

BEAT DOWN CONFLICT WITH THESE 9 INDISPENSABLE RULES



Summary: In order to get through conflict in the workplace, you need to have the rules outlined to help you manage the situation.

Keeping a company running smoothly requires a great deal of effort at maintaining the peace. Conflict can arise in any situation, at any level, and for any reason. No one will be exempt from having some kind of conflict affect the daily functions of their employees. In order to make sure the conflict can be resolved quickly and effectively, here are 9 rules you should know.

1. Conflict will happen

When people are crammed into stressful situations in a closed environment, someone is eventually going to crack. An international survey done in 2008 by CPP, Inc reported that 85 percent of employees have to deal with conflict in some way. In the United States, 36 percent of employees specify that the conflict is “always” or “frequently” happening. The reasons for conflict vary, with 49 percent of employees stating personality or ego clashes as the source and 33 percent claiming a heavy workload as the problem. With conflict being such a constant issue, employees are spending over 2.5 hours a week battling the conflict. Remember that conflict means your employees are engaged, so do not be afraid that conflict is only a bad thing. Turning conflict into something that works in your favor is the trick.

2. Don't put conflict on hold

Since conflict is inevitable, don't put off addressing it when it does happen. Putting conflict aside will only make it explode. Letting an issue build into a bigger problem that affects productivity and happiness for all in the workplace will cause big problems for your company. With one in six employees reporting that they have a conflict still unresolved or lasting longer than expected or becoming more intense, the need for management to address them is happening. However, there is still room for improvement. Eighty-nine percent of employees also state that they have experienced a conflict that escalated. Cleaning up the mess a conflict makes is harder than just fixing it when it was a minor problem.

3. Weigh the conflict

With the guarantee of conflict happening in the workplace, there will be a lot that cannot always be dealt with. With limited time and money that can be spent on addressing conflicts, there will be some that are not a priority. To determine if the conflict is worth it, weigh the amount the conflict affects the quality of work and ability to work.

4. Promote flexibility and compromise

The best way to resolve conflict is if both parties involved are willing to compromise. The reason there is a conflict is because neither party wants to give in. If only one party is willing to work on the problem, it will go nowhere.

5. Professional, not personal

Work is work, do not let it become anything more. Fulfilling the company's interests is the primary goal, not to make best friends. Use polite, business like language to help you refrain from letting your personal viewpoints cloud the situation. A shocking 27 percent of employees report experiencing a conflict involving personal insult or attack. When a conflict becomes personal, it will be a lot harder to resolve.

6. Actively listen

Not listening carefully to what the other individuals involved say will lead to miscommunication. They may clearly be stating what bothers them, but you are not hearing them appropriately. To make sure you are hearing what their concerns are, restate their viewpoint in your own words. You may find a big part of finding a resolution is that you do not understand how they are expressing themselves. You need to be on the same page so that respect and cooperation can happen and you can foster calmer emotions during the situation. With 76 percent of employees stating that conflict has led to something positive, there is light at the end of the tunnel.

7. Calm down

If things are getting too emotional, take a moment to calm down. Use “I” statements, a low tone, open and positive body language, and keep to the facts to ensure things don't get overly emotional. There is nothing wrong with walking away from the situation for a moment to take a moment and think.

8. Mediator

If by the end of the day you still can't seem to figure out a way to resolve the problem, bring in another source. A mediator may be the key to seeing the problem from another perspective and enlighten the conflict. A mediator can be a manager, coworker, or another HR employee that is not already directly involved in the conflict.

9. Preventative measures

Moving forward, the best way to resolve conflict is to prevent it. Have clear expectations established that outline conduct, job descriptions, and the line of authority. Hold training workshops to train employees in conflict management so they can have more skills to use in the future. A staggering 95 percent of employees admit that conflict management training has helped them in some way. While it may not prevent conflict from arising again, it may help resolutions be reached easier and faster. Set up a process for negotiating conflict so that you are better prepared the next time it arises.

To learn more about dealing with conflict, read these articles:

- [Use the Conflict Transformation Method](#)
- [Solve Generational Conflict in the Workplace](#)
- [Working For The Enemy – A Lesson in Conflict Management](#)
- [Create a Workplace That Everyone Wants to Be a Part Of](#)

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