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# Beneficial Conflict and Destructive Conflict in Teams and How to Deal with It

## Differences between beneficial conflict and destructive conflict in teams

Conflict is a result of real or perceived opposition to another's values actions or interests. This can occur internally or externally. Conflict work groups can affect the organisation as a whole and conflict resolution can produce a positive outcome for both parties involved. Constructive conflict is where the benefits outweigh the disadvantages it generates productivity, shared decisions that are beneficial to the team. The process of constructive conflict is just as important as the end result. Destructive conflict often stems from guidelines that have been rigidly set and in most cases this type of conflict produces negative results. Opposing teams in conflict are often subjected to personal attacks, threats and hostility. On a whole; defeat of the opposition is the main goal, rather than coming to a resolution that both parties can agree with.

On the contrary to the destructive conflict, constructive conflict has a strong belief that all parties involved can be a winner and the goals involved from both parties are flexible which means a common link between both parties can be found. Beneficial conflict relies on a flow of communication and a willingness to accept change. Poor conflict management often limits positive interaction and reproduces destructive conflict. The following are a few causes of destructive conflict: feeling of inadequacy, hopelessness, lack of empathy, fear of change and lack of understanding of different views.

Overall constructive conflict fuels conversation, employees develop a better relationship between themselves and their superiors – collaboration increases as well as productivity and in turn promotes equality; on the other hand destructive conflict promotes inequality and causes friction between relationships. Respect is often lost between co-workers this often leads to frustration and resentment which also leads to low productivity and unfinished tasks that have been set.

## Methods of dealing with conflict within a team

Prepare for resolution by firstly acknowledging the problem for it to be managed and resolved. In some cases, the problem may start off trivial and members of the team may ignore these first signs. As a team discuss the impact the conflict is having on team dynamics and performance. Everyone involved must agree to cooperate to resolve the conflict. This can be done by putting the team first and putting aside your own ideas and opinions. Communication is paramount, and

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everyone involved need to talk about the issue and discuss their feelings and understand where the other person is coming from to move on.

First one must understand the situation – clarify positions within the team of everyone to identify the nature of the conflict objectively, by listing facts, assumptions and beliefs underlying each position and what information is the basis of their beliefs. Analyse the team by breaking off into smaller groups and seek out which facts and assumptions are true. These areas will bring about new areas of agreement along with new ideas and solutions. It is important not to criticize or judge the perceptions of other people, but instead listen to all ideas presented. Each team member needs to be heard and acknowledged to have a solution. After the group dialogue, and the facts are uncovered team members step away from their emotional attachment and see the issue at hand more objectively.

Lastly reach an agreement – with all facts and assumptions considered, the team can see the best action to take to reach an agreement. If it needs to be taken further, a timescale must be put in place to agree what needs to be done, by whom and see which decision making and evaluation need to be employed, and make sure that the team is committed to work with the outcome of the proposal, analysis and evaluation.

When the conflict has been resolved you should celebrate and acknowledge the contributions everyone made toward the solution, in turn building team cohesion and confidence in their problem making skills and can help avert any further conflict. This process can help solve team conflict both efficiently and effectively. First gain understanding of the different perspectives and using the understanding to expand your own thoughts and beliefs about the issue.

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