



## REDUCING CONFLICT

### Attitude Reflects Leadership

Conflict is part of everyday life. As leaders, it's important to find ways to reduce conflict in the office. Here are some tips to prevent conflict at work.

- **Encouragement** – Keep positive and always give your employees or co-workers feedback. This makes everyone in the workplace feel as though their work is being valued. Being consistent with this will teach everyone in the office to do the same.
- **Humor** – Promoting humor at work can lighten up the mood in the office. This allows everyone to have a little fun! People spend a great deal of time at work; if it's strictly business and no fun, you risk under-productive employees who aren't interested in staying at the company. While work is a responsibility, it should be a passion as well. Encourage humor in the office by doing a fun exercise before a meeting or sending out a humorous email.
- **Awareness** – Unfortunately, conflicts are bound to arise from time to time. Be aware of what conflicts could be brewing. Being aware will give you an idea of how to handle the situation. Does someone feel like they are not given enough personal space? Is it a personality clash between two co-workers? Once you notice a disruption in your team's efficiency, take the steps to resolve it!
- **Get Advice** – If you're having trouble resolving a conflict at work, seek help from someone in your company's HR department. An outside perspective can be helpful.
- **Get Ahead** – To avoid conflict from arising, teach your employees how to handle tense situations. Explain the importance of properly handling conflict at work and in life in general. You could even host a conflict resolution seminar. Keeping the office informed is one step toward a healthy work environment.

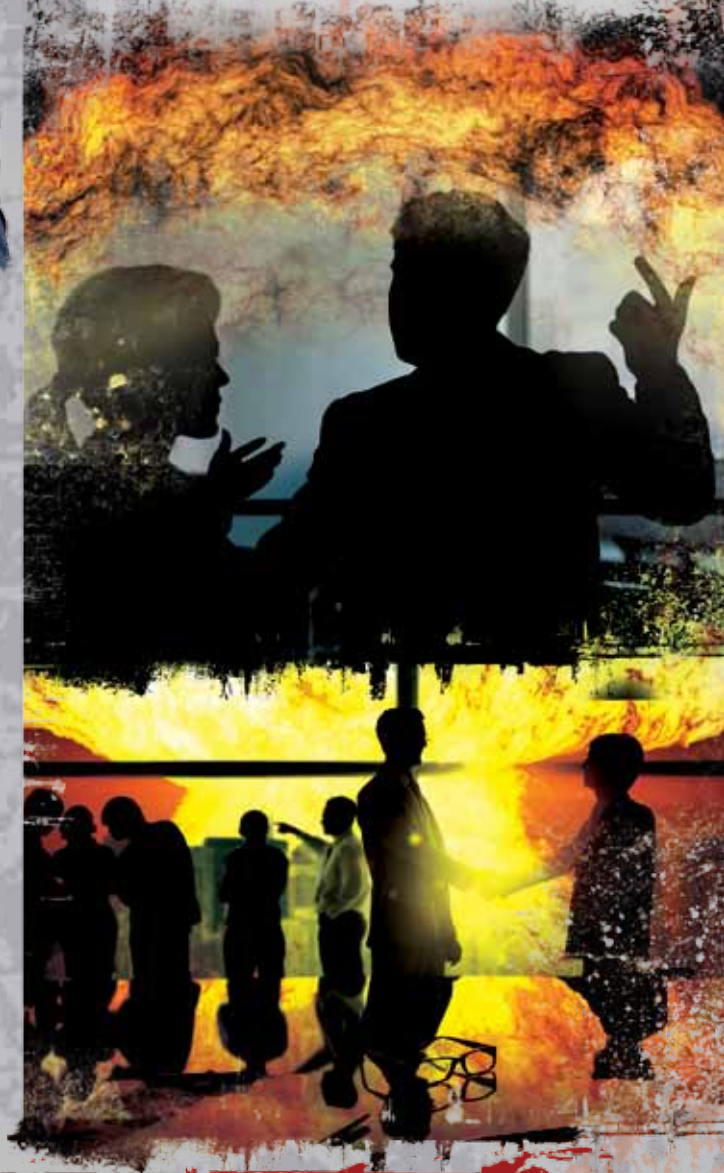
## A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

If conflict can be resolved, the situation may produce many positives. It can:

- Improve the quality of decisions.
- Produce creativity.
- Stimulate involvement in discussions.
- Facilitate employee growth and strengthen relationships between employees.
- Increase movement toward goals.
- Create a more energetic environment in the office.
- Foster new ideas and solutions.



# CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN THE WORKPLACE



Printed on 30% Post-Consumer Recycled Paper

STAY SAFE SERIES

© 2014 PRIMO PREVENTION, LLC • PO Box 371 • Reserve, LA 70084  
985-359-7848 • [www.primoprevention.com](http://www.primoprevention.com) • PSS-MH-19

## KEEPING THE PEACE





## WHAT IS CONFLICT?

Conflict is a normal and even healthy part of any relationship. After all, not everyone can be expected to agree on everything. Conflict in the workplace seems to be a fact of life. It's not uncommon for people with different goals and needs to come into conflict. It's important to create a work environment that enables everyone to thrive. When disagreements or differences in opinions escalate, it should be dealt with effectively. When conflict isn't dealt with immediately and in a positive way it can cause real harm to a relationship. If handled correctly, conflict can be an opportunity for growth and can even strengthen the bond between groups of people. By learning successful conflict resolution skills you can keep your relationships strong and growing.

## WHAT IS CONFLICT RESOLUTION?

At times we all get angry and frustrated. In these situations what do you do? You could throw a huge temper tantrum, say hurtful things or even get violent but do these actions ever solve the problem at hand? No, they actually make them worse.

When dealing with a conflict, it's important to sort things out in a way that's fair for everyone. Believe it or not, it is possible to settle a conflict peacefully. This process is called conflict resolution. Conflict resolution helps out in the most difficult situations and doesn't involve fighting or going against your ideas and beliefs. Trying to avoid the situation or person is never the best solution. It's best to work together and solve the problem! In many cases, effective conflict resolution skills can make the difference between positive and negative outcomes.

## WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT?

### Factors for Workplace Conflicts

- Feeling taken advantage of or taken for granted
- Having a perfectionist boss
- Receiving no compensation, reward or acknowledgments
- Dealing with unrealistic or unmet expectations from both sides
- No clarity of values and goals
- Values and goals of employees and employers are not synchronized
- Miscommunication between employees or no communication at all
- Ego clash or blame game

## MAKING THINGS RIGHT

### 4 Steps to Resolving Conflict

#### Step 1: Understand

In order for an argument to be resolved, everyone involved needs to understand what the conflict is about. To ensure this, everyone should:

- Have the chance to talk about how they feel.
- Listen carefully to what the others have to say.
- Try to understand the other's point of view.

#### Step 2: Avoid making things worse

- Avoid put-downs.
- Avoid screaming and shouting.
- Avoid any violent behavior including fighting, hitting, kicking, or pushing.

#### Step 3: Work together

- Say how they feel without blaming the others involved.
- Take turns at speaking.
- Speak in a calm quiet tone. When you're upset it may be hard to keep your voice down but speaking loudly will only make everyone more upset.
- Show the others involved that you're listening. Do this by:
  - Making eye contact with them when they speak.
  - Making 'listening noises.' For example, saying "Uh huh," "yes" or "no" in the right places.
  - Repeating what they said to ensure you understand correctly. For example, "So you're upset because I didn't invite you to Erica's party?"

#### Step 4: Find the solution

Once you've discovered the root of the problem, it's time to find a solution.

- Together try to think of ways to resolve the conflict.
- Sometimes it's helpful to have a mutual friend come in and suggest ways of making your ideas work.

Once everyone has agreed on a solution, then everyone is responsible for carrying it out. Sometimes things don't work out the first time. If not, you need to go through the entire process again and find a new solution that works better. Conflict resolution is not always easy. It takes everyone involved to work together willingly.

## LUKE & TONY'S STORY

Luke and Tony both work in the accounting department at a huge engineering firm. Tony is a new employee and Luke has been working for the company for 5 years. Luke and Tony do the exact same job. Luke likes to do things the way they have always been done and because he's been working there for longer he thinks he is always right. Tony tries his hardest to follow the company rules but he's still new and learning.

At work, employees must clock in 10 minutes before the start of each shift. Luke has to commute 30 minutes to work every day and sometimes because of the traffic he runs a little late. At least a few times a week, somebody asks Tony where Luke is at. Tony is frustrated and is tired of covering for Luke.

Finally, one morning, Luke arrives 30 minutes late. Tony is asked twice where Luke is. When Luke finally arrives at his work station, Tony confronts him. He says he will no longer cover for him when he's running late. Luke grows furious and the two of them begin shouting at each other. Their supervisor hears the commotion and takes the two workers into his office.

The three of them sit down and discuss the problem. Both Luke and Tony get the chance to explain their frustrations and together they discover a solution. Now, when a problem arises at work they discuss the issue rather than letting it get the best of them.

