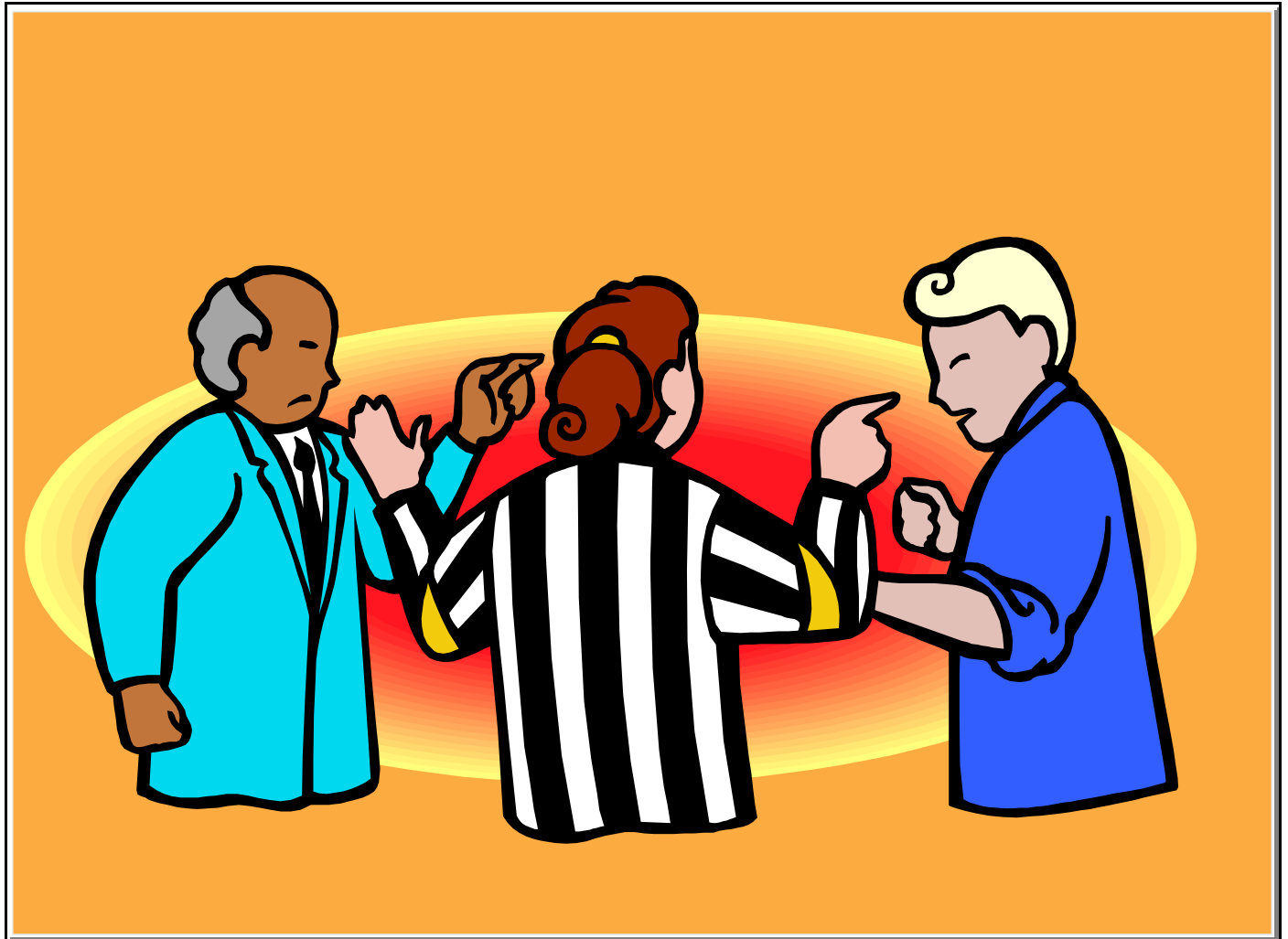


Conflict and Challenge in the Workplace

Satellite Seminar ♦ Participant Handout

October 30, 2002



National Food Service Management Institute

The University of Mississippi

P. O. Drawer 188

University, MS 38677-0188

Phone: 800-321-3054

Fax: 800-321-3061

E-mail: nfsmi@olemiss.edu

Web: www.nfsmi.org



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Table of Contents

Satellite Seminar Objectives	2
Kilmann-Thomas Model	3
Response to Conflict	4
Assumptions About, Causes of, and Value of Conflict	5
Conflict Resolution Styles	6
Achieving Win Win Results	7
Dealing with Conflict Worksheet	8
Tips for Dealing with Non-Productive Behaviors	9
Analysis and Action Worksheet	11
Pretest	12
Posttest	13
Suggested Readings	14
<i>Management Skills for Success</i> Collection	14
Answer Keys	14
Satellite Seminar Evaluation	15
ASFSA Continuing Education Credit Form	16

Satellite Seminar Objectives

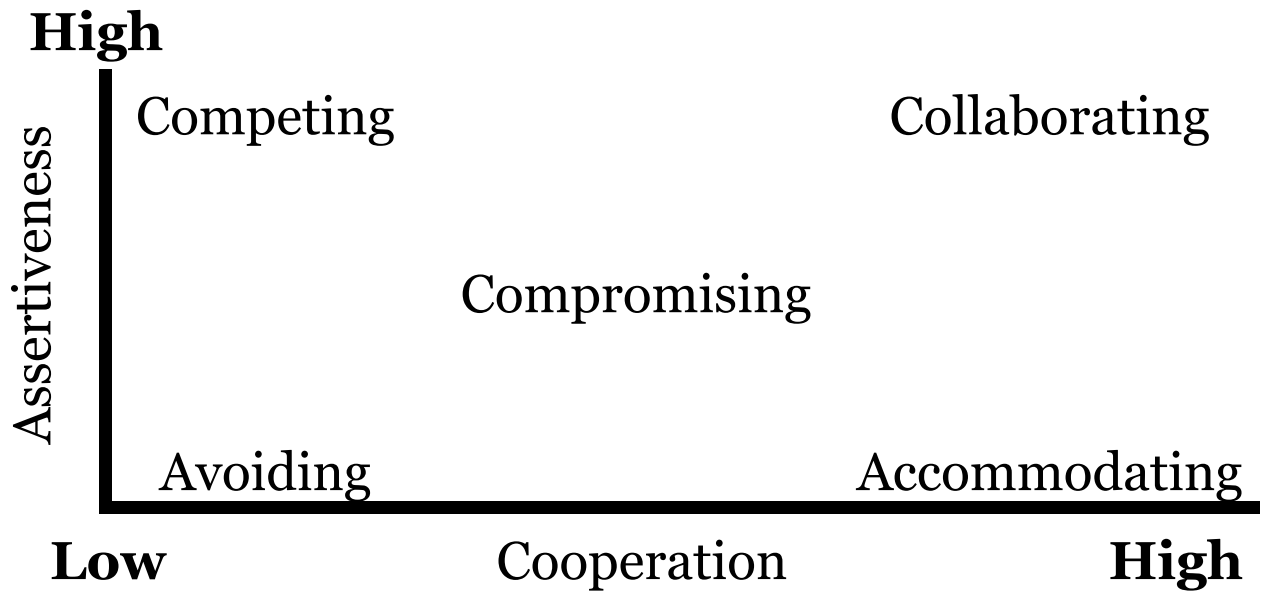
At the completion of this satellite seminar participants will be able to:

1. Recognize how they handle conflict individually.
2. Discuss the causes and value of conflict.
3. List characteristics of conflict resolution styles.
4. Recognize problem behaviors or non-productive behaviors and actions of difficult people.
5. Examine coping strategies for working with non-productive behaviors.



Kilmann-Thomas Model

Defining the Conflict Modes



NOTES



Response to Conflict

When conflict occurs at work, how do you usually handle it? After each of the following techniques, indicate whether you use it often, occasionally, or rarely.

Technique used to handle conflict	Often	Occasionally	Rarely
Avoid the person or subject			
Change the subject			
Try to understand the other person's point of view			
Get another person to decide who is right			
Play the martyr			
Give in			
Apologize			
Try to identify specifically what you agree or disagree on			
Whine or complain to get your way			
Pretend to agree			
Admit that you are wrong, even if you do not believe you are			
Fight it out			
Turn the conflict into a joke			
Work toward a mutual solution			

Most of us use different techniques for resolving conflict with different people. Sometimes different situations require different techniques. Often we use a limited number of techniques to resolve conflict.



Assumptions About, Causes of, and Value of Conflict

Causes of Conflict	What Does it Mean?	What is the Value to You?
Misunderstanding	When individuals do not hear what is being said.	
Personality clashes	When individuals do not value “people just like me.”	
Competition for resources	When employees believe they are better off competing for resources rather than cooperating.	
Authority issues	When employees lack confidence in their leaders or perceive overuse of authority.	
Lack of cooperation	When one person does not share information with the whole group.	
Differences over methods or style	When agreement does not exist on standard ways of completing a task.	
Low performance	When individuals are not working to their potential.	
Value or goal differences	When individuals value different outcomes or objectives.	

The Value of Conflict

Conflict is **destructive** when it:

- ▶ Diverts energy from more important issues and tasks.
- ▶ Deepens differences in values.
- ▶ Polarizes groups so that cooperation is reduced.
- ▶ Destroys the morale of people or reinforces poor self-concepts.

Conflict is **constructive** when it:

- ▶ Opens up issues of importance, resulting in issue clarification.
- ▶ Helps build cohesiveness as people learn more about each other.
- ▶ Causes reassessment by allowing for examination of procedures or actions.
- ▶ Increases individual involvement.



Conflict Resolution Styles

Consider these five basic approaches to conflict resolution. In the right column, indicate the styles you are most likely to use with your followers (F), peers (P), or manager (M).

Resolution Style	Characteristic Behavior	Favorite Sayings	F, P, M
Avoid (Lose/Lose)	Non-confrontational; denies issues are a problem. This is the style of a highly dependent person without inner direction. May postpone conflict or avoid it at all costs. Moving away, leaving, losing.	“Let’s discuss this later.” “Let’s forget it.”	
Accommodate (Lose/Win)	Agreeable, non-assertive; cooperative even at expense of personal goals. Yielding, moving toward the other person, friendly.	“I’m sorry. You’re right.” “Go ahead and do it your way.” “Oh, well, it is hopeless to try.”	
Compete (Win/Lose)	Uses power, position, personality, or status to get own way. Academics, athletics, and the law can reflect this mind-set. Assertive and aggressive. Forceful, moving against others.	“Of course I’m right.” “Do it my way.” “It’s your mistake.” “If I win, you lose.”	
Compromise	Aggressive but cooperative. Tries to bargain, compromise, and split the difference.	“Let’s talk this over so we each get what we need.”	
Collaborate (Win/Win)	High respect for mutual benefit. Recognizes the needs and mutual benefit of both parties. Strives for win/win or recognizes abilities and expertise of all. Integrating, working toward solution with others.	“Let’s share our ideas. We can work this out if we work together and value each other’s skills and values.”	

Adapted from the work of Kenneth Thomas and the Thomas-Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument, *Robert B. Maddux in Team Building: An Exercise in Leadership*, and Stephen R. Covey’s *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*.



Achieving Win Win Results

- Gain participation from everyone involved in the conflict.

- State the reason to work on a solution.

- Have each party see the problem/situation from the other point of view. State what you want. Repeat what you hear.

- Identify the key issues and concerns involved.

- Determine what results would constitute a fully acceptable solution.
 - ✓ State what you WANT to happen when results have been achieved.
 - ✓ Include the results for you, for your relationships, and for job or task achievement.
 - ✓ Agree to work toward resolution and schedule a follow-up meeting if necessary.



Dealing with Conflict Worksheet

Directions: Circle three techniques you often use to resolve conflict that do not work. Check one technique you will try to use more often.

Avoid the person or subject

Change the subject

Try to understand the other person's point of view

Get another person to decide who is right

Play the martyr

Give in

Apologize

Try to identify specifically what you agree or disagree on

Whine or complain to get your way

Pretend to agree

Admit that you are wrong, even if you do not believe you are

Fight it out

Turn the conflict into a joke

Work toward a mutual solution

Consider a win/win agreement you want to create. Remember, it will take more than just you to create the agreement. Begin thinking about it now. Jot down some ideas about how to follow each of the steps outlined in the worksheet.



Tips for Dealing with Non-Productive Behaviors

Arguing - looking for an opportunity to disagree or pick at an idea, when questioning goes beyond clarification or thoughtful debate and becomes annoying and disruptive, not letting go of own idea to hear others.

Manager Goal: **Help to consider other ideas.**

Manager Tips: Change the focus.
Agree with her ideas.
Limit time for speaking.
Ask what the group thinks.
Paraphrase positions.
Ignore, and then meet later for one-on-one.

Withdrawing - acting indifferent or passive, not being involved in discussion, occupying self by doodling or whispering to others, getting off the subject.

Manager Goal: **Persuade to become involved and to contribute.**

Manager Tips: Get ideas for getting the employee involved in advance.
Include ideas in final product.
Have him/her share ideas with someone else, then come back to the group.
Ask open-ended questions.

Aggression - going after others' ideas in a critical or vicious manner, blaming others or showing hostility and anger, putting down others' ideas or status.

Manager Goal: **Persuade to become involved and to contribute.**

Manager Tip: Keep your cool!
"I see you have strong opinions. Let's hear what the others think."
Respond to the whole group, not just the one person.
Remain neutral.
Check to see if you have eliminated all threats from the work domain.

Complaining - finding fault, blaming, whining that things are unfair, always expressing dissatisfaction with the way things are.

Manager Goal: **Shift to problem solving.**

Manager Tip: Be patient and compassionate.
Commit to getting the person to focus on solutions.
Listen for the main points.
Identify the key points (even if you have to interrupt).
Shift focus to solutions.



Tips for Dealing with Non-Productive Behaviors

Zapping - like a sniper, zapping or putting down others' ideas, squelching anything new or different with "It will never work," or "We tried that once, and it was a failure."

Manager Goal: **Focus on the possibilities.**

Manager Tips: Ask, "How do the rest of you see this?"

Ask person to offer a replacement idea for the one she zapped.

Say, "I think this idea has possibilities; anyone else see a chance here?"

Focus on the future.

Talking - loves to hear own voice, doesn't relinquish the floor, monopolizes the conversation, and uses all the airtime.

Manager Goal: **Persuade to be quiet.**

Manager Tips: Assign the role of scribe.

Refer to ground rules of respecting, timeliness, and listening.

Use non-verbals (glance at watch to indicate your concern with time; with hands indicate that it is time to wrap up).

Confer privately to seek understanding of what the person wants.

Attention-seeking - clowns about things and disrupts the team's efforts to come to a conclusion or has an unusual way of calling attention to one's self (like standing on a chair when everyone else is seated).

Manager Goal: **Shift focus to task at hand.**

Manager Tips: Restate the purpose of the work or discussion.

Ask how the interruption or behavior relates to the topic or task.

Call on the person for serious dialogue to show that he can contribute. "I missed the point of your joke. Could you give me your point straight?"

Reward the serious side of the person by complimenting desired behavior.

Arrogance - highly assertive and outspoken, intends to get things done in the way he/she knows is best, very controlling and self-assured know-it-all.

Manager Goal: **Open mind to group task or new information.**

Manager Tips: Know what you are talking about.

Restate his/her ideas.

Agree with parts of these ideas.

Present ideas using words like "maybe," "perhaps," or "I wonder if."

Use "we" or "us" instead of "I" or "you."

Use questions to get expanded ideas.



Analysis and Action Worksheet

Write the initials of a person whose behaviors you currently view as difficult.

What action or behavior seems “difficult” to you?

What attitude or action of yours is contributing negatively to the situation?

What could you change about you?

What strategies could you use to make the situation more agreeable to you and the other person?

Check out your analysis with another participant. Share with the intent to identify the best options available to you, but be careful not to identify that person whose behaviors you view as different.



Pretest

Directions: Read the following questions and circle the correct response. This pretest is intended to be used as a self-evaluation tool.

1. Some examples of non-productive behaviors are expressing anger, not responding, and interrupting.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. Conflict with others should be avoided at all costs.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. The five styles of dealing with conflict include all of the following except:
 - a. Arguing
 - b. Accommodating
 - c. Competing
 - d. Compromising
 - e. Avoiding
 - f. Collaborating
4. Avoidance is one of the most common strategies for coping with conflict.
 - a. True
 - b. False
5. Collaborating is both assertive and cooperative.
 - a. True
 - b. False
6. Steps to resolving conflict include:
 - a. Determining if a problem exists
 - b. Listening with an open mind
 - c. Working out a plan that only pleases one of you
 - d. Stating what you think the problem is
 - e. All of the above
 - f. A, B, and D
7. In order to begin to think of ways to cope with difficult people and situations, we have to start with ourselves.
 - a. True
 - b. False
8. A zapper snipes at others' ideas and squelches anything new or different.
 - a. True
 - b. False
9. When someone complains, he or she:
 - a. Whines that things are unfair
 - b. Blames
 - c. Finds fault
 - d. Monopolizes the conversation
 - e. All of the above
 - f. A, B, and C
10. When confronted with a difficult situation, listen carefully without interruption, remain calm, speak with confidence, and look for a win/win situation whenever possible.
 - a. True
 - b. False



Posttest

Directions: Read the following questions and circle the correct response. This posttest is intended to be used as a self-evaluation tool.

1. In order to begin to think of ways to cope with difficult people and situations, we have to start with ourselves.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. When confronted with a difficult situation, listen carefully without interruption, remain calm, speak with confidence, and look for a win/win situation whenever possible.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. A zapper snipes at others' ideas and squelches anything new or different.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. Some examples of non-productive behaviors are expressing anger, not responding, and interrupting.
 - a. True
 - b. False
5. Steps to resolving conflict include:
 - a. Determining if a problem exists
 - b. Listening with an open mind
 - c. Working out a plan that only pleases one of you
 - d. Stating what you think the problem is
 - e. All of the above
 - f. A, B, and D
6. The five styles of dealing with conflict include all of the following except:
 - a. Arguing
 - b. Accommodating
 - c. Competing
 - d. Compromising
 - e. Avoiding
 - f. Collaborating
7. Collaborating is both assertive and cooperative.
 - a. True
 - b. False
8. Avoidance is one of the most common strategies for coping with conflict.
 - a. True
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9. When someone complains, he or she:
 - a. Whines that things are unfair
 - b. Blames
 - c. Finds fault
 - d. Monopolizes the conversation
 - e. All of the above
 - f. A, B, and C
10. Conflict with others should be avoided at all costs.
 - a. True
 - b. False



Suggested Readings

Adams, B. (1998). *Managing people*. Holbrook, MA: Adams Media Corporation.

Axlerod, A. & Holtje, J. (1997). *201 ways to deal with difficult people*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Carlson, R. (1998). *Don't sweat the small stuff at work*. New York: Hyperion.

Covey, S. R. (1989). *The seven habits of highly effective people*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Gabarro, J. (Ed.). (1992). *Managing people and organizations*. Boston: Harvard Business School.

Management Skills for Success Collection

Content presented in this satellite seminar and accompanying participant handout is based on two human resource modules, "Dealing with Conflict in the Workplace" and "Dealing with Difficult People and Situations." These modules are part of the *Building Human Resource Management Skills: Management Skills for Success* collection available for purchase from NFSMI. This collection may be purchased from the NFSMI Sales Division, 1-800-321-3054, or borrowed from the Food and Nutrition Information Center (FNIC) at the National Agricultural Library (NAL). Visit the NAL Web site for questions and answers about lending services: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/general/lending.html>. Use the following call numbers when borrowing from NAL:

Management Skills for Success Topics - **Kit No. 400**

Leadership Development for Managers Topics - **Kit No. 401**

Achieving Effective Food Service System Topics - **Kit No. 402**

Answer Keys

Pretest: 1. a 2. b 3. a 4. a 5. a 6. f 7. a 8. a 9. f 10. a

Posttest: 1. a 2. a 3. a 4. a 5. f 6. a 7. a 8. a 9. f 10. b



Satellite Seminar Evaluation

Please complete this evaluation and fax or mail to NFSMI. Mark the number which best describes your feelings about *Conflict and Challenge in the Workplace*.

	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4	5
1. This satellite seminar presented valuable information.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The education level was appropriate.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The accompanying handouts were useful.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I received at least one idea that can be used in my program.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The length of this satellite seminar was good.	1	2	3	4	5

My position is (please mark one):

Food Service Assistant
 Manager
 Director
 State Agency Staff
 Other (Please specify) _____

The name of the state and viewing site: _____

Suggested topics for future satellite programs: _____

Additional Comments: _____

MAIL TO:
Conflict and Challenge in the Workplace
National Food Service Management Institute
 The University of Mississippi
 P. O. Drawer 188
 University, MS 38677-0188

FAX TO:
 1-800-321-3061



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October 30, 2002 ♦ Satellite Seminar

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