



Conflict Styles

Instructions: Listed below are 15 statements. Each strategy provides a possible strategy for dealing with a conflict.

Give each a numerical value.

1 Always 2 Very Often 3 Sometimes 4 Not very Often 5 Rarely, if ever

Don't answer as you think you should, answer as you behave.

- ___ a. I argue my case to demonstrate the merits of the position I take.
- ___ b. I try to reach compromises through negotiation.
- ___ c. I attempt to meet the expectations of other people.
- ___ d. I seek to investigate issues with others, to find solutions that are mutually acceptable.
- ___ e. I am firm in resolve when it comes to defending my side of the issue.
- ___ f. I try to avoid being singled out, keeping conflict with others, to myself.
- ___ g. I uphold my solutions to problems.
- ___ h. I compromise to reach solutions.
- ___ i. I trade important information with others so that problems can be solved together.
- ___ j. I avoid discussing my differences with other people.
- ___ k. I try to accommodate the wishes of other people.
- ___ l. I seek to bring everyone's concerns out into the open to resolve disputes in the best possible way.
- ___ m. I put forward middle positions, in efforts to break conflict deadlocks.
- ___ n. I accept the recommendations of others.
- ___ o. I avoid hard feelings by keeping my disagreements with others to myself.

SCORING:

The 15 statements you just read are listed below under five categories. Each category contains the letters of three statements. Record the number you placed next to each statement. Calculate the total under each category.

Style				Total
Competitor	a	e	g	
Collaborator	d	i	l	
Avoider	f	j	o	
Accommodator	c	k	n	
Compromiser	b	h	m	

Results:

My dominant style is _____ (Your **LOWEST** score)

My back-up style is _____ (Your second lowest score)

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES

1. The Competitor

- The Competitor use a forcing or competing conflict management style
- They are highly goal-oriented
- The relationship takes on a lower priority
- They do not hesitate to use aggressive behaviour to resolve conflicts
- They can be autocratic, authoritative, and uncooperative; threatening and intimidating
- They have a need to win; therefore, others must lose, creating win-lose situations

Advantage:

If their decision is correct, a better decision without compromise can result.

Disadvantage:

May breed hostility and resentment toward the person using it.

Appropriate times to use this Style

- When conflict involves personal differences that are difficult to change
- When fostering intimate or supportive relationships is not critical
- When others are likely to take advantage of non-competitive behaviour
- When conflict resolution is urgent; when decision is vital in crisis
- When unpopular decisions need to be implemented

2. The Avoider

- They adopt an avoiding or withdrawing conflict management style
- They would rather hide and ignore conflict than resolve it; this leads them uncooperative and unassertive
- Tend to give up personal goals and display passive behaviour creating lose-lose situations

Advantage:

May help to maintain relationships that would be hurt by conflict resolution

Disadvantage:

Conflicts remain unresolved, overuse of the style leads to others walking over them

Appropriate times to use this Style:

- When the stakes are not high, or issue is trivial
- When confrontation will hurt a working relationship
- When there is little chance of satisfying your wants
- When disruption outweighs benefit of conflict resolution
- When gathering information is more important than an immediate decision
- When others can more effectively resolve the conflict
- When time constraints demand a delay

3. The Accommodator

- They use a smoothing or accommodating conflict management style with emphasis on human relationships
- Prepared to put the feelings of the other party before their own feelings or needs.
- They often ignore their own goals and resolve conflict by giving into others; unassertive and cooperative creating a win-lose (bear is loser) situation

Advantage:

Accommodating maintains relationships

Disadvantage:

Giving in may not be productive and they may be taken advantage of

Appropriate times to use this Style

- When maintaining the relationship outweighs other considerations
- When suggestions/changes are not important to the accommodator
- When minimizing losses in situations where outmatched or losing
- When time is limited or when harmony and stability are valued

4. The Compromiser

- They use a compromising conflict management style; concern is for goals and relationships
- Are willing to sacrifice some of their goals while persuading others to give up part of theirs
- Compromise is assertive and cooperative-result is either win-lose or lose-lose

Advantage:

Relationships are maintained and conflicts are removed

Disadvantage:

Compromise may create less than ideal outcome and game playing can result

Appropriate times to use this Style

- When important or complex issues leave no clear or simple solutions
- When all conflicting people are equal in power and have strong interests in different solutions
- When there are no time restraints

5. The Collaborator

- They use a collaborating or problem confronting conflict management style valuing their goals and relationships
- They view conflicts as problems to be solved finding solutions agreeable to all sides (win-win)

Advantage:

Both sides get what they want, and negative feelings are eliminated

Disadvantage:

Takes a great deal of time, effort and patience

Appropriate times to use this Style

- When maintaining relationships is important
- When time is not a concern
- When peer conflict is involved
- When trying to gain commitment through consensus building
- When learning and trying to merge differing perspectives