptive to what you have to say.
- **Acknowledge and preserve the value in the relationship:** Whenever possible, one of your goals in conflict resolution is to preserve and/or strengthen your relationship with the other person. There's a definite possibility that you will work with them in the future.

### **Techniques for Dealing with Angry people**

1. **Listen closely.**
2. **Ask questions.**
3. **Apologize.**
4. **Stay calm and don't take their anger personally.**
5. **Remain courteous.**
6. **Propose an action plan and then follow through!**

## Techniques for Dealing with Upset People

1. Be glad when a person shares their feelings of discontent with you.
2. Think of the situation as an opportunity to shine.
3. Don't take it personally or become defensive.
4. Show genuine care and concern.
5. Listen.
6. Let the complaining person vent.
7. Politely interrupt the upset person and offer guidance.
8. Apologize assertively when you have made a mistake.
9. Express empathy, if it is genuine.
10. Take notes about the situation.
11. Tell the upset person what you can do.
12. Try to find a solution you can both agree on.
13. Thank the person for sharing his or her concern.
14. Follow up later, when appropriate.
15. Phrase your comments positively.

## Tips for Dealing with Difficult People

- Maintain a friendly and professional attitude.
- Acknowledge that a difficult situation exists.
- Calm the person by questioning and verifying that you understand.
- Focus the person on the problem at hand.
- Communicate to them that you want to partner with them to find a solution.