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Workplace Wars: Avoiding the Minefields

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Richard Grimes, MPA, CPT



Continuing Education and Development, Inc.

P: (877) 322-5800
info@cedengineering.ca

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Introduction

Let's face it: extremes of harmony and too much getting along can easily become a problem in the workplace. Complacency quickly breeds lower performance standards. Status quo, the do not-rock-the-boat mindset, becomes valued more than thinking out of the box, and people simply become intellectually lazy.

Of course, we are not proposing to stir things up just for the sake of it (although it does sound like a good idea sometimes) but we all know that differences of opinion are inevitable and essential to innovation, creativity, and problem solving. Unfortunately, they can also lead to a lot of interpersonal friction which can escalate into workplace wars. As much as we like to think of ourselves as being in control of our workplace situations, there are times when you just cannot ignore them, walk away, or turn the other cheek.



We have all seen the early warning signs that a confrontation with another person, department, or division is inevitable and at some point, we will have to step up and challenge them or stay back and allow them to prevail.

Maybe you feel you have invested too much time in a project to walk away and feel you must fight to preserve it. Or a colleague needs someone to stand tall beside them in a moment of adversity. Perhaps a professional adversary threatens your career, and you feel like you must take a stand now or forever wonder, "what if?"

This course will help you identify and understand the factors that can lead to a workplace war and help you devise a strategy that can help you achieve a satisfactory outcome short of going to war or, at least, not experience a result that is excessively unsatisfactory.

Although most people will do everything, they can to avoid storm and negative situations, there are times when it is beneficial to confront issues that bother us IN A CONTROLLED MANNER and get opposing viewpoints out into the open so we can deal with them and move forward.

This course will help you in at least two ways.

- You will learn how to devise a strategy that can give you the best chance for a controlled outcome favorable to you *if you have the luxury of time to plan for it.*
- Or it will give you some tips on how to react more appropriately *if you are attacked without warning and do not have time to devise a plan.*

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants taking this course will be able to:
2. List the three kinds of differences between coworkers that can lead to workplace wars
3. Define those differences using typical workplace situations
4. Focus on three types of measurements to clarify confusion about content differences
5. List at least four subcategories of relational differences that can cause difficulties in the workplace
6. List and describe four different kinds of workplace behavior that is typical to all locations
7. Be able to list specific potentials of friction with those four different kinds of workplace behavior.
8. Be able to devise effective diplomatic strategies for dealing with each of the four types
9. List the three stages of workplace storm development
10. Devise effective diplomatic strategies for dealing with the escalating storm development
11. List at least four different reasons for employee storm development
12. Understand and apply the differences between positions and interests in a potential workplace confrontation that could lead to a war between people, departments, or divisions
13. Identify and provide examples of the three kinds of interests someone may have in a diplomatic workplace negotiation
14. Use effectively a diplomatic strategic planning worksheet
15. Describe and use at least three different diplomatic tactics that can be used to defuse a potential workplace war
16. Describe and use at least four closing diplomatic tactics that can avoid a workplace war

What Do We Mean by “Workplace Wars”?

In the current economy, many employers have been reducing expenses as much as possible and making employees do more with less. Management’s encouragement to “work smarter” usually means longer hours, fewer resources, and increasing stress over deadlines.

Disagreements with colleagues competing over those precious and limited resources are inevitable and common. Regardless of the state of the economy, you probably spend more time interacting with (or thinking about how to interact with) colleagues than with anybody else – including your family.

Also, just like being at home with loved ones, it is natural to become irritated in the workplace with each other at one time or another. Then if you add perceived competition for limited resources, potential opportunities for promotions, and getting face time with your boss' to the mix, you have the recipe for an intra- or interdepartmental storm.

This course calls that ultimate state of storm when the festering workplace irritations bubble up into verbal combat “workplace wars.”

Why Do They Happen?

As we mentioned earlier, many of these conflicts are the natural outcome of competing agendas between individuals or groups. They have invested so much in the situation that it is virtually impossible for them to consider any outcome other than that toward which they have been working.

For example, when you have been working long, late, and hard on a presentation that you expect to make to a client only to have your boss step in at the last minute and give your material to his latest pet employee saying, “Joe/Joan will make the pitch”, it is very difficult to sit there and smile hoping the company gets the sale.

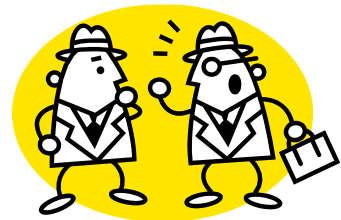
You probably would like nothing better than to see your latest competition fail miserably and have the client walk out of the meeting early. In a situation like that, it would be very difficult, indeed, not to declare war (silently to yourself, of course) on your adversary and work toward his or her professional demise.

But, before you declare that potential war, it would be useful to analyze the factors which may have led to it because as bad as declaring war on a colleague (or boss) may be, it would be even worse if it backfired on you because you used faulty strategy. We will help you begin development of a strategy by discussing some of the differences between colleagues that can be potential causes for workplace war next.

Content Differences

Content Differences – When there is disagreement about the basic facts, elements, requirements, or content of the situation.

- “No, she wants it at 2:00PM, not 3:00PM!”
- “We are supposed to identify three options for each scenario, not three options overall!”
- “Overtime means hours worked after 40 hours per week, not any time worked after eight per day!”



This is the easiest source of storm to correct. For example, if there is disagreement about the basic facts, elements, requirements, or content of the situation, simply go back to the source for clarification.

But what if the content is not very specific? What if the directions to you or your team are vague?

- *“Be sure to do a great job!”* - (What does a “great” job look like? How does it differ from an “adequate” job or a good job?)
- *“Make sure they get their money’s worth.”* - (What does “money’s worth” look like? How likely is it that your impression of “money’s worth” is the same as the client’s? Is your job worth taking a chance on guessing correctly?)
- *“I will need that report in a timely manner.”* - (When is “timely”? Is it in an hour, by the end of the day? Just when specifically, is timely?)
- *“Make it look very professional”* - (Does this mean double-spaced, glossy paper. heavy binder? Can you think of a more ambiguous and subjective phrase in the workplace than “make it look professional”?)

The best way to get a definitive expectation is to focus on measurements of **quality, quantity, and time**. Ask the other person to define as specifically as possible:

- **Quality** (how good) – 98% pure, zero typos, no smudge marks, same font throughout, same brightness and weight of paper in the report. (Note: The same font, brightness, and weight are not necessarily traditional terms of quality, but we are looking at the clarification of ambiguous terms. If the boss thinks a common font and uniform paperweight or brightness in the report means quality, then that is what it means for that project. As long as the boss is happy and it does not violate any laws or ethical standards, just do it. It is not worth arguing about)
- **Quantity** – Do not accept “a few, some, more” as measurable amounts if there is any chance for a disagreement in the future. If you have any doubt, ask for clarification since you are trying to please them.
- **Time** – If there is a possibility of friction in the future, take a few minutes for clarification now. Words like “sooner, later, and timely” are understood easily but make sure you and

the other person involved share the same understanding. If you do not, then problems will occur.

Relational Differences

These occur when the problem stems from difficulties between people regardless of the workplace situation. Psychologists may say these relationship problems come from the “chemistry” that exists between people. ⁱ

Some of us have a natural and mysterious attraction to each other and life is great when we are around them. Other times, there is no sense of connection with others, and we simply coexist like enduring a long flight sitting next to strangers. Finally, there are occasions when we meet someone whom we instantly dislike before we even speak to each other. There are probably no settings, environment, or surroundings in which we could ever feel neutral toward them. Fortunately, these occasions are rare.

Although we may not be able to control with whom we work, we can control our reactions to them if we understand something about some fundamental differences in people. Take a few minutes to think about the behaviors and characteristics of the people with whom you work.

What They Say: How do different ones express themselves? Do they use colorful phrases, “down home-isms,” larger-than-life expressions, or exaggerations when describing situations or requirements?

How They Say It: Do they speak quickly in their normal mode and speed up even more when they get angry? Do some speak slowly and monotonously? Do some use anecdotes to illustrate points or do they just lay them out and let others interpret what they mean? Do they start every description of an experience with another person by putting themselves first: “Me and Joe worked hard on that presentation.”

How They Act: Are there some who, if you held their hands, would not be able to speak? Does anyone gesture broadly when speaking?

Their Work Environment: Do some have reports, files, and papers strewn over their desks while others are neat and tidy? Do some have family pictures casually posed or are there only formal pictures? What do you see as their wall decorations? Are they achievement oriented (#1 in the golf tournament) or (attention seeking) “here’s the governor and me at a luncheon?” The office environment can tell a lot about the inhabitant to an alert observer.

Here are four distinctive behavior patterns that you may see in the workplace. As human beings, we are mixtures of these four traits regardless of culture, age, sex, or national origin with varying degrees of “specific behavioral purity” within each of us. This means that some are extreme examples of these, and others may be so thoroughly blended that it is difficult to tell just what they are.

We include these traits only as a resource to use if you have a coworker, you can easily identify as being predominately one of these types. If you can identify their type, you can learn how to deal with them most effectively and avoid conflicts that can lead to workplace wars.

The easiest way to understand these four different traits is to think about who we may typically see in a medium-sized engineering firm. Specifically, we’re talking about the **CEO** and the department heads of **Engineering**, **Sales**, and **Human Resources**.

Analytical Behavior

Our fictional head of the **engineering department** has a strong *Analytical* nature (a basic requirement for a successful engineering career) with a mixture of a *Driver* (which we’ll cover soon) that has helped him become the leader of all the company engineers.



Their behavioral style has a low degree of assertiveness (they listen more than they speak) and a low degree of emotional expression. People with this style *focus on facts more than feelings*. They evaluate situations objectively and gather plenty of data before deciding. They prefer an organized work environment where they know exactly what is expected of them.

Colleagues often perceive them as deliberate, constrained, and logical. They tend to be good listeners who follow procedures, carefully weigh all alternatives, and remain steadfast in purpose.

Coworkers see them as disciplined, independent, and unaggressive, and as people who are likely to let others take the social initiative.

They may be judged as conservative (*meaning a preference for status quo* – not in a political context), businesslike, and persistent in their relationships with others and strongly risk-averse.

They pursue their goals only after they have compiled plenty of data to support a project's purpose, practicality, and policy. For them, the *process* is as important as the outcome.

Here are some more of the behaviors that you will see in an Analytical:

- Seem technically oriented, often seeking structure, certainty, and evidence before making decisions (show them the warranty!)
- Appear quiet and unassuming; may show little emotion when dealing with others (they are listening much more closely than it appears)
- Tend to take little social initiative with others; may remain guarded until a strong relationship has been developed
- May push to extend existing ideas and procedures before going on to something new
- Will meticulously check every word and term in a contract or agreement before signing it

Their office environment:

- It probably has minimal wall decorations. If there are some, they are probably off-the-shelf graphics, nothing frivolous, everything is utilitarian
- If there are documents on their desk, they are neatly stacked and everything looks orderly
- Family pictures, if any, are formal portrait settings, not candid shots of vacation, the dog, etc.
- There are probably charts, graphs, or other statistical measurements in their office.



Strengths of this behavior include:

- Seem able to approach problems on the basis of facts and logic and to create solid solutions
- Tend to make the most practical decision by being thorough and open to ideas
- Like to discover new ways of solving old problems
- Often productively competent in working out a problem and in getting a job done right

Potential sources of friction with them:

- You must realize that their need to collect data it makes it difficult to meet a deadline – they will always need “just one more piece of data”
- Their need to have zero errors makes it difficult to provide an estimate or make an off-the-cuff suggestion
- Their need for orderliness makes it uncomfortable when someone with whom they are working jumps from one topic to another randomly
- They will suppress feelings of frustration, irritation, or anger until they reach a boiling point and explode suddenly and unexpectedly over what will seem to others like a small point.

But, for the Analytical, things have just gotten to a boiling point and that small thing was the “straw that broke the camel’s back.”

Strategies for dealing effectively with them

- You must meet their need for data by providing charts, graphs, warranties, or statistics. (Always check your data first because they will.)
- Give them some room for error when asking for an estimate or opinion otherwise you will *never get an answer because they will never have enough data*. For example, ask for an estimate “with a 95% confidence level.” If you give them an ‘out’ (95% instead of 100%) so they do not have to be perfect, you allow them to reduce their inner drive for error avoidance.
- Set some preliminary milestones so you can check on progress instead of an all-or-nothing final date. Their drive for perfection and analysis of data may cause them to get so bogged down in the details they lose track of the overall schedule.
- Support their principles and thinking, provide evidence and service; and answers that explain HOW as often as possible. When explaining something, proceed in a logical sequence and do not make any leaps of logic.

- Give them time to reach the desired conclusion. If they feel rushed, they will dig in and become nearly impossible to move.

WHO IN YOUR WORK GROUP EXHIBITS THESE TRAITS? _____

WHAT SPECIFIC TRAITS DO YOU RECOGNIZE? _____

WHAT STEPS CAN YOU TAKE TO DEAL MOST EFFECTIVELY WITH HIM/HER?

Amiable Behavior



Our head of **Human Resources** is a key element of providing the source and example of warm relationships that every organization needs.

She, as an Amiable, is often seen as quiet, unassuming, and supportive. Perceived as a warm, friendly listener who seems easy to get along with, she attracts people who enjoy personal contact and shared responsibility (“teamwork” is something they enjoy).

They tend to pursue goals by first establishing strong personal ties (i.e., first the personal relationship then the business relationship) and may be perceived as avoiding risks and decision making unless they have strong support or data to back them up.

They like time to build relationships and to seek support and feedback from others before they make decisions. “Where do you want to go to lunch? What about you?” they will ask everyone in the group but make no decision themselves for fear of offending someone.

This is the opposite of the analytical behavior (page 7) who makes decisions on objective facts, not the opinion of others. Naturally, they are very cooperative in their interaction with others because they want to be liked and “fit in”.

Some phrases you may use to describe perceived Amiable in your group include:

- Seem to accept others and place a high priority on getting along

- They appear quiet, cooperative, and supportive as they seek approval
- They seem easy to get to know and work with
- They tend to minimize interpersonal conflict whenever possible

Their office environment probably includes:

- “Happy” decorations included candid pictures of family & friends
- “Have a Nice Day” slogan variations
- Probably some clutter giving it a comfortable and homey feel
- Some emphasis on teamwork in an award, a slogan, or books on the shelf dealing with relationships and or communication

Strengths of this style include:

- May help others and provide positive strokes for other people's work and accomplishments
- May have a deep sense of loyalty and dedication to those in their work and peer groups
- Seem able to communicate trust and confidence in other people
- Function very well on teams and other social settings
- Tend to make people feel comfortable about themselves

Potential sources of friction with them:

- They often have trouble asserting themselves and making decisions quickly because they don't want to leave anyone out or hurt someone's feelings.
- Generally, they do not like confronting disagreement with co-workers.
- They are tempted to base everything on feelings and less on tangible results.
- Their reluctance to deal with conflict means that they do not always get what they really want and may internalize feelings until a blow-up over something seemingly insignificant. (This is like the analytical.) Their frustration about not resolving such issues can turn into resentment that is directed toward the same co-worker in later interactions.

Strategies for dealing effectively with them

- Use a friendly tone of voice while making frequent eye contact and smiling
- They seek approval – provide it as much as you can.
- Use no aggressive or no dramatic gestures because this may be seen as unfriendly

- Speak slowly and in soft tones with moderate inflection (because that's how friends talk with each other)
- Use language that is supportive and encouraging with guarantees and assurances

WHO IN YOUR WORK GROUP EXHIBITS THESE TRAITS? _____

WHAT SPECIFIC TRAITS DO YOU RECOGNIZE? _____

WHAT STEPS CAN YOU TAKE TO DEAL MOST EFFECTIVELY WITH HIM/HER?

Driver Behavior

The CEO of our company is the consummate Driver.

He is results-oriented, tending to initiate action and give clear direction. Drivers seek control over their environment and want to know the estimated outcome of each option when making deals.

They are willing to accept risks but want to move quickly and have the final say. They love competition – especially when they win.



In relationships, they may appear uncommunicative, independent, and competitive and tend to focus on efficiency or productivity rather than devoting time and attention to casual relationships. They seldom see a need to share personal motives or feelings.

Drivers feel most comfortable pursuing their goals when they're in charge and taking the initiative. They are often seen as thriving in situations in which they can create plans and have others carry them out.

Drivers in your workplace may be described as:

- Heartless, bottom-line oriented, will make direct eye contact as a way to intimidate to exert influence
- Able to move quickly and briskly with purpose while others hurry to catch up
- Speaking forcefully and fast-paced using terms such as will (not should), can (not try), and sound very certain of themselves
- They seem to make things happen, take risks, and view problems as just another challenge.

Their office environment probably includes:

- Planning calendars and project outlines displayed in their offices
- Wall decorations include achievement awards (“#1 in the golf tournament demonstrating their competitiveness and achievement”)
- Furniture is “executive” style and of the best available (or best they can afford)

- Probably many communication methods available – desk phones, tablets, cell phones, email, Zoom or Teams, - because they want to stay in touch, solve problems, and keep moving people ahead toward goals.

Strengths of this style include:

- The ability to take charge of situations and make quick decisions are what often make drivers high achievers.
- They put a single-minded focus on the goals they want and are not afraid to take risks to accomplish them.
- Often confident and strong-willed and like to initiate, control, and serve as own motivator
- Appear efficient, hardworking, results-oriented, and direct and to the point

Potential sources of friction with them:

- When feeling stressed, drivers can be so focused on getting things done quickly that they can overlook details and make mistakes.
- They may push aside their own and other's feelings to get the job done, which can create tense situations with co-workers.
- Because of their hard-driving, competitive nature, drivers can sometimes become workaholics and expect others to do the same.
- Their failure to consider the feelings of others can drive off a lot of good employees from their organization and create a lot of friction and bad feelings within a workgroup.

Strategies for dealing effectively with them:

- Don't waste their time with a preamble– get to the point and be efficient
- Allow them to build their own structures when possible
- Give them choices between options and probabilities – allows them to be 'in charge'
- They measure value by results – show them how your product achieves results

WHO IN YOUR WORK GROUP EXHIBITS THESE TRAITS? _____

WHAT SPECIFIC TRAITS DO YOU RECOGNIZE? _____

WHAT STEPS CAN YOU TAKE TO DEAL MOST EFFECTIVELY WITH HIM/HER?

Expressive Behavior

If the description of an Expressive is “*often excitable, fun-loving, and talkative; loves an audience and applause or recognition may be a cherished reward,*” then the head of our sales department is the perfect example. They are motivated by recognition, approval and prestige. They are very communicative and approachable, while freely sharing their feelings and thoughts.



They move quickly, continually excited about the next big idea, but they often do not commit to specific plans or see things through to completion. They are better with strategy than the tactics needed for execution.

Like drivers, they enjoy taking risks. When making decisions, they tend to place more stock in the opinions of prominent or successful people than in logic or research. Though they consider relationships important, the Expressive’s competitive nature leads them to seek quieter friends who are supportive of their dreams and ideas, often making relationships shallow or short-lived.

Colleagues described like this are very likely to be Expressives:

- They appear to be risk-takers, competitive, and spirited (much like the Drivers)
- Often futuristic, creative, and inspirational
- They are out-going, spontaneous, persuasive, gregarious, and humorous
- They see the “big picture” but don’t care much for the details
- Their approach toward projects may be, “Ready, FIRE, aim!”
- They think quickly and are more solution than process focused (Analytical – the engineers in our company - believe the proper process will lead to the appropriate solution. Expressives identify a solution and ask, “*How can we get there?*”)

If you had a large engineering project, the various behaviors would broadly work like this:

- The *expressive dreamer* lays it all out
- The *take-charge driver* leads it and makes it happen
- The *amiable team builder* keeps the workforce together and morale high
- The *analytical data manager* maintains the records and documents

Their office environment probably includes:

- Their pictures shout “look at me” such as with celebrities, unique locations (The Golden Gate Bridge), or exciting events such as skydiving. (The Driver’s pictures show competition or achievement like #1 in the golf tournament. The Expressive’s would be *‘Here are the Governor and I playing golf’*.)
- Bright colors
- Candid pictures of the family and their dog
- Many different projects or topics that they are working on

Strengths of this style include:

- Their lively nature allows them to motivate and generate excitement in others.
- They work at a fast pace and are good at building alliances and relationships to accomplish their goals.
- They are well suited for high-profile positions that require them to make public presentations, such as trainers, actors, salespeople, and so on.
- Like to share dreams and stimulate creative exchange of ideas

Growth opportunities for this style include:

- When upset, they can often communicate their feelings with considerable intensity, and if criticized, they may lash out with a verbal attack.
- They may seem overwhelming to less assertive styles, because when they're enthusiastic about an idea, they press for a decision and may overlook important details.
- They may need to stay with a project longer than just the initial start-up phase to make sure everyone understands the concept
- Rely less on intuition at times and dig for more facts

Potential sources of friction with them:

- They are more consumed by generalities rather than details.
- They usually respond better to people who focus on the big picture instead of the minutiae of details.
- Avoiding direct eye contact or lacking an energetic and fast-paced approach. (If you cannot keep up with them, they will lose interest, and your relationship starts to deteriorate.)

- Failure to allow time in the meeting for minimal socializing, talking about experiences, people, and opinions, in addition to the facts. Otherwise, you may not get their best when you need it most.
- Ignoring or ridiculing their intuitive sense of things (They rely on a “gut feeling” and it is frequently correct. Learn to encourage it when possible, not minimize it.)
- Failure to support your ideas with testimonials from people whom they know and respect
- Failure to paraphrase any agreements made and maintain a balance between minimal levity and reaching objectives

WHO IN YOUR WORK GROUP EXHIBITS THESE TRAITS? _____

WHAT SPECIFIC TRAITS DO YOU RECOGNIZE? _____

WHAT STEPS CAN YOU TAKE TO DEAL MOST EFFECTIVELY WITH HIM/HER?

Viewpoint Differences – These occur when people see the same thing differently. Is the glass half-full or half-empty? Both sides are seeing the same thing but interpret it differently. (This is a common cause of storms within the two largest topics of daily discussion in most workplaces: *sports and politics*.)



Viewpoint differences are really not worth arguing about because people base their opinions on personal preferences, not objective factors. As a test, what could someone say that would get you to cheer for your school's archrival? Probably nothing and that is the point we are making.

No amount of past records, championships, or game scores could convince you to change your mind. When encountering situations like this, it is easier to “agree to disagree” and move on to other topics.

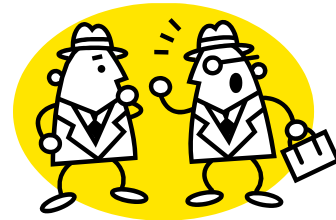
Storms Are Brewing

A key element of surviving a workplace war is to be able to recognize the gradual buildup of “storm clouds” between individuals or factions within the department. Sometimes you can diffuse them and gain a reputation as a wise diplomat and peacemaker or know when to be somewhere else when the bombs start falling.

Before getting into the various stages of conflict, it is useful to consider common beliefs about conflict. A surprise to many people is that there are times when it can be a good thing if allowed to run its course.

“The presence of conflict is the sign of a poor leader!”

“Conflict” used in a competitive way to generate new ideas or increase productivity to meet an earlier deadline can be a good thing and the sign of a wise leader.

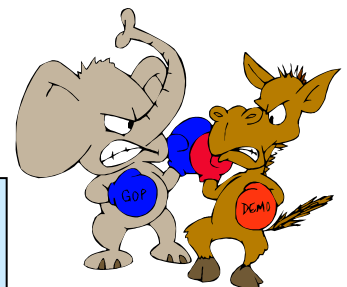


“Anger is always negative and destructive.”

Anger *can become* negative and destructive if allowed to develop and grow. It can also serve as a motivator to act now and get things done.

“Conflict, if left alone, will take care of itself.”

Not necessarily. We believe leaders should always *be aware* of conflict within their groups but *not always involved*. Sometimes it can take care of itself.





“Conflict must be resolved immediately.”

Once again, not necessarily. Sometimes people need to step back and ponder the situation. A wise leader will observe and see if the participants can work out their own differences. After all, the leader will not always be there to act as their referee.

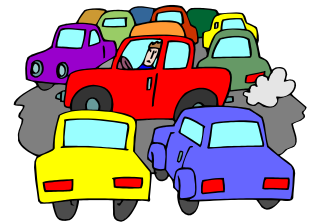
Three Stages of Workplace Storm Development

STAGE ONE - “Irritating Daily Events”

Characteristics of Stage One Storms

You MUST LISTEN FOR these clues:

- Comments are focused on “non-human” topics (machinery, weather, traffic, the “system [computers, the organizational culture, procedures]” etc.)
- Words are in the present tense (“*This copier is out of paper*”. “*Traffic is just crazy out there today.*”)
- More focus on a solution than the problem (“*Darn it*” is more natural. *This copier is out of paper again. Where is the supply so I can refill it?*”)



Ways to Handle Stage One Storms

If you feel that you must get involved in these low-level events, here are some suggestions:

- **Initiate a response that examines the situation.** (“*It looks like the copier is out of paper. Do you know where the stock of it is?*”)
- **Ask yourself if the reaction is proportional to the situation.** (Is anyone carrying “baggage” from previous situations? How would you know? Hint: Does this sound like a one-time event or the latest in a series of recurring problems? “*I’m so sick of this! There is NEVER enough paper in this thing! Am I the only person who knows how to refill it?*”)

- Identify points of agreement, work from these points first, and then identify the points of disagreement. (*"I agree with you that it seems like no one else restocks the copier but you. But maybe if you didn't always do it, someone else may have to step up."*)

STAGE TWO - "Challenges Requiring "Win-Lose" Results

Characteristics of Stage Two Storms



You must LISTEN FOR these clues:

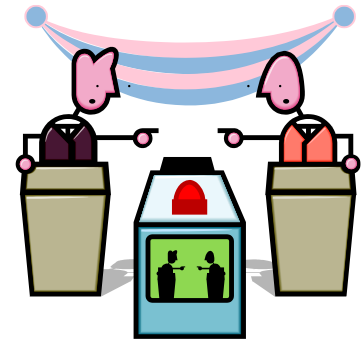
- Words are in the past tense (*"This copier never has paper in it! It's always empty!"*)
- Comments are focused on "human" topics (machinery maintenance person, weather man, traffic – a particular driver, the "system [the IT guy who services your PC, the organizational culture - a particular person within it, procedures – a particular person who doesn't follow them]" etc. *"I hate people who can't even restock a copier run they run it out of paper!"*)
- More focus on who caused the problem – or allowed it to happen - than a solution (*"The copier on this floor needs paper. Who is supposed to keep it full?""*)



Important considerations for Stage Two:

- Coping strategies DO NOT WORK because **people are the problem**, and the conflicts do not go away. (The problem has moved from Joe's behavior to focusing on Joe himself.)
- Self-interest is very important. "CYA" ('Cover Your Assets') is a survival strategy. People take sides, take notes, and keep score. Alliances and cliques may form.

- An “us” vs. “them” mentality develops. Discussion of issues and answers are futile because **participants and the problem have become too closely entangled**. (This is like a heated political discussion.)



Participants deal in terms that are more general. You will hear about the phantom “**them**” and comments as “**everyone** thinks...,” “**always**...” and “**never**” increase in frequency. Each side is reluctant to provide facts without asking, “How will you use this information?”

TRUST IS VERY LOW!

Ways to Handle Stage Two Storms

- Create a safe environment to discuss the situation which includes:
 - Make the setting informal
 - Establish neutral turf
 - Have an agenda so there is focus on an outcome

A generic agenda would be one in which both sides agree to take some of the responsibility for reducing the conflict. An easy way to do this is to get each side to “trade” something. (Note: Never say, “**GIVE UP**” something because that implies losing!)

“Sam, maybe we can work a way to resolve this. Would you be willing to trade proof-reading of your work before you give it to Sue if she will stop making comments about your work quality?”

This way, neither side thinks the other won something and you, the diplomat, still get the peace and harmony you want.

- **Be hard on facts, soft on people.** Take time to get every detail. Clarify generalizations. Who, by name, are “they”? Are you sure that “always” or “never” is accurate?
- **Do not let the participants sit across from each other.** Arrange to get them sitting beside each other across from you. (Sitting across from each other so they make eye contact can start it all again.)

Do the work as a team sharing in the responsibility of finding an alternative everyone can live with. Stress the necessity of equal responsibility in finding resolution. Question: *Why should you not carry this load for the participants? (Answer: Because then it becomes **your** solution for them, and they have nothing invested in making it work.)*

- **Focus on points of agreement to find a middle ground.** Do not suggest that each side “concedes” something because that implies “giving in” which is seen as a weakness.

“Do you agree that this bickering is becoming an aggravation for the two of you? If so, maybe we can work a way to resolve this. Sam, would you be willing to trade proof-reading of your work before you give it to Sue if she will stop making comments about your work quality?”

Take as much time as necessary to reach agreement without forcing concessions or issues. Avoid voting to resolve issues because that leads to a “win – lose” result. (The only way to avoid having hurt feelings by voting is if you are assured of a unanimous decision before you begin!)

Focus on each side gaining **satisfaction** with the outcome instead of a “win-win”. The outcomes do not have to be identical as long as each side is satisfied.

These three questions can help bring the impasse to a **mutually satisfying outcome** if asked at the appropriate times. Ask in any order that fits the situation.

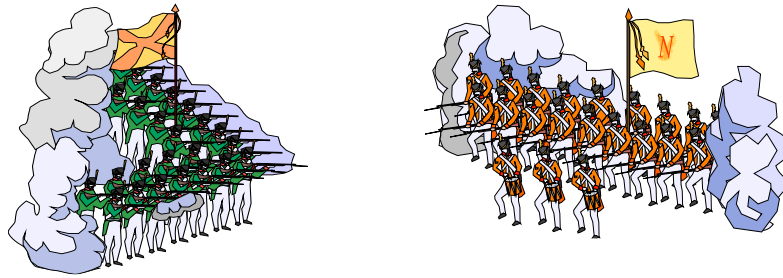
3KEY QUESTIONS

1. “Well, if not this offer, what would you suggest?”
2. “What would it take to get a YES from you?”
3. “Can you live with that?”

What Stage 1 or 2 storms are underway in your department?

What strategy can you use to deal with them effectively?

STAGE THREE - “Eliminating the Enemy”



Characteristics of Stage Three Storms

The motivation is to “get rid” of the opponent, not just win. Being right and punishing wrong becomes consuming goals. The competing parties identify “insiders” and “outsiders.” “You are either with me or against me!”

Leaders emerge from the group to act as representatives. You equate your position as doing “*what’s good for the organization!* [“**I have to fire you for the good of the organization**”].”

Specific causes of the problem get lost in emotion. Many newly recruited team members may not know the origins of the storm.



TRUST IS NON-EXISTANT!!

Ways to Handle Stage Three Storms

- An outside intervention agent or team (a neutral person or department) is required as a mediator so neither side feels this third party favors the other.
- Details are critical to a thorough understanding of the situation by the mediator.
- You must allow sufficient time to get a true picture of both sides of the case.
- The mediator can ask each side to present their case (without comment from the other) and identify the results they would like to achieve in this process.
- The mediator puts the responsibility on the two teams to find areas of common agreement or trade in search for an agreement.
- Not every participant on both teams may be at Stage 3. Try to break off members at lower stages and redirect their energies away from this situation.

WARNING

Successful resolution at this level frequently means that something or someone must go! Do not be surprised if that is the “price” for a team to agree to a cease-fire in the war.



Brewing Storms Assessment Checklists

<i>Stage One Storms</i>		YES	NO
Are the individuals willing to meet and discuss facts?			
Is there a sense of optimism?			
Is there a cooperative spirit?			
Does a “live and let live” attitude typify the atmosphere?			
Can participants discuss issues without involving personalities?			
Can the participants remain in the present tense?			
Is the language specific?			
Do solutions dominate the efforts?			
What else?			
<i>Stage Two Storms</i>		YES	NO
Is there a potentially destructive competitive attitude?			
Is there an emphasis on winners and losers?			
Is it hard to talk about problems without including people?			
Is the language in generalities?			
Can you identify these statements in their conversations?	“They...”		
	“Everyone is...”		
	“You always (or never)...”		
	“He always (or never)...”		
Is there a cautious nature when issues are discussed?			
Can you detect a “CYA” attitude among participants?			
Does either party try to “look good” or play a political game?			
<i>Stage Three Storms</i>		YES	NO
Are attempts being made to get rid of others?			
Is there an intention to hurt someone?			
Have obvious leaders or spokespersons emerged?			
Is there a choosing of sides?			
Has corporate good become identified with a set of special interests?			
Is there a sense of “holy mission” on the part of certain participants?			
Is there a sense that things will never stop?			
Has there been a loss of middle ground allowing only “right or wrong”, “either / or”, or “totally black and white” options?			
WHAT ELSE?			

Personal Causes for Employee Storm Development

(These are excellent topics for discussion within a department if there seems to be some storms building and the leader wants to stimulate discussion to defuse them.)

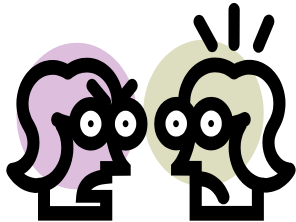
Differences in Values

What are some reasons why employees within a department may have different values?

(There could be differences in age, backgrounds, economic conditions, education, and work ethics. Remember, different does not mean better or worse!)



Assumptions



“I thought you were going to finish that project for me! Now you’ve made me miss the deadline!”

(What assumptions have you made recently that did or could have led to problems?)

Competing For Scarce Resources

“Fred and I are both competing for the promotion. I wonder how we’ll get along after one of us doesn’t get it!”

(People compete for scarce resources such as time with the boss, access to a copier or printer, parking spots, or anything of perceived value.)



The Inability to Handle Change



“I’m not doing the work on that new machine! I’ve done just fine doing it by hand for the past 20 years!”

(What conflicts have you ever had when someone –or you – has been resistant to change?)

Situational Assessment

As you gather information about the [content](#), [relational](#), or [viewpoint](#) differences that may exist among your colleagues and [gauge the extent of storms brewing around you](#), it is time to assess the data at hand so you can formulate some strategy for survival. If a war is coming, it would be nice if you could survive it unscathed at a minimum or with an enhanced reputation as an optimal outcome.

This next section, then, is about assessing the situation so you can get as favorable an outcome for all – but especially you - as possible.

The Ends Determine the Means

Before developing your strategy for the pending war, you should clearly determine for yourself what the outcome should be. Until you know where you want to end up, you will not be able to put together a coherent and effective strategy to get there.

Suppose there is much competition within your group for anticipated leadership opportunities that will arise if the corporate expansion and reorganization occurs as rumored. Being a realist, you realize that advancement in your career will require some leadership experience and the sooner you can get a chance to show senior management what you can do, the better your chances will be for any leadership roles if the expansion rumors are true.

So, lacking any existing entry-level leadership positions in the current organizational chart, you look around for an opportunity with medium-to-high visibility to the executives who have the greatest influence on your future there. (Remember, visibility and budget do not mean the same thing.)

If your company's CEO went through major surgery recently, he or she may think your idea about a blood drive for the local Red Cross is a perfect, high visibility community service project that will cost next to nothing to conduct. Since the blood drive needs a project manager to make it happen successfully, that could be your chance for a leadership role (probably with very little competition from your departmental adversaries) and be the career enhancement you want. The potential war between you and your peers for a leadership opportunity could be over before the first battle

occurs. (Or maybe the CEO is a runner; you could lead a project for a fund-raising marathon. Most companies have community service initiatives which provide opportunities for smart, career enhancing volunteerism but trouble finding volunteers to lead them.)

But, if your desired outcome is gaining leadership experience *within a specific project* of a *specific size* filling a *specific role*, then your strategy for getting there will be much more detailed, difficult, and time consuming and will require a totally different strategy.

To summarize - Determine as clearly as possible the nature of the outcome you seek. Would a generic form be sufficient (“some medium to high visibility leadership experience”) or would it have to be more specific like a specific role in a specific project?

To use the battlefield motif of this course, it is like this: if a quick cavalry dash can carry the day, do not waste time assembling an armored column. Remember the words of George Scott playing General George Patton as he quoted Frederick the Great, “L'audace, l'audace, toujours l'audace” (“Audacity, audacity, always audacity.”)ⁱⁱ

Diplomacy – Not War

Many workplace difficulties end up in fights simply because neither side understands anything about diplomacy nor dealing with people in an adversarial situation. They just think every situation is an all-or-nothing, someone-wins-and-someone-loses event. The reality is very different if we take a little time to look deeper into what is taking place.

The popular feel-good phrase usually associated with workplace diplomacy is, “*We are trying to achieve a “win-win” situation*” or something like that. Unfortunately, this attempt to make everyone feel good rather than address the actual outcomes probably does more to limit potential success in negotiations than it does to help because each side is *still thinking about whether they won more* regardless of how altruistic they try to sound to the other side.

When you stop to think about it, we humans are fundamentally competitive, and there is no real way that two people can say with honesty (notice we do not say ‘sincerity’) “*we each won in this situation!*” The very definition of winning is that someone emerged from a competition in a more advantageous position than did the others. Even if both sides agree to say, “We each won,” one

will still tell themselves (and anyone else who will listen), ‘Yes, but I won MORE than they did!’ Winning is a measurable that everyone can understand. Just look at the scoreboard: we scored more than they did!

Satisfaction is what we really want from a negotiation – not winning. Each side can be satisfied even if they end up with different outcomes. I may have paid more for it than I had planned , but you agreed to deliver it sooner than you expected. You got more money, and I got it sooner. **We are both satisfied.**

Winning requires that each side value the same thing such as a greater score in a competitive situation. In the example above, if you said, *“I won because you gave me more money than you wanted to,”* I could say, *“Yes, but I had plenty of money. However, you promised delivery sooner than you wanted to. That means I won!”* Obviously, if we do not value the same outcomes, then talking about winning is meaningless. (This takes us back to the viewpoint discussion starting on page 17.)

Back again to the previous example: you valued the money while I valued the delivery time. Therefore, we describe workplace diplomatic outcomes more in **degrees of satisfaction** than the either-or concept of winning or losing as we do in competitive events. The extent of our satisfaction is not so easy to measure because it is an internal factor. Since it is internal, and usually very personal, we have not focused much effort on analyzing it.

In workplace situations requiring some degree of diplomacy, we are rarely dealing with either-or situations. Even when it comes down to the dramatic “take-it-or-leave-it” confrontation, we have still considered many other aspects within the negotiation before we finally take it or leave it.



Think about when we buy a car. Our final decision to take it or leave it results from the extent to which it meets our needs regarding concerns of safety, mileage, passenger capacity, color, audio equipment, comfort options, etc.

Although *outwardly* the decision appears to be an either-or/take-it-or-leave-it choice, the reality is that we considered all of our needs and thought about how well the car met them. If we are

satisfied overall that the car meets our needs, we buy it: even if it is at a higher price than we wanted.

Positions vs. Interests

A critical aspect of situational assessment when dealing with others with competing outcomes is to understand the difference between someone's interests and their positions. Basically, positions are the **visible facts** about the deal such as price, delivery date, quantities, terms, and conditions of the sale while interests are the **invisible personal reasons** behind the positions.

Suppose there is a house for sale by the owner in the neighborhood where you want to buy. Here are two possible scenarios that could occur which will demonstrate the difference between negotiating from **positions only** or from **positions and interests**.



If you take time to find out as much as you can about the invisible reasons behind their pricing, delivery dates, quantities, and terms and conditions, you may be able to offer alternative options that will still satisfy them and allow them to be more flexible on their positions.

A Practical Demonstration

Your Comments	The Owner's Comments
How many bedrooms and baths does it have?	3 bedrooms and 2 baths
How old is it?	It is 13 years old.
How much are you asking?	\$395,000
We would not want to pay more than \$375,000.	That is your choice, but it will not be enough for this house!
Maybe we could go to \$380,000.	We might consider \$390,000.
We would not go much higher!	We will not go much lower!
At this point, it may break off entirely or antagonisms begin to develop because one side starts thinking the other side is trying to take advantage of them. The relationship turns into a competition and becomes personal about whether one side can persuade the other to give in. (This is a Stage 2 Storm developing!)	
The chance of a successful negotiation where both sides are satisfied becomes very slim.	

The blue text represents how an inclusion of interests could be added to the original conversation to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion for both sides.

Your Comments	The Owner's Comments
This looks like a very nice house you have. May I ask why you want to sell?	It has been a great house for us, but I have a new job in another city. We are trying to sell here so we can get settled there before school starts.
How many bedrooms and baths does it have?	3 bedrooms and 2 baths
How old is it?	It is 13 years old.
How much are you asking?	\$395,000
I am sure it is worth every bit of that, and you will eventually <i>(reinforcing the fear about moving quickly in time for school)</i> find a buyer. However, if it were a little less, we would be very interested in it, and it may help you get on with getting your family moved and settled before school starts in your new neighborhood.	Well, we do want to get our kids settled in the new neighborhood before school starts, if possible. <i>(The buyer has acknowledged the importance of helping their family transition to a new neighborhood.)</i> How much less would it have to be for you to be interested?
We would not want to pay more than \$375,000 but we have excellent credit , and my lender has already approved us to this amount. He assured us it would go through quickly!	That is a lot below what we were thinking. I guess I can come down a little <u>if it closed quickly</u> (this serves his interest of getting to the next city before school) , but I really could not go below \$385,000.
Maybe we could get up to \$385,000 if the appraisal supports that much. If it is more, it is still \$385,000 and if it is less, the price will match the appraisal if we agree to buy it.	That sounds fair. It is a deal! (Using the appraisal to set a price point is an "external reference" that we will discuss later. It gives them one less issue over which to argue.)
In this example, the buyers have already done their homework by looking at real estate listings in this area to get a feel for the market value of the house. Although the market value and final sales price are not directly tied together, it will give them a feeling of whether they can afford to be looking in this area. In addition, this means they do not have to start with the position (price). Once they know they can afford it, they talk with a lender to get an approved limit so they can speed the paperwork afterwards in case they find a seller that wants to move quickly. By asking the seller why he/she wants to sell, they are trying to determine the interests <u>behind</u> the price. If the seller had said, <i>"Our family has grown and we're looking for a smaller house,"</i> they may not be as much in a hurry to sell as the relocators and be firmer in their pricing. Since they took time to determine the sellers' interest of getting to their next neighborhood in time for their children to register in their new school, they were able to touch those interests (words in bold blue) by making the statements they did. This also gave the seller a graceful way to reduce the price to speed the sale without appearing to be "beaten down" by an aggressive buyer. The more time spent trying to identify the other person's interests behind the deal will give you more opportunities to present various options that may appeal to the seller. In other words, there are more chances to satisfy each side and not go to war!	

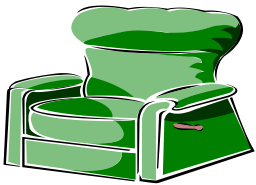
Three Kinds of Interests

These are the kinds of interests you will encounter as you use diplomacy to try to avoid a war.

Interests can be:

“**SHARED INTERESTS**” = **we both want that same item.**

Example: The spouses each think a recliner would be good to have in the family room.



“**NON-CONFLICTING**” = **one side wants something, and the other side does not care one way or the other.**

Example: The wife wants a beige recliner to match the carpet while the husband does not care what color it is.

“**CONFLICTING**” = **if you get your interest, I cannot get mine.**

Example: The husband wants a recliner, his wife wants a new carpet, but they cannot afford both.

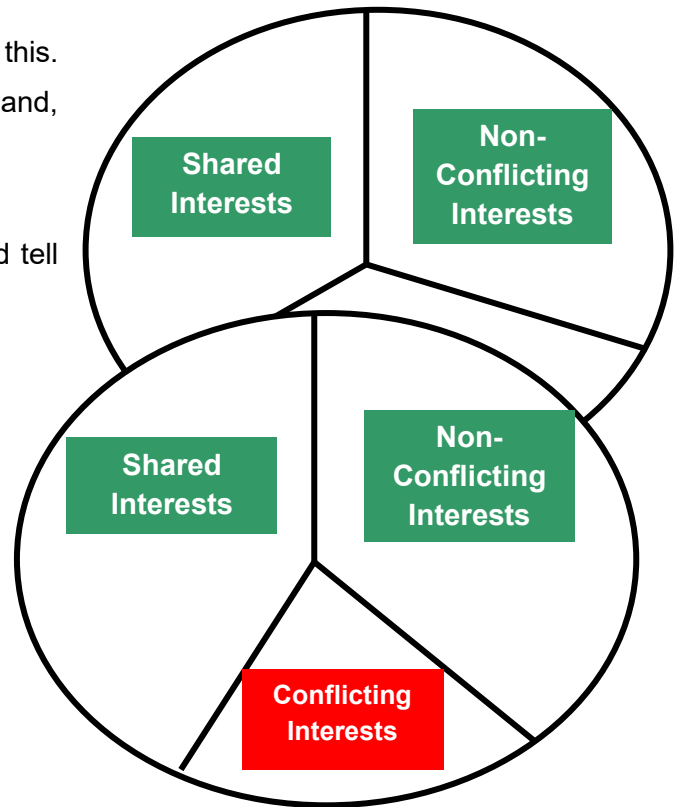
What would be examples of these interests you may encounter in your situation?

SHARED	NON-CONFLICTING	CONFLICTING

Think of the three kinds of interests in a graph like this. As shared and non-conflicting interests expand, **conflicting interests** must contract!

Therefore, if you can discover their interests and tell them about yours *before you get down to discussing positions*, you may discover that you have more **shared interests** or **non-conflicting interests** than you realized. The more you can identify the smaller you can force the conflicting issues portion.

Another way you may be able to reduce the size of the conflicting interests wedge is through identifying **EXTERNAL REFERENCES** that neither of you can influence as you work through the process. (We introduced this in the house-buying example on page 30.)



Suppose that you wanted to buy a used car. What could you use to determine a fair value that neither you nor the salesperson could influence? (The ‘Kelly Blue Book’ or the NADA Value guide)

What kind of external reference could you use when negotiating these issues?

This issue	Use these EXTERNAL references
You want to determine a fair price for a piece of used equipment that you want to buy.	An appraiser, a skilled mechanic you trust, a banker, or similar published sales in the area
You want to determine a fair, long-term price for delivering material to the jobsite.	Negotiate the load price with a variable pegged to the cost of fuel that is beyond the control of either side and will probably vary over the term of the deal.

For example, if you can base the price of the house you want to buy on the appraisal value + a small markup, you have instantly removed a major obstacle to the negotiation because someone

who has no stake in the outcome of your negotiation does the appraisal (an external reference). Therefore, each side can trust them!

Always look for external references that could apply to your diplomatic strategy BEFORE YOU BEGIN discussions.

The Secret of “WIIFT”

“WHAT’S IN IT FOR THEM”

How does the question, “*What’s in it for them?*” relate to our previous comments about interests vs. positions? Why would it be useful for you to make that connection before you start diplomatic discussions?

This gets you thinking about their possible interests behind their position.

It helps you ask yourself, “*If I were in their place, why would I want to have that position? Are there ways I can help them meet their interests while helping me get what I want, too?*”

Don’t Fight Over Value

What or who determines the “value” of an object?

Each side decides for themselves what the value is to them. Remember, both sides may not share the same idea of the object’s value or value may not always mean money. One side may pay more for a quicker delivery date.

What or who determines the “price” of something?

Each side decides for themselves what they are willing to pay for something or for what they are willing to sell it. Remember, price may not always mean money.

Could the value and the price of an object be widely different? Yes

How can they?

Suppose you were having a garage sale, trying to clear out some of the objects your family has been accumulating for the past 30 years. One of the items is the family piano on which your grandmother taught you to play simple songs. Later, you taught your children to play those songs

on the same piano. That old piano has many treasured memories for you. You have a written appraisal stating the value is \$750 and that is on the piano for shoppers to see.

Two people are looking at it. One is the local antique dealer (you see the sign on his truck in your driveway) and the other is a young mother with a five-year-old child with her.

The antique dealer has been trying to get your price down by pointing out the scratches on its legs (where your puppy once scratched it trying to get your attention when your grandmother was teaching you a song). The young mother is watching her child trying to pick out notes on the keyboard as she tells you they want to get her piano lessons someday but just cannot afford the cost of a piano and lessons right now.

Do you think the seller, the antique dealer, and young mother all have the same concept of the piano's price and its value?

Who do you think would 'value' the piano more: the antique dealer who is looking for an object to sell for a profit or the young mother looking to find a way to help her child learn about music?

Would they value it in the same way?

Do you think the price would be the same to both prospective buyers?

Do you think part of the "price" to the young mother may be 'take care of it and let it give your family great memories like it did for ours'?

Can you see now why price and value may be different from each perspective?

Why is that an important concept to understand when trying to gain a desired outcome and avoid a workplace war? (We ask it so you realize your view may not be the same as their view.)

Diplomatic Strategy & Tactics Worksheet

Use this worksheet before you start diplomatic negotiations to help get a firmer understanding of the situation and for strategic planning. **Remember, once you have started the negotiations, it is too late to prepare!**

DEVELOPING YOUR NEGOTIATING STRATEGY & TACTICS	
1.	Describe the issue you want to resolve:
2.	What are your priorities associated with resolving it? (For example, we would pay a little more if we could get a faster delivery. However, we will offer less at first.)
3.	What do you think may be behind any relational differences between you? What clues or information makes you think that? What approach works best with that type? (Review relational differences starting on page 6)
4.	What do you think are the other side's interests in this?
5.	What do you think are their priorities within the desired outcome?
6.	List common interests you think you share with the other side:
7.	List options that you can suggest based on the common interests:
8.	List interests that may be non-conflicting between the two sides:
9.	List interests that may be conflicting between the two sides:
10.	List any external references that can be used to reduce a potential battle:
11.	What possible consequences are there for the other side in not reaching an agreement? How will you make the other side aware that you know about these consequences?
12.	What are possible consequences for you in not reaching an agreement? Do you think the other side knows about this How and why?
13.	What is the least with which you will be satisfied ?
14.	What is your range of possible offers?

The Power of Pause

If things begin moving too fast and you are getting too emotional, do not hesitate to call “time out” and pause to take a break for a few minutes (or until tomorrow). Remember, a successful diplomatic discussion is based on mutual satisfaction (page 27) and cannot occur if one of the parties involved feels he or she is being pressured into a decision.

Never hesitate to take a break and review your pre-negotiation homework so you can reaffirm your limits.

If new information comes out that you did not have before the negotiation began, **you should stop and evaluate the new situation**. Failure to do this may result in your getting less than you need for a successful outcome.



Conceding With Style

If you must make a concession, you can convey how important it is to you (or make them think it is important) with a pause before making the concession. The pause is very important because.

- It gives the other party a feeling they have gained something of value.
- It makes you look thoughtful and deliberate.
- **WARNING!** Failure to pause and conceding too quickly may make the other party think they have not asked for enough and keep asking for more.

Act as though conceding was not your first choice of behavior, but for the good of the deal, you are willing to give in for this. It is an excellent way to build goodwill at a low price if what they are asking for really does not mean much to you.

Think about the husband and the reclining chair back on page 31. Suppose his wife asks, “Could you be happy with a dark green chair, so it matches our carpet?” He could pause before answering, make a face like he is really thinking hard about it, and then says, “OK, that will be fine.” In reality, he could care less as long as he gets his chair, but his wife thinks he conceded to please her. Both sides are satisfied.

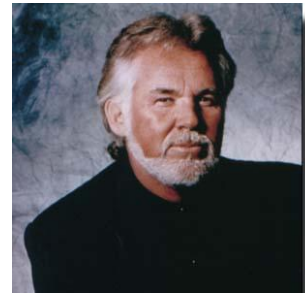
Common Workplace Diplomacy Tactics

Rarely will a workplace negotiation go exactly as both sides would like. Inevitably, one of the participants will have a little more experience, or a stronger desire to reach a particular outcome, or be better prepared, etc. In the very real likelihood that it does not progress exactly as you think it should, here are some tactics that you can use or at least recognize when the other side is using them on you.

The best way to improve your diplomatic skills is to remember, **“Perfect practice makes perfect”!** The more you try, the better you will become.

Tactic #1 – “The Gambler”

“You gotta know when to hold ‘em,
Know when to fold ‘em,
Know when to walk away,
And know when to run!”
(Kenny Rogers, “The Gambler”)



Preparation before you start negotiating helps you know all these things!

1. “Know when to hold ‘em”

You did your pre-negotiation preparation thoroughly (see page 35) and know:

- The value of what you are negotiating.
- Where your resistance threshold begins (This is the point at which you start pushing back because it is approaching your limit. You still have some room for flexibility but not much.)
- Your negotiation limits.
- The options you would be willing to consider. (Plan B, Plan C, Plan D, etc.)
- Or strongly suspect what your opponent’s intangible interests are.
- You have other choices if this does not work out. (This is not the only game in town.)
- That you are willing to walk away if the deal would require you to exceed your negotiation limits.

2. “Know when to fold ‘em”

- You have done your preparation (#1 above) and know when:
 - You have reached your negotiation limits.
 - The other person is not willing to move from his or her opening position.
 - You would have to concede too much to close the deal and would, in the long run, not be satisfied with it.

3. “Know when to walk away and know when to run” (See #2 above.)

Tactic #2 - “Seeking Higher Authority” or “The Invisible Partner”



Sometimes you need to take a break in the negotiations to review the whole process, consider other alternatives, settle your nerves, or to calm yourself down again.

You can say, “I’ll need to check with my boss (or my partner – even if you don’t have one – the owner, the renter, the mechanic; just anyone that sounds reasonable who is not there) before I can go any farther.

Let’s meet again at (time and place) to continue.”

If someone does this to you, insist on getting an exact time and date when you will resume.

(If you are feeling particularly feisty, ask to meet the “invisible partner” so you can pay your respects only, not to negotiate!

WAIT! What will be your reply if the other side wants to pay their respects to your “invisible partner”?)

Tactic #3 – “Good Cop & Bad Cop”

You have seen the television shows where the “bad cop” interrogates the suspect aggressively who still does not admit to anything.



The bad cop is fed up and threatens the suspect only to have the “good cop” step in and “save” the suspect. He suggests the bad cop go and get a cup of coffee while he and the suspect talk a little. Soon, the suspect is talking freely with his “new friend” and inadvertently gives up vital information that sends him to jail. The two cops, of course, were working together all along.

Sometimes negotiators for one side will do that same game. One will seem totally focused on their tangible position and not budge an inch. His friend will say something like, “Come on, can’t you see she (you) is trying to work with us? Why don’t you get a cup of coffee and let her and I talk a little? Maybe we can salvage something from this.”

Be careful! Your relief at finally having someone reasonable to work with may cause you to give up some information or concede something that really was important to you.

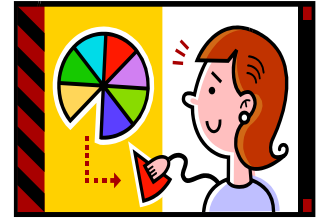
Always go back and review your situation while humming the chorus from *The Gambler* (page 37) to yourself.

Be sure you have prepared so well that you have no doubt about “When to hold ‘em, when to fold ‘em, when to walk away, and when to run”!

Tactic #4 – “Split the Difference”

When the negotiations have stalled, the other side may suggest, “Why don’t we split the difference, and be done?”

While it may sound like a reasonable thing to do and you are very tempted to say, “Yes,” there is a danger awaiting you.



You must ask yourself, “WHAT SPLIT PROPORTIONS DO THEY MEAN?”

Although you may assume it will be halfway between your positions and become a 50%-50% equal sharing, they may have meant 60-40 with you being on the short side!

Always verify the proportions before you agree! Otherwise, you could be very sorry.

Tactic #5 – “The Reality Check”

Sometimes it may be necessary to give the other side a peek at reality to get them to budge from their position. This “reality check” is actually an appeal to their interests as you are trying to help them see they are better off working with you than against you.

For example, you and your counterpart both work for the same project client but are negotiating about allocation of resources on the project. (Suppose there is no contractual allocation existing.) You may say something like, *“I hope we can find a way to resolve this without getting the client (or some other high-ranking person) involved. If they have to get into it, we lose any control over the allocation.”*

The ‘reality check’ aspect of this is your letting him know that you won’t hesitate to escalate this if he won’t work with you in good faith. The reality he needs to understand is that you are determined to get a resolution and will not let his games or tricks stand in your way.

Disruptive Tactics

Here are some typical disruptive tactics used in workplace negotiations and ways you can counter them.

DISRUPTIVE TACTIC	THE COUNTER MOVE
They put you in a stressful or distracting situation. Sitting facing the sun, an unstable (or too low) chair, a noisy background, etc.	Confront the behavior – not the person. “I’ll have to get out of the sun (find another chair, find a quieter place) before I can concentrate on our negotiation.”
They take an extreme position. (“We won’t settle for less than \$X” “You’ll have to deliver it by the 1 st of the month or no deal.” They offer you \$100,000 for a house that is clearly worth \$175,000”)	Look for the rationale behind the extreme position. (“Why is \$X the specific amount? Are there other factors involved that force you to say \$X? Are you not aware of what property values are in this neighborhood? Help us understand why you think we would agree to something like that.”)
Obvious Distortions (“This car was only driven by a little old lady who never went faster than 30 mph nor drove more than 3 miles at a time.”)	Pretend belief but ask for verification. (“You can imagine how surprised I am to find such a little-used car. Do you have documentation that can help me believe this isn’t a dream?”)
Quasi-authority (“I’ll have to take your offer to my boss for final approval.”)	Clarify their authority first (“Before we get into this, do you have authority to sign a final agreement, or are you collecting data for someone else?”)
Doubtful intentions You are not sure of their intent to comply with the decision. (“We agree to buy the manuals from you and not make any copies.”)	Give yourself a contingent (“While we are confident no one [don’t say ‘you’ here] will make copies of the manual to avoid buying them from us, would you consider a minimal purchase amount based on the intended audience you told us you will have?”)
Remember, in many situations...less than full disclosure is not lying. (This is information for you – not a disruptive tactic!)	Make sure before you start that you have identified and addressed all of your interests. That way, even if they fail to disclose everything, you will have negotiated about the issues that concern you.
Good guy-bad guy They work in pairs while the “good guy” tries to get the bad guy to calm down while asking for a concession from you to help him (good guy) satisfy the bad guy.	Recognize it for what it is and confront them. (“Look, if you two need to have a moment alone to work this out, I don’t mind waiting outside for a moment.”)
Threats or final positions (“Take it or leave it!” “We just don’t do things <i>that</i> way in our company!”)	Ask for clarification (“Are you saying that you are willing to let all the time and effort we both have put into this to be wasted if we do not do X?” “Can you tell me just how your company <i>does do things</i> ?”)
Refuse to negotiate (“We’ll see you in court!”)	Realize it may be a negotiating tactic. (Look at their interests. Why would they not want to negotiate? Are they hoping to get you to make a first offer? Maybe they really cannot afford it and want to save face. Try to communicate with them through a 3 rd party that both sides trust.)

DISRUPTIVE TACTIC	THE COUNTER MOVE
Escalating demands (“Now that we have that out of the way, there is one additional, <i>very small</i> consideration...” “I know my curfew is 10:00 but I’d like to stay out with the kids until 10:30.”)	Confront it or reverse it (“Where did this come from? Why do you think we would be willing to agree to a final amount only to have another <i>very small</i> consideration come up? Why would I think it would not keep happening?” “What assurance can you give us that it won’t keep happening?” “I can understand that you would like to be out later but, you know, the more I think about it, I would be more comfortable if you were back home by 9:30”)

Reaching the Agreement

“It ain’t over until the fat lady sings!”ⁱⁱⁱ

Your diplomatic discussion is not complete until both sides have agreed on issues like these:

- What will happen?
- Who else is involved?
- When it will happen?
- Who does what?
- Who pays how much and when?
- A confirmation that we both understand the same thing with a written contract if anything of value is involved or a tangible review if nothing of value is involved



(Note: This is not a legal definition of what is necessary! It is only “thought starters” for this course.)

Some Closing Tactics

The best way always to close the deal is just ASK! This is not the time to be vague! If you think you have met all of their requirements (and certainly enough of yours that you will be satisfied with this outcome), then politely say something like, “*It sounds like we each will be very satisfied with this, so can we sign it and start working on making it happen?*”

Some people will have no problem signing while others have difficulty taking that final step (even if they get everything they need) and will need a little nudging to help them make the commitment.

These are some of the most common and effective closing tactics used in business negotiations. You may have used some of them already or has them used with you.

Closing Tactic #1 – If, then

If either side (or both) still has a point that cannot be given up so the deal can close, look back over the whole proposal. Try to find a place where one side did not get everything they wanted and link that to a closing.

Suppose the client felt the monthly service checkup was a little too expensive and was using that to avoid signing the contract, you could offer, *“If the service agreement on the copier also provided for one free service call within a six-month period, then would you be willing to sign now?”* You will have linked their hesitation about the per-price call to a remedy that helps them feel they are getting more for their money.

Suppose you are selling a customized software package that has a purchase price of \$20,000 and an annual license/maintenance fee of \$3,500. The manager you are dealing with understands the benefits of the program and wants it for her department. She is willing to agree to a three-year contract. You have learned she has a \$15,000 limit on what she can approve without higher authority. In addition, you are not sure about her ability to “sell” it to her manager who can approve the \$20,000 cost of the software.

You could link her agreement to a lower price and a higher annual fee since the software company would prefer a lower price and a higher annual cash flow (the license/maintenance fee) instead of a “no sale.” You offer, *“If we lower the purchase price to your approval limit of \$15,000 and increase the annual license/maintenance fee to \$5,250 for three years, then will you sign it today?”*

WARNING!!

Never ask people to “concede” something because that suggests they are giving in or getting less in the deal. Instead, suggest the parties involved “trade” something with each other. (However, you can use that powerful sense of inequity if you say, *“I will concede that to you if...”* You give them the impression you are giving up something valuable to you.)

Closing Tactic #2 – Assume Agreement and Offer Options

If you sense they may have trouble making a commitment by saying, “YES,” then **assume their agreement and offer them a choice of options or implementation.**

Suppose you are interviewing an applicant that you would like to hire. You have gone back-and-forth on the offering package and sense they are satisfied with the offer but, for some reason, just can't bring themselves to say 'Yes'!



You can say, *“Would you rather start on Monday the 3rd or the 10th? Either one will get you into the pay cycle starting on the 15th.”* You really do not care which day they pick but only that they do pick one because that means they have agreed to your offer (at least in their minds.) As soon as they select one, you have closed the deal and can mark on the hiring contract the start date and give it to them for signature.



“We have to catch up on a lot of work this week. What night would you prefer to stay late and help me do it?” (You do not ask, “Do you want to work late?”)

“It is time for a change of scenery. Where would you like to go for dinner tonight?” (You do not ask, “Do you want to stay home tonight or go out to eat.”)



“Would you rather pick up your toys now or before you can go out to play?”
(You do not ask, “Do you want to pick up your toys?”)



Closing Tactic #3 – Review Features & Benefits

Determine in advance the major features & benefits of your idea and present only the ones which will have value to the interests of the person you are trying to persuade.

FEATURES are undeniable facts about the object such as its color, it has a V-8 engine, it requires 2 D-Cell batteries, etc.

BENEFITS are what that feature means to the buyer. Be sure you carefully select the benefits that you highlight.



For example, if you were selling SUVs, you would think twice before making a point of mentioning a big, gas-guzzling V-8 engine (a feature) as a benefit to a customer with bumper stickers on their car supporting energy conservation.

FEATURES	BENEFITS
This new car features air conditioning.	The benefit is you will ride cooler.
What are some features and benefits of working for your organization that you would emphasize to an applicant you would like to hire?	
What would determine WHICH features and benefits you would stress?	

Closing Tactic #4 - Welcome Resistance



Welcome resistance because it identifies what you must overcome for acceptance of your idea!

Ask for their reasons for resistance **directly** using **indirect** questions:

“What obstacles do you see that I may have overlooked?” (A *direct question* to them phrased *indirectly through your possible error.*)

Ask for specifics instead of generalities for resistance:

“I am sorry but ‘I just do not like it!’ does not tell me much about your viewpoint. What ***specifically*** do you have concerns with?”

Resistance of, “We just do not process payments in that way!” should lead you to say, “Please tell me in what way you DO process payments.”



As long as you get the result you want, do you really care about the process leading to it?

This is a chance to give in to their process ideas while retaining your ultimate result. This satisfies both sides

Listen without interrupting (not just hear) to their expression of resistance because:

- They may answer their own objections
- You may realize they do not really understand the situation, and this gives you a chance to clarify and possibly salvage your idea
- They may lose some of their pent-up emotion by talking it out
- They may hear themselves and realize their objection is actually petty
- They may identify a problem that you missed which saves you embarrassment

- They may be able to offer an alternative which will work and still be acceptable to them

Welcome their replies because it gives you an opportunity to find a solution

Ask if they would agree if you could find a way around their objection:

- “Would you be willing to try it if it cost less?”
- “If I can find a way to get our people trained, would you be willing to do it this way?”

Ask for specifics instead of generalities for resistance:

- “I can understand your saying it costs too much. Can you tell me ***how much too much?***”

Reverse roles with them and ask for their solution:

- “If this were your problem to solve, how would you solve it?” (If you can agree to their solution, then do it! Remember, which is most important to you...***that you get the result you want or the result and the way you want it done?***)

Ask them what they would require for agreement.

Closing Tactic #5 – Trade Some Information

Offer to be the first to give a little information *if they are willing to do so, too*.

For example, you may say, “*We seem to be stalled. If I share a little of my interests with you, would you be willing to tell me a little about yours?*”

You are making it clear before you say anything that you expect reciprocity. If they agree, then share a little. If they do not, you have not given up anything. Ideally, going back and forth as trust builds between you may help you realize how each side can benefit.

Another benefit may be that as you share information, you discover that your interests are NOT competing; you just THOUGHT they were because you were so focused on positions.

Here is an example that admittedly is a little extreme but makes the point. Suppose both of you are food processing companies competing in negotiations with a vendor for a limited supply of their product - oranges.

Your bidding war is getting very expensive and each of you needs the entire supply of this particular kind of orange. Before things get out of hand, you ask if the other will trade some information about your interests.

They agree and you say, "We have a new food snack coming out and we need those orange rinds for flavoring." They smile and say, "We have a new food coming out, too, but we need the PULP and will discard the rinds!"

Suddenly, you two are no longer competitors *because your interests are different* although you each need the entire supply. Although this is a rare situation, please keep it in mind when you find yourself in a bidding war and you ASSUME (not know) each side is after the same interest!

Closing Tactic #6 – Try Mixing and Matching

Many times, we become focused on one position when we discover resistance and assume it is the most important issue TO BOTH SIDES. Then we begin to dig on our position while trying to push the other off of theirs.

Try setting it aside for a moment and considering other potential interests the other side may have. For example, if price becomes an issue, say, "Let's set this aside temporarily and look at a delivery date (or quantities, or something else that may be bound up in this.)"

Mixing and matching may result in more options or variations that you originally thought existed. They may say, "If you could delay taking delivery for a week, we could come down on the price a little bit."

Suddenly, the big obstacle you **THOUGHT** you had becomes smaller as you discover there may be some mix-and-match combinations of price, quantities, delivery dates, transportation, etc. that will allow both of you to reach a satisfactory outcome.

Closing Tactic #7 - Back to Square #1

If you have to go back to the beginning, **be sure you come up with fresh ideas, issues, concerns, trades, etc.** If not, you will end up exactly where you were before when you stalled. Remember, it makes no sense to keep doing things the way you always have and expect different results.

Characteristics of Successful Workplace Diplomacy

Regardless of the subject, there are some common elements shared by all successful diplomatic discussions:

1. It should reach a **mutually beneficial agreement** (meets the legitimate interests of both sides to the extent possible, resolves conflicting interests fairly, will last for some time, and considers community [workplace, neighborhood, family] interests.)
2. It should be **“efficient”** (able to be implemented with a minimum of “moving parts”, other people or factions, and contingencies on future events)
3. Should **improve** (or not damage) **the relationship** between the parties involved
4. It should **create an environment in which we would be willing to negotiate with each other again.**

Why Diplomacy Occasionally Fails

Unsuccessful diplomatic discussions and subsequent wars can result from many things:

- Poor preparation by failing to define desired outcomes, limits, possible issues for trades, consequences of not reaching a desirable outcome before starting
- Failure to consider the other side’s potential needs, wants, and negotiating style

- Failure to identify combinations of desirable solutions within the context of the “big picture” (i.e., pay more for faster delivery, charge less for lower quality, etc.)
- Failure to maintain a long-term view on the ultimate goal(s) by getting distracted on short-term issues
- Failure to “know when to hold ‘em, when to fold ‘em, when to walk away, and when to run!” (Kenny Roger’s, “The Gambler”)^{iv}
- Failure to understand the difference between positions and interests

Diplomatic Tips and Last Thoughts

As we said earlier, the more you practice your diplomatic skills in an attempt to avoid a workplace war, the stronger they will become, and you will gain confidence as you move ahead in your career.

These are a few tips and last thoughts to keep close by as you gain this experience.

1. **You cannot do things the way you always have and expect different results.** If something does not seem to be working, do not make the mistake of automatically trying it harder. Ask yourself if there are other ways to approach what you want and consider doing things differently.
2. **There are no faulty conclusions, just faulty assumptions.** When you come up with unexpected outcomes, go back and review your assumptions. Two and two are always equal four. So, if you keep getting “three,” maybe you need to look closer at what you think are twos.
3. Do not hesitate to ask, **“Why would I want to do that?”** when someone proposes something that you think is outrageous or unexpected for these reasons:
 - a. It gives you time to think a little more
 - b. It gives you time to recover if you were caught completely off guard
 - c. It makes you appear thoughtful
 - d. It gives them the chance to provide more information that may tell you something you did not know

- e. It keeps you from overreacting (in case it is not warranted) which may harm the progress of the discussion.

For example, if your teenager wants to extend their curfew, your asking, “*Why would I want to do that?*” makes you sound reasonable and willing to listen. (You can still say no after hearing their rationale without causing any hard feelings.)

4. **The more you narrowly define a satisfactory outcome makes it harder for you to be satisfied.** Conversely, the greater the possibility of options to your satisfactory outcomes increases the chances you will find a satisfactory outcome.

For example, if you are looking for a new SUV and have defined your interests as:

- It scored in the top five of insurance roll-over tests
- Must get at least X miles per gallon in the city
- Have A/C and a music package with AM/FM, CD, and tape player
- Carry six adults comfortably
- Ranked in top four of Consumer Reports of retaining resale value, etc.,

You have given yourself many options of dealers to visit for your “transportation solution.” However, if you define your satisfaction as only a Toyota Highlander, your options for a satisfactory negotiation are severely limited.

5. **How can I make it easy for them to help me get what I want?**

Suppose your counterpart likes your proposal but needs some help in selling it to his/her boss. Do not hesitate to ask how you can help them make the sale to their boss because by helping them, you are helping yourself.

6. **Trust is historic**

We must learn that we can trust people based on our experiences with them. Remember that while not every diplomatic discussion may end the way you want it to, it is important that you at least retain goodwill with the other side. You never know when your paths will cross again, and you want them to recall your behavior kindly.

7. Signing the contract is the beginning of the relationship. This is NOT the time to show them how tough you can be.

If you beat someone down to the minimums and then sign a contract with them, THEY HAVE THE LENGTH OF THE CONTRACT TO TRY TO GET EVEN WITH YOU!

You *virtually guarantee* they will try to recover self-respect by meeting minimum performance requirements in the contract. You will spend too much time managing the relationship to make it profitable for you.

Thank you for taking our course.

ⁱ <http://www.todaysengineer.org/2005/Sep/6ways.asp>

ⁱⁱ http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Frederick_II_of_Prussia

ⁱⁱⁱ -New York Mets Manager and Baseball Hall of Fame Catcher Yogi Berra when asked by a reporter for his opinion about an opera currently playing on Broadway in 1969

^{iv} http://www.lyricsfreak.com/k/kenny+rogers/the+gambler_20077886.html