

Vanguard University
School for Professional Studies
Business Major
Degree Program

ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR
BUOM #372

Student Guide

01/09
V3.0
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Study of group behavior and how group functioning affects organizational effectiveness. Emphasis is placed on decision making and resolving conflict in groups. Students develop strategies for efficient and productive group management and determine which tasks are handled by groups and individuals.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The students will:

1. demonstrate knowledge of the types of group processes and the relationship of groups to organizations.
2. examine the DISC Inventory and a variety of motivational patterns that influence small group dynamics.
3. analyze group and individual decision-making techniques.
4. demonstrate an awareness of organizational complexity.
5. identify the nature and significance of group and organizational conflict and its management.
6. analyze the social dynamics of group processes.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Tubbs, Stewart. A Systems Approach to Small Group Interaction. Tenth Edition. New York, NY: McGraw Hill Inc., 2009.

Lafferty, Jay C. Desert Survival Situation. Plymouth, MI: Human Synergistics. 1987.

Kulkin, Sanford G., and Coleen Kulkin. The DISC Personality System. New Castle, PA: The Institute for Motivational Learning, Inc., 2008. (Phone: 800/779-3472 or Fax: 724/658-7310)

Thomas, Kenneth W., and Ralph H. Kilmann. Thomas-Kilmann Questionnaire. Tuxedo, NY: Xicom, Inc., 1990. (Phone: 800/759-4266 or Fax: 914/351-4762)

OVERVIEW

Human beings are social by nature and, as a result, spend much of their time in groups. Some groupings have essentially social purposes such as fraternities, sewing circles, or informal groups of friends. These social groups will grow and diminish according to the interest and social needs of the people involved, and there is generally little attention paid to what the group may produce. All that matters is whether or not the members are enjoying the time spent in the group setting.

Other groups are formed to complete a specific task, which is too large or too complex for any single person to accomplish. Examples of such groups that are essentially task-oriented would include: a research team seeking a cure for cancer, a work crew building a house, or a squad of fighter pilots. Each of these groups is attempting to produce or accomplish something that no single member of the group could.

Most groups fall somewhere between the extremes of the informal group of friends and the cancer researchers: that is, they serve at least two purposes, both social and task. In fact, one could argue that the fraternity and the sewing circle do have task goals (perhaps higher academic achievement and production of quilts respectively), and that the task-oriented groups meet some social needs as well. For example, members of the same fighter squadron will often become life-long friends.

This course will focus on groups that are primarily task-oriented (managerial teams of one kind or another, or the class itself). Students will have to keep in mind, however, that most groups provide members with both social and task-related payoffs. The importance of this point should become clearer throughout the course.

While everyone has experienced groups that have produced more than expected, leaving the members feeling satisfied and successful, it is also true that some have experienced groups that have produced virtually nothing and left the members upset and embittered. All too often the causes for the success or failure of a given group remain a mystery to those involved. This is partially because Americans have not been trained to take a systematic look at how groups operate, especially those in which we are involved. It is a difficult task to be both a productive member and astute observer of the group. But this is precisely the skill that is necessary if one is to understand the causes of positive and negative group behavior.

Some people try to attribute a group's success or failure to the personalities of the members, or to the traits of the designated leader. While these factors may be interesting and may, in fact, have some bearing on a group's performance, there is not much that can be done about them. This course will focus not on traits or personalities, but on skills that group members can learn and employ in improving the performance of the groups in which they are members.

The level of group skills possessed by members of an organization is of direct concern to a manager in several crucial ways. Four of these ways are explored in more detail in this course.

1. Group Decision Making

Theoretically, and in many cases practically, a group will make a better decision than any one of its members. This assertion can only be true when the group members work well together, trusting each other's judgment and encouraging each other to participate fully and openly in the decision.

There is cynicism in this country about the performance of groups. The saying, "A camel is a horse designed by a committee," reflects many people's attitudes about the potential of group work. Over the past twenty years a large body of research has shown that groups with skillful members do, in fact, outperform individuals working alone. But the same body of research has uncovered the fact that poorly functioning groups are worse than no group at all.

This course will "de-mystify" the difference between high and low achieving groups and point out the skill necessary for high group achievement.

2. Personnel Decisions

Since organizations need people with group skills in addition to the technical prerequisites for their jobs, identification of suitable personnel becomes a more complex problem. Simple written testing in combination with a personal interview, the traditional model used for hiring, will tell the employers virtually nothing about the prospective employee's ability to function well in a team setting.

While a person's on-the-job performance gives some indication of his/her potential to handle a high-level position, the new position might demand interpersonal skills not tested in the present job setting. Many corporations and public agencies, therefore, are exploring alternatives to the traditional test-interview model of making promotional decisions. These will be discussed in this course.

3. Understanding Organizational Conflicts and Effectiveness

Without a firm grasp of the skills necessary for effective group work, a manager has little hope of making sense of the conflict or the effectiveness of the organization. Conflict has causes and cures, and it presents opportunities as well as obstacles to the manager who understands group dynamics. During this course, students will explore the twin areas of conflict and effectiveness, using group dynamics as a frame of reference with which to understand both.

4. Decisions about Organizational Change

Finally, managers concerned with the growth and development of their organizations must understand the fundamentals of group-functioning. One cannot conceptualize change in an organization without considering the effect any change would have in terms of group dynamics. A manager contemplating a change would be very foolish to ignore: (1) the strengths and weaknesses of the groups currently working, and (2) the impact any proposed change would have on teamwork in the future. Without a solid foundation in group dynamics, the change-agent manager is totally lost in trying to choose among alternative courses of action.

COURSE POLICIES

- **ATTENDANCE AND TARDY POLICY**

You must attend class on time and remain present until dismissed. Class attendance is necessary in order to complete the course. The School for Professional Studies relies on the dynamics of class interaction and group processing in order to integrate and apply the learning of academic content. This model also emphasizes the development and practice of interpersonal communication skills and teamwork (e.g., group problem solving and negotiation). The format therefore necessitates class attendance. In practical terms, one course session is equivalent to three weeks of traditional semester course work.

Due to the concentrated scheduling and the emphasis upon participatory learning, students need to be in attendance every week. Students who miss more than one class meeting (or more than five class hours) in any given course will automatically receive a failing grade and need to retake the course to obtain a passing grade. If an instructor deems that a student's second absence was under extremely unavoidable and unusual circumstances (i.e., an auto accident), the professor may file an academic petition on behalf of the student to the Dean of SPS. If the academic petition is approved, the instructor may give the student a "W" (Withdrawal) grade in place of a failing grade. The student will still be required to retake the course.

- **CLASS PARTICIPATION**

You must be prepared and participate in all discussions. Criterion: Is the student engaged in classroom discussions? Does the student demonstrate an ability to handle assigned material with a degree of proficiency? (E.g., demonstrate the type of questions and issues consistent, and reflecting a familiarity with the assigned material).

Participation evaluated according to quality, not quantity, of participation. Attendance will be scored, and no participation points will be awarded if the student is absent.

- **SUBMISSION OF PAPERS/FINAL EXAMS**

The School for Professional Studies office does not assume responsibility for any final papers. No homework or final papers will be accepted for professors in the SPS office, nor will final papers be returned to students through the SPS office.

The method for the submission of homework and the final exam or final paper will be determined by the professor. The professor will discuss the method which will be employed during the first night of class. All exchanges of papers will be between the student and the professor.

- **LATE PAPER POLICY**

You are responsible for submitting assignments on time (by 6:00 pm). Unless authorized by the Professor in advance, no credit will be given for assignments not turned in when due.

- **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Work submitted for assessment purposes must be the independent work of the student concerned. Plagiarism, or copying and use of another's work without proper acknowledgment, is not permitted. Nor is it permissible for any former or present student to

allow another student to refer to, use as a sample, or in any way copy or review their work. Any student who commits plagiarism or is a knowing party to plagiarism in this class will receive a **failing** grade ('F') for the course. If a student needs guidance, he or she must seek the Professor's assistance.

- **DISABILITY SERVICES**

For students with documented medical or psychological disabilities, please contact the Coordinator of Disability Services to request reasonable accommodations. The Coordinator of Disability Services is located in the Counseling Center on the second floor of the Scott Academic Center and can be reached at extension 4489 or by email at disabilityservices@vanguard.edu

For students with a documented learning disability who would like to request appropriate accommodations, please contact the Director of Learning Skills, located upstairs in Scott Academic Center at extension 2540 or by email at disabilityservices@vanguard.edu

REACTION PAPER REQUIREMENTS

This paper should be a (A) **summary** of the concepts learned in class, and an (B) **application** of those concepts to a group situation. Experiences in class (ie. Desert Survival Situation, DISC Inventory, the Quiz Game, etc.) should illustrate the concepts. It is to be seven typed pages, (Times New Roman, size 12 Font), with an inch margin on the top, bottom, right, and left. The following outline should be utilized.

Introduction What will the paper be about...? (Definition of Group and Organizational Behavior from the text, etc.)

Group vs. individual decision-making

- A. Summarize concept (Article in Student Guide on Synergistic Decision Making)
- B. Give application from Desert Survival Situation – Did your group make better decisions than individuals?

Personality Styles (DISC Inventory)

- A. Summarize concept (Description in DISC Inventory)
- B. Your application (Description of your style(s), both the strengths and weaknesses)

Conflict

- A. Summarize concepts (Chapter 7 in Text and “Managing Organizational Conflict” in Student Guide)
- B. Give application (Analysis of your score in the Thomas Kilmann Conflict Inventory)

Competition

- A. Summarize concept (from article “A Point of Departure” in Student Guide)
- B. Give application (Analysis of “Quiz Game” from final night of class)

Group Task Roles

- A. Summarize concept (from “A Classification of Member Roles” in Student Guide, and page 77, 78 of Text)
- B. Give Application (from a variety of small group activities in class – which roles did you assume most? Explain.)

Group Maintenance Role

- A. Summarize concept (from “A Classification of Member Roles” in Student Guide, and page 79, 80 of Text)
- B. Give Application (from a variety of small group activities in class – which roles did you assume most? Explain.)

Conclusion What did your paper say...? (Draw a final conclusion regarding Group and Organizational Behavior.)

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

During this course, students will be expected to read the majority of A Systems Approach to Small Group Interaction, plus several articles included in the Student Guide. The objective of most of this reading is to prepare students for the work that will take place in class during the next four weeks. If students do not do this reading, much of the classwork will remain at a superficial level. The success of the curriculum depends on students being prepared.

Over the five weeks of this course, two essay assignments will be due. The purpose of the assignments is to ensure that the students are demonstrating a comprehension of the topics covered in the textbook by elaborating on practical applications of the concepts in real-life scenarios.

At the end of the course, students will be asked to write a summary paper of seven pages. This assignment will help students solidify what they have learned throughout the duration of this course and to place it in the context of their experiences in the workplace. Before writing the summary paper, students should carefully review any notes they may have taken, skim over those parts of the reading that were the most valuable, and review their journal entries.

STUDENT EVALUATION

Much of the learning in this course is directly related to the students' active involvement in group activities. As a result, make careful notes of participation and the level of insight demonstrated during the discussion and activities. Students will be expected to demonstrate that they have completed the assigned readings; evidence of this is found in both their comments in class and in their summary papers.

<u>Percentages</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Significance</u>	<u>GPA</u>
93-100%	930-1000	A	Exceptional	4.00
90-92.9%	900-929	A-		3.67
87-89.9%	870-899	B+		3.33
83-86.9%	830-869	B	Above Average	3.00
80-82.9%	800-829	B-		2.67
77-79.9%	770-799	C+		2.33
73-76.9%	730-769	C	Average	2.00
70-72.9%	700-729	C-		1.67
67-69.9%	670-699	D+		1.33
63-66.9%	630-669	D	Below Average	1.00
60-62.9%	600-629	D-		0.67
00-59.9%	000-599	F	Failure	0.00

Course Grading Scale

Reaction Paper	40%
Homework Assignments	30%
Class Participation	25%
Final Submission of Learning Journals	5%

ASSIGNMENTS**WEEK ONE**

Read “Time Management,” “Ask Lakein's Question All the Time!,” “When Perfectionism Helps and When It Doesn't Help,” and “How I Save Time” in the Student Guide.

WEEK TWO

Read Tubbs, Chapters 1 and 2.

Read "Synergistic Decision Making," "A Classification of Member Roles," and "Characteristics of Constructive Feedback" in the Student Guide. (**Bring 'Desert Survival Situation' to class**)

Assignment #1—Self-Disclosure—is due.

WEEK THREE

Read Tubbs, Chapters 3 and 4.

Complete the DISC Inventory (in class).

WEEK FOUR

Read Tubbs, Chapter 5.

Assignment #2—Leadership Philosophy Paper—is due.

WEEK FIVE

Read "Managing Organizational Conflict," and "A Point of Departure" in the Student Guide.

Read Tubbs, Chapters 6 and 7.

TIME MANAGEMENT

Students in the Degree Completion Program will find that one of the more vital tasks they need to learn during the course of the program is managing their time. They have to manage their time with their family, their profession, and their new academic responsibilities. Meeting all of these responsibilities and commitments is a challenging and difficult task. This essay is an attempt to aid students in utilizing a proven technique to better manage their time.

Different methods of time management require persons to analyze their strengths, their weaknesses and possible barriers. Others utilize file folders, color codes and other methods to assist people to prioritize the tasks they have to do.

Basic Principles Of Time Management

First Principle: The important thing to recognize about time management is that the only way to get something done is to do it. This might sound trite but, in fact, the only way that things get done is for someone to do them.

Second Principle: The second principle is to take the task and break it down into bite-size chunks that can be scheduled to be accomplished. Another way of visualizing this is seen in Ben Franklin's remark that the only way to fell a big oak is with small strokes. The only way a student is going to complete the write-up of the Project is to break it down into a series of bite-size chunks that can be accomplished in a day-by-day process until, finally, the whole project is done, or, to utilize Ben Franklin's analogy, the oak tree falls.

One technique of breaking down the big task, i.e., writing the Project, is to break down the major tasks into a series of smaller tasks that can be accomplished on a day-by-day basis. Each series of days becomes weeks and each series of weeks becomes a month, and each month becomes part of the twelve months that it usually takes students to complete the program. One method of breaking the task down is to start with the final outcome and work backwards, listing each step that must be accomplished. Planning in reverse is a method, which enables people to develop a clear and comprehensive plan for what needs to be done. Any method can be utilized to break a task down into smaller and smaller tasks that can be accomplished in an hour or less.

The important thing to recognize is that it is essential to break an overwhelming task down into smaller tasks. For example, many of us in the past have said, "Oh, well, I'll do that over Christmas vacation," or "I'll do that on Saturday and Sunday and lock myself up and work on it for 24 hours." Many times this technique forces us to get sick, or to come up with other excuses for not doing the task we set out to do. Many times when we do not break a task down into smaller chunks, it is like a ghost that is constantly haunting us. We're always saying to ourselves, "Oh, I can't really go play golf," or "I can't help Mary sew," etc., because we have not accomplished what we set out to do on a very precious Saturday or Sunday. A much better technique is to break the task down into smaller tasks, and then to set an appointment with ourselves much like we set an appointment to see a doctor or a lawyer or a business associate.

By making an appointment with yourself to spend one hour or two hours on a certain task, you then can accomplish that task at a set time and allow yourself the freedom to meet other professional and family responsibilities for the rest of the day. Therefore, you should make a series of appointments with yourself to do small bits of whatever it is you need to do for your Project. During that time, try to be inaccessible to people as if you were meeting with someone on an important appointment. It has been our experience that people who utilize this technique of setting aside an hour a day, or a couple of hours on certain days, accomplish the tasks necessary to complete the Project.

Third Principle: A third principle of time management is the "TO DO" list. The following short story illustrates the power of this principle. A consultant was hired by Lily Industries to come in to their management division and assist this division in becoming more effective and efficient. The consultant, after a brief look at the practices of the management, offered a very simple suggestion. The suggestion was that every day each manager makes up a list, a "TO DO" list, of the things that he/she needed to accomplish during the day. Each item on the list was given a number and, as the tasks were accomplished, the person crossed that task off the list. The tasks that were not accomplished were carried over for the next day. The consultant, realizing that this little bit of advice did not take much time, told the company president that the company could send him his consulting fee if the advice was beneficial.

Seven months later the consultant, for his brief hour and a half consultation, received a check from the president for \$70,000. The method upped the productivity of the management staff beyond any of their expectations.

Systematic time management is essential to be effective in an organization. Identify the nonproductive, time-wasting activities and get rid of them. This requires asking a number of diagnostic questions.

1. "What would happen if this was not done at all?" If the answer is, "Nothing would happen," then obviously the conclusion is to stop performing that task.

It is amazing how many things busy people are doing that never will be missed. There are, for instance, the countless speeches, dinners, committee memberships, and directorships, which take an unconscionable toll on the time of busy people. They are rarely enjoyed by them or done well by them, but are endured, nevertheless. Actually, all one has to do is to learn to say "no" if an activity contributes nothing to one's own organization, to oneself, or to the organization for which it is performed.

2. "Which of the activities on my time log could be done by somebody else just as well, if not better?"

For years there has been a great deal of talk about "delegation" in management. Every manager, whatever the organization (business, government, university, or armed service) has been exhorted to be a better "delegator." In fact, most managers in large organizations have

themselves given this sermon and more than once. Yet there are usually few results from all this preaching. The reason why no one listens is simple: as usually presented, delegation makes little sense. If it means that someone else ought to do part of "my work," it is wrong. One is paid for doing one's own work. And if it implies, as the usual sermon does, that the laziest manager is the best manager, it is not only nonsense—it is immoral.

But most executives, when confronted with their time log, rapidly acquire the habit of delegating to other people everything that he/she need not do personally. The first look at the time log makes it abundantly clear that there just is not enough time to do the things the executive considers important, wants to do, and is committed to doing. The only way to get to the important things is by delegating to others anything that can be done by them.

3. Effective executives have learned to ask co-workers systematically and without coyness: "What do I do that wastes your time without contributing to your effectiveness?" To ask this question, and to ask it without being afraid of the truth, is a mark of the effective executive. Even though this may not be a simple problem to solve, it is easily diagnosed.
4. There is a fourth question that makes the "To Do List" or any planning method a more effective time management tool. It was formulated by Alan Lakein to deal with the minute-to-minute decisions required to stay focused on the most important items on your list.¹ Lakein's Question is: "What is the best use of my time right now?"

The question should be posed frequently throughout the day whenever there is any question that what you are doing is not the most productive or efficient use of your time. If the answer is that you "don't know," keep asking Lakein's Question until you get an answer.

The first answer is usually the best one (the "answer" isn't about "right" or "wrong" but of "best"). If you have any doubts, reflect briefly on your answer then proceed with your answer or ask Lakein's Question again.

Remember Lakein's Question: **What is the best use of my time right now?**

¹ Lakein, Alan. How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life. New York, NY: David McKay Co. 1973.

ASK LAKEIN'S QUESTION ALL THE TIME

A particularly good time to ask Lakein's Question is when you have been interrupted by a visitor or telephone call (assuming that the interruption is desirable or necessary in the first place). When it's over, check whether you should go back to what you were doing or on to something new.

Also ask Lakein's Question when you notice that you are becoming distracted. Are you listening to a conversation in the next office, wondering who just walked down the hall, daydreaming about next year's vacation? Pop the question!

Also ask when you intuitively feel you may not be making the best use of your time, when you detect a tendency to procrastinate, when you pause momentarily in the middle of doing an A-1, or when you find yourself shuffling papers rather than processing them.

Ask it when you're torn between two different projects, when you run out of steam, or at points when it seems natural to make the transition to something else.

To help you remember to ask Lakein's Question, put up signs around you with "What is the best use of time now?" and "Ask Lakein's Question" printed on them. The signs can be as visible as you wish. How about a large sign directly across from where you normally sit? How about using them as posters all over the house? Or if you want the signs to be less conspicuous, how about in a drawer or in your private notebook? You might even get some stationery with the question printed on it.

Even if you know what the A-1 is and have started it, you can still ask Lakein's Question, but be a little more specific: "What is the best use of my time now on the A-1? What part shall I do, and how shall I do it?"

Consider simplifying the task, making it easier or faster. Should you phone or visit that slowpoke in the other department? Would it be better to write a letter to that long-winded customer so he doesn't gab on forever on the phone, or do you really need a give-and-take discussion with him to get a quick decision?

A fast work pace is also a strength. The ability to work very rapidly and perform well pays off, so check your work pace periodically by asking Lakein's Question. Maybe you're still hung up on last week's details. It happens.

You can also waste time on items that were once A's, but are A's no longer. Is that big order likely to be canceled? Has the deadline changed? Is that difficult account executive about to get fired? A former A may decline in value to B and then C not only with the passing of time, but also with the degree of its completion. The 80/20 rule suggests that 80 percent of the value is often gained during the first 20 percent of your work time on a certain task. Being a perfectionist may mean that you're working much too hard to get only minimum value.

WHEN PERFECTIONISM HELPS AND WHEN IT DOESN'T

Perfectionism is worth approaching when 80 percent of the value comes from the **last** percent of the effort, for example, the construction of a dam, bringing home the family's favorite groceries, unstopping a plugged-up sink, remembering your wedding anniversary every year.

Perfectionism is a waste of time on such labors as ironing every last wrinkle out of a sheet or re-checking a low-priority letter for typing errors. Once you get immersed in some activities, they seem to acquire a momentum of their own. You may then be carried along without control, drifting with the tide.

One way to combat this drift is to set yourself control points for reviewing your progress. Check every fifteen minutes or half hour, or go until 3:30 and then review, using a kitchen timer to remind yourself. If you're not benefiting from continued effort, stop and change to doing something else.

You can also set the timer to help you meet deadlines. If you need to get something done in half an hour, set the timer accordingly. If you find the ticking annoying, put it in the bottom drawer; then you'll hear only the bell. Suppose the timer rings and you're still not finished? To protect yourself, practice. As you adopt this routine, you'll find that your confidence increases, and that you come up consistently with good answers the first time around.

Do you suspect diminishing returns? Are you being needlessly perfectionistic? Ask Lakein's Question. If you're not sure whether it is worth finishing something (or worth continuing), I suggest that you stop. If you don't come back to it, then in fact you were done. If you feel uncomfortable the next day about having stopped and you want to continue, go back to it. But pretty soon . . . right! Ask Lakein's Question again.

HOW I SAVE TIME

1. I count all my time as "on-time" and try to get satisfaction (not necessarily accomplishment) out of every minute.
2. I try to enjoy whatever I am doing.
3. I'm a perennial optimist.
4. I build on successes.
5. I don't waste time regretting my failures.
6. I don't waste my time feeling guilty about what I don't do.
7. I remind myself, "There is always enough time for the important things. If it's important, I'll make the time to do it."
8. I try to find a new technique each day that I can use to help gain time.
9. I get up at 5 a.m. during the week (and go to bed early).
10. I have a light lunch so I don't get sleepy in the afternoon.
11. I don't read newspapers or magazines (except occasionally). I do glance at the headlines at the newsstands to keep up on the world.
12. I skim books quickly, looking for ideas.
13. I don't own a television set. (My family and I went to a motel to watch the Super Bowl, and we rented a set for the political conventions.)
14. I have my office close enough to my home to be able to walk to work. But when I'm lazy or in a hurry, I drive.
15. I examine old habits for possible elimination or streamlining.
16. I've given up forever all "waiting time." If I have to wait, I consider it a "gift of time" to relax, plan, or do something I would not otherwise have done.
17. I keep my watch three minutes fast, to get a head start on the day.
18. I carry blank 3x5 index cards in my pocket to jot down notes and ideas.

19. I revise my "Lifetime Goals" list once a month.
20. I review my "Lifetime Goals" list every day and identify activities to do each day to further my goals.
21. I put signs in my office reminding me of my goals.
22. I keep my long-term goals in mind even while doing the smallest task.
23. I always plan first thing in the morning and set priorities for the day.
24. I keep a list of specific items to be done each day, arrange them in priority order, and then do my best to get the important ones done as soon as possible.
25. I schedule my time months in advance in such a way that each month offers variety and balance as well as "open time" reserved for "hot" projects.
26. I give myself time off and special rewards when I've done the important things.
27. I do first things first.
28. I work smarter rather than harder.
29. I try to do only A's, never B's and C's.
30. I have confidence in my judgment of priorities and stick to them in spite of difficulties.
31. I ask myself, "Would anything terrible happen if I didn't do this priority item?" If the answer is no, I don't do it.
32. If I seem to procrastinate I ask myself, "What am I avoiding?" and then I try to confront that thing head-on.
33. I always use the 80/20 rule.
34. I start with the most profitable parts of large projects and often find it is not necessary to do the rest.
35. I cut off nonproductive activities as quickly as possible.
36. I give myself enough time to concentrate on high-priority items.

37. I have developed the ability to concentrate well for long stretches of time (sometimes with the aid of coffee).
38. I concentrate on one thing at a time.
39. I focus my efforts on items that will have the best long-term benefits.
40. I keep pushing and am persistent when I sense I have a winner.
41. I have trained myself to go down my "To Do" list without skipping over the difficult items.
42. I do much of my thinking on paper.
43. I work alone creatively in the morning and use the afternoons for meetings, if necessary.
44. I set deadlines for myself and others.
45. I try to listen actively in every discussion.
46. I try not to waste other people's time (unless it's something that really matters to me).
47. I delegate everything I possibly can to others.
48. I make use of specialists to help me with special problems.
49. I have someone screen my mail and phone calls and handle all routine matters.
50. I generate as little paperwork as possible and throw away anything I possibly can.
51. I handle each piece of paper only once.
52. I write replies to most letters right on the piece of paper.
53. I keep my desktop cleared for action and put the most important thing in the center of my desk.
54. I have a place for everything (so I waste as little time as possible looking for things).
55. I save up all trivia for a three-hour session once a month.
56. I try not to think of work on weekends.
57. I relax and "do nothing" rather frequently.

58. I recognize that inevitably some of my time will be spent on activities outside my control and don't fret about it.
59. I keep small talk to a minimum during work hours.
60. I look for action steps to be taken now to further my goals.

SYNERGISTIC DECISION MAKING

(to be used in conjunction with Desert Survival Situation)

This model of decision-making consists of two aspects: problem solving and interpersonal relations. Problem solving is the rational sequence of questions the team considers in reaching a decision, and interpersonal relations is the way people treat one another in solving the problem. These two aspects are so closely related that they are like two sides of the same coin. Without interpersonal support among team members, rational problem solving becomes split with competitiveness, manipulation, and domination by the most aggressive personalities. Without a rational problem-solving process, the supportive climate breaks down because of lack of direction, frustration and indecisiveness.

An intriguing aspect about synergistic decision-making is the extent to which it depends upon people's ability to defer judgment. For example, when analyzing the situation it's important for people not to jump to conclusions regarding the kinds of problems they face. When developing alternative courses of action, it is vital that people not start debating the "right" alternatives, because this reduces the creative climate, forces people into "either-or" thinking, and leads to the hasty selection of one alternative over another.

In the supportive climate, listening depends upon our ability to actively pay attention to what another is saying. This is impossible if we are judging the other person (i.e., appearance, delivery, style) or judging what he or she is saying while they are talking. As incredible as the human brain is, it simply functions poorly when it attempts to do two things at once—to understand and to judge.

I. The Rational Problem-Solving Process

One of the purposes of a problem-solving process is to slow down the tendency of survivors to jump to conclusions and then quickly leap to action. The survivors have just experienced a traumatic incident and now face life or death decisions. The more calmly and rationally they go about making those decisions, the more likely they are to come up with effective ones.

The process suggested below helps the survivors look at their dilemma from different points of view. "What are we faced with and what do we have going for us? What would we like to see happen? What are the possible ways we could deal with this situation? What are the shortcomings of each of the alternatives?" As a result, the survivors are more likely to consider all the relevant factors before deciding.

A. Deciding On A Process

The first thing survivors need to do is decide how they are going to go about solving the problem. What questions need answering, and in what order should they be considered to arrive at the best decision?

B. Analyzing The Situation

1. What is the survivor's mental and physical condition?
2. What materials are on hand and how might they be used?
3. Where are they located?
4. What is each person concerned about, and how serious are those concerns?
5. What assumptions are being made?

C. Setting Objectives

1. What are the minimum outcomes expected?
2. What is the best that could reasonably be expected to happen in this situation?

Groups generally realize that their primary objective is to survive. However, you may find some teams who feel their primary objective is to reach the mining camp. Walking to the mining camp is really a possible course of action, not the primary objective.

Survival would be a minimal objective. If you ask the teams, they will acknowledge that they would like to survive in good shape. So, the maximum objective might be "to survive the situation in good enough shape so that no one requires hospitalization."

One of the purposes of considering the maximum objective in a survival setting is to alter the fatalistic thinking.

D. Developing Alternative Courses Of Action

Most teams spend considerable time discussing whether or not they should stay at the crash site or attempt to walk to the mining camp. This is the critical survival decision, and in the real environment would mean the difference between life and death.

Most teams take the "advocacy" approach to dealing with this question. Those that are in favor of leaving argue it out with those who wish to stay. There are two problems with this approach:

1. The team fails to consider the other side if everyone assumes at the beginning that they should either stay or leave.
2. The argument over staying or leaving often leads to a needless win/lose conflict and ego involvement.

Another more creative approach to alternatives would be for everyone to discuss the advantages of leaving, and then for everyone to discuss the advantages of staying. The disadvantages of each alternative can then be discussed in the same manner in the next step of the process.

E. Identifying Obstacles And Adverse Consequences

1. What stands in the way of taking each course of action?
2. What would be the adverse consequences of taking each course of action?
3. How likely are the consequences to occur?
4. How serious would it be if they occur?

These last two questions can be handled mathematically by rating each consequence on a scale from 1-5 according to (A) how likely it is for that consequence to occur, and (B) how serious would it be if it did occur? Multiply A x B and add up the totals for each consequence for each alternative. For example, one adverse consequence of attempting to walk out would be getting lost. Getting lost might rate "3" in likelihood and "5" in seriousness totaling "15." Fifteen would be added to the other consequence scores to get a total score for alternative of "Walking Out."

Please refer to the Expert's Ranking section for specific adverse consequences of walking or staying.

II. The Interpersonal Process

In something as complex as human interaction it would be presumptuous to contend that certain factors and only those factors are what account for effective interpersonal relations in decision making. The factors discussed below are intended only as a brief and partial summary of what has been identified in research as the components of effective teamwork.

It is interesting to note that the studies conducted in leadership in the military, in business and industry, in education and a number of other fields indicated that humanistic interpersonal relations (e.g., active listening, supporting, confronting) is a key characteristic among effective leaders.

A. Active Listening And Clarifying

Active listening is most noticeable by its absence. When team members carry on more than one conversation at a time, interrupt one another and jump from one subject to another, you can be sure people are not listening to each other. The consequences of this failure, particularly in the survival situation, are the loss of vital information and improperly explored ideas. This results in poor selection of alternatives.

One technique for encouraging active listening is to require each person to summarize what the previous speaker has just said. Although this method appears clumsy, it takes far less time than it does for people to repeat themselves. It also promotes clarity, since people can check with the speaker to see if they correctly understood.

B. Supporting And Building

Aside from actively listening, which is one of the most supportive things a person can do with another, there are a number of other behaviors which demonstrate a concern for others' ideas and feelings. Speaking in a friendly, warm manner, creating opportunities for others to speak, encouraging divergent points of view and responding to others openly and spontaneously are all ways we can acknowledge the value of others.

People tend to respond to a supportive climate by being more original and creative; the stuff that makes the difference in effective problem solving.

C. Confronting And Differing

One of the more serious mistakes survivors commit is to make assumptions about their situation and then act upon those assumptions as if they were facts. This does not mean that they should act solely on factual information since that would probably be impossible. However, it is important to recognize the assumptions upon which decisions are being made.

Confronting is the process whereby we explore each other's ideas to separate the facts from the assumptions or where we try to see things for what they are rather than how we would like them to be. It may mean facing the possibility of our own impending death, acknowledging a lack of progress in dealing with the problem, bringing out into the open the way people are dealing with one another, or simply disagreeing with what is happening. Participants should explain in a nonthreatening manner how their ideas differ from those of other members.

Many teams do poorly in the Survival Situation because team members are either unwilling or unable to confront what is happening and differ with a particular line of thought. This often happens with women who are sure they could not walk the 70 miles to the mining camp, but are reluctant to differ and confront the men who insist they must leave. In the "real" situation, of course, this would be fatal.

A CLASSIFICATION OF MEMBER ROLES

The member roles identified in this analysis are classified into three broad groupings.

I. Group Task Roles. Participant roles here are related to the task which the group is deciding to undertake or has undertaken. Their purpose is to facilitate and coordinate group effort in the selection and definition of a common problem and in the solution of that problem.

II. Group Building And Maintenance Roles. The roles in this category are oriented toward the functioning of the group as a group. They are designed to alter or maintain the group's way of working—to strengthen, regulate and perpetuate the group as a group.

III. Individual Roles. This category does not classify member roles as such, since the "participations" denoted here are directed toward the satisfaction of the "participant's" individual needs. Their purpose is some individual goal which is not relevant either to the group task or to the functioning of the group. Such participations are highly relevant to the problem of group training that is directed toward improving group maturity or group task efficiency.

I. Group Task Roles

The following analysis assumes that the task of the discussion group is to select, define and solve common problems. The roles are identified in relation to functions of facilitation and coordination of group problem-solving activities. Each member may, of course, enact more than one role in any given unit of participations. Any or all of these roles may be played at times by the group "leader" as well as by various members.

- A. The INITIATOR-CONTRIBUTOR suggests or proposes to the group new ideas or a changed way of regarding the group problem or goal. The novelty proposed may take the form of a suggested solution, some way of handling a difficulty that the group has encountered, a new procedure for the group, or a new way of organizing the group for the task ahead.
- B. The INFORMATION SEEKER asks for the clarification of suggestions made in terms of their factual adequacy and for authoritative information and facts pertinent to the problem being discussed.
- C. The OPINION SEEKER asks not primarily for the facts of the case, but for the clarification of the values pertinent to what the group is undertaking, or of values involved in a suggestion made or in alternative suggestions.
- D. The INFORMATION GIVER offers facts or generalizations, which are "authoritative", or relates his/her own experience pertinently to the group problems.

- E. The OPINION GIVER states his/her belief or opinion pertinently to a suggestion made or to alternative suggestions. The emphasis is on his/her proposal of what should become the group's view of pertinent values, not primarily upon relevant facts or information.
- F. The ELABORATOR spells out suggestions in terms of example or developed meanings, offers a rationale for suggestions previously made, and tries to deduce how an idea or suggestion would work out if adopted by the group.
- G. The COORDINATOR shows or clarifies the relationships among various ideas and suggestions, attempts to pull ideas and suggestions together, or tries to coordinate the activities of various members or subgroups.
- H. The ORIENTER defines the position of the group with respect to its goals by summarizing what has occurred, points to departures from agreed upon directions or goals, or raises questions about the direction of the group discussion.
- I. The EVALUATOR CRITIC subjects the accomplishment of the group to some standard or set of standards of group-functioning in the context of the group task. Thus, he/she may evaluate or question the "practicality," the "logic," the "facts," or the "procedure" of a suggestion or of some unit of group discussion.
- J. The ENERGIZER prods the group to action or decision and attempts to stimulate or arouse the group to "greater" or "higher quality" activity.
- K. The PROCEDURAL TECHNICIAN expedites group movement by doing things for the group—performing routine tasks, e.g., distributing materials, manipulating objects for the group, rearranging the seating, or running the recording machine, etc.
- L. The RECORDER writes down suggestions, makes a record of group decisions, or writes down the product of discussion. The recorder role is the "group memory."

II. Group Building And Maintenance Roles

The analysis of member-functions is oriented to those participations that have for their purpose (1) the building of group-centered attitudes and orientation among the members of a group or, (2) the maintenance and perpetuation of such group-centered behavior. A given contribution may involve several roles and a member or the "leader" may perform various roles in successive contributions.

- A. The ENCOURAGER agrees with and accepts the contribution of others. He/she indicates warmth and solidarity in his/her attitude toward other group members, offers commendation and praise, and in various ways indicates understanding and acceptance of other points of view, ideas and suggestions
- B. The HARMONIZER mediates the differences between other members, attempts to reconcile disagreements, relieves tension in conflict situations through jesting or pouring oil on the troubled waters, etc.
- C. The COMPROMISER operates from within a conflict in which his/her idea or position is involved. He/she may offer compromise by yielding status, admitting his/her error, by disciplining himself/herself to maintain group harmony, or by "coming halfway" in moving along with the group.
- D. The GATE-KEEPER AND EXPEDITER attempts to keep communication channels open by encouraging or facilitating the participation of others ("We have not heard the ideas of Sandy yet," etc.) or by proposing regulation of the flow of communication ("Why don't we limit the length of our contributions so that everyone will have a chance to contribute?", etc.).
- E. The STANDARD SETTER OR EGO IDEAL expresses standards for the group to attempt to achieve in its functioning or applies standards in evaluating the quality of group processes.
- F. The GROUP-OBSERVER AND COMMENTATOR keeps records of various aspects of group process and feeds such data with proposed interpretations into the group's evaluation of its own procedures.
- G. The FOLLOWER goes along with the movement of the group, more or less passively accepting the ideas of others (being an audience in group discussion and decisions).

III. "Individual" Roles

Attempts by "members" of a group to satisfy individual needs which are irrelevant to the group task and which are non-oriented (or negatively oriented to group building and maintenance) creates problems for group and member training. A high incidence of "individual-centered" as opposed to "group-centered" participation in a group always calls for self-diagnosis of the group. The diagnosis may reveal one or several of a number of conditions—low level of skill training among members, including the group leader; the prevalence of "authoritarian" and "laissez faire" points of view toward group functioning; a low level of maturity, discipline and morale; an inappropriately chosen and inadequately defined group task, etc. Whatever the diagnosis, it is in this setting that the training needs of the group are to be discovered and group training efforts to meet these needs

are defined. The outright "suppression" of "individual roles" will deprive the group of data needed for really adequate self-diagnosis and therapy.

- A. The AGGRESSOR might work in many ways—deflating the status of others; expressing disapproval of the values, acts or feelings of others; attacking the group or the problem it is working on; joking aggressively; showing envy toward another's contribution by trying to take credit for it; etc.
- B. The BLOCKER tends to be negative and stubbornly resistant, disagreeing and opposing without or beyond "reason," and attempting to maintain or bring back an issue after the group has rejected or by-passed it.
- C. The RECOGNITION-SEEKER works in various ways to call attention to himself/herself, whether through boasting, reporting on personal achievements, acting in unusual ways, struggling to prevent his/her being placed in an "inferior" position, etc.
- D. The SELF-CONFESSOR uses the audience—opportunity which the group setting provides—to express personal, non-group oriented "feeling," "insight," "ideology," etc.
- E. The CLOWN makes a display of his/her lack of involvement in the group's processes. This may take the form of cynicism, nonchalance, horseplay and other more or less studied forms of "out of field" behavior.
- F. The DOMINATOR tries to assert authority or superiority through manipulating the group or certain members of the group. This domination may take various forms which include flattery, asserting a superior status or right to attention, giving directions, or authoritatively interrupting the contributions of others.
- G. The HELP-SEEKER attempts to call forth "sympathy" response from other group members or from the whole group, whether through expressions of insecurity, personal confusion, or depreciation of himself/herself beyond "reason."
- H. The SPECIAL INTEREST PLEADER speaks for the "small business person," the "grass roots" community, the "homemaker," "labor," etc., usually cloaking his/her own prejudices or biases in the stereotype which best fits his/her individual need.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

1. It is descriptive rather than evaluative. By describing one's own reactions, it leaves the individual free to use it or not to use it as they see fit. By avoiding evaluative language, it reduces the need for the individual to respond defensively.
2. It is specific rather than general. To be told that one is "dominating" will probably not be as useful as to be told that "in the conversation that just took place, you did not appear to be listening to what others were saying, and I felt forced to accept your arguments."
3. It is focused on behavior rather than on the person. It is important that we refer to what a person does rather than to what we think or imagine he is. Thus we might say that a person "talked more than anyone else in this meeting" rather than that he is a "loud-mouth." The former allows for the possibility of change; the latter implies a fixed personality trait.
4. It takes into account the needs of both the receiver and giver of feedback. Feedback can be destructive when it serves only our own needs and fails to consider the needs of the person on the receiving end. It should be given to help, not to hurt. We too often give feedback because it makes us feel better or gives us a psychological advantage.
5. It is directed toward behavior that the receiver can do something about. Frustration is only increased when a person is reminded of some shortcoming over which he has no control.
6. It is solicited rather than imposed. Feedback is most useful when the receiver himself has formulated the kind of question that those observing him can answer or when he actively seeks feedback.
7. It is well-timed. In general, feedback is most useful at the earliest opportunity after the given behavior (depending, of course, on the person's readiness to hear it, support available from others, and so forth). The reception and use of feedback involves many possible emotional reactions. Excellent feedback presented at an inappropriate time may do more harm than good.
8. It involves sharing of information, rather than giving advice. By sharing information, we leave a person free to decide for himself, in accordance with his own goals and needs. When we give advice we tell him what to do, and to some degree take away his freedom to decide for himself.
9. It involves the amount of information the receiver can use rather than the amount we would like to give. To overload a person with feedback is to reduce the possibility that he may be able to use what he receives effectively. When we give more than can be used, we are more often than not satisfying some need of our own rather than helping the other person.

10. It concerns what is said and done, or how, not why. The "why" takes us from the observable to the inferred and involves assumptions regarding motive or intent. Telling a person what his motivations or intentions are, more often than not tends to alienate the person and contributes to a climate of resentment, suspicion, and distrust; it does not contribute to learning or development. It is dangerous to assume that we know why a person says or does something, or what he "really" means, or what he is "really" trying to accomplish. If we are uncertain of his motives or intent, this uncertainty itself is feedback, however, and should be revealed.
11. It is checked to ensure clear communication. One way of doing this is to have the receiver try to rephrase the feedback he has received to see if it corresponds to what the sender had in mind. No matter what the intent, feedback is often threatening and thus subject to considerable distortion or misinterpretation.
12. It is checked to determine degree of agreement from others. When feedback is given in the presence of other people, both giver and receiver have an opportunity to check with others in the group about the accuracy of the feedback. Is this one person's impression or an impression shared by others? Such "consensual validation" is of value to both sender and receiver.
13. It is followed by attention to the consequences of the feedback. The person who is giving feedback may greatly improve his helping skills by becoming acutely aware of the effects of his feedback. He can also be of continuing help to the recipient of the feedback.
14. It is an important step toward authenticity. Constructive feedback opens the way to a relationship that is built on trust, honesty, and genuine concern. Through such a relationship, we will have achieved one of the most rewarding experiences that man can achieve and will have opened a very important door to personal learning and growth.

MANAGING ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT

by Stephen P. Robbins
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An Interactionist Approach

It is in decision making that we develop and select from alternatives the actions that will lead toward goal attainment. Though it is frequently discussed only in the planning function, decision making is also an integral part of organizing, leading, and evaluating. And, as the remainder of this section will explain, this vital decision-making activity has become increasingly more difficult to perform in today's pluralistic organizations.

Though administrators have never had an easy time in the decision-making process, it is more difficult today than in previous generations as a result of conflicting group goals and expectations. Opposition is seen as a way of life among members of both small and large groups—through inter-organization and intraorganization conflict. We find special-interest groups protecting their sacred territories by playing expected roles. A plant location decision by a manufacturing firm has management trying to resolve differences between such varied interest groups as union officials, stockholders, community organizations, and government bodies; or a university president's decision as to the feasibility of co-educational dormitories finds opposing positions among trustees, faculty, students, parents, and alumni. No matter how clear the evidence may be that a particular course of action should be taken, there are few decisions made today that receive unanimous support.

The vast majority of administrative decisions are more difficult to make, and there are no indications that this difficulty will decrease during the coming decades. Therefore, it appears that between and among individuals, groups, and organizations, **pluralism** is a fact of life.

Philosophies of Conflict

When we accept that unanimity does not exist in complex organizations, we acknowledge that friction is part of the administrator's job. Katz and Kahn (1) perceive this adjudicating of conflicting demands to be one of the main functions of top management, while Gross (2) refers to friction as the factor that differentiates the real administrator from an administrator on paper.

Just as decision making comprehensively permeates planning, organizing, leading, and evaluating, managing conflict is an overriding concept that pervades the four basic functions. Disappointingly, this new view of conflict management is not widespread. Only recently have the ideas expressed by Katz and Kahn or Gross gained acceptance among students of conflict. It is possible to differentiate three philosophies that reflect managerial attitudes towards conflict, arbitrarily labeled for our discussion as traditional, behavioral, and interactionist. The first two

are descriptive because they represent predominant views espoused in the management literature. The third is normative, demonstrating what this writer believes should be management's direction today.

The prescription of the early management theorists, the traditionalists, towards conflict was simple. It should be eliminated. **All** conflicts were seen as destructive and it was management's role to rid the organization of them. This philosophy dominated the management literature during the late nineteenth century and continued to the middle 1940s. (3)

This traditional philosophy was followed by the behavioral view, which unfortunately is still the generally accepted approach to managing conflict in the majority of organizations. The behavioralists' philosophy can best be described as "acceptance" of conflict. They have accurately perceived that complex organizations, by their very nature, have built-in conflicts. Disagreements over goals clearly exist. Sections compete for recognition. Departments compete for prestige. Other groups compete to increase their boundaries. All compete for power.

The behavioralists' view of conflict seeks to rationalize its existence. Typical of this pervasive attitude is Katz's comment (4): ". . . it should be added that we are not assuming that all conflict is bad and that the only objective toward which we should work is the resolution of conflict. Group conflict has positive social functions" Or Bennis provides a second example of this view:

We do not believe that the elimination of conflict is invariable or even typically the desirable goal in wise management of conflict, as many who identify consensus with agreement tend to do. Conflicts stem basically from differences among persons and groups. Elimination of conflict management is, for us, better conceived as the acceptance and enhancement of differences among persons and groups (5)

Attitudes toward conflict such as these, though they recognize that conflict is inherent, give it only superficial acceptance. They grasp for supportive material to defend conflict's existence. Though encouragement of conflict is occasionally eluded to, such as Bennis' mention of "enhancement," nowhere is there found the active seeking of conflict or the positive creation of the conditions that breed conflict.

The behavioralists, in their efforts to "build a case" for conflict, are rationalizing: sure we have conflict, but it's good for the organization. When they think in terms of "managing" conflict, they demonstrate their uncertainty in its positive value by engrossing themselves entirely in the development of conflict-resolution techniques. If conflict is truly of value to an organization, a more positive approach is needed.

The third philosophical stage is the positive approach. The interactionist philosophy differs from the behavioral in that it:

1. recognizes the absolute necessity of conflict;
2. explicitly encourages opposition;
3. defines conflict management to include stimulation as well as resolution methods; and
4. considers the management of conflict as a major responsibility of all administrators.

A review of current managerial practice finds few administrators employing the interactionist philosophy of conflict management. We appear to have made little progress since Ephron's comment in 1961, "insofar as administrators have been troubled by conflict within their organizations, they have sought not so much to understand its origins as to find ways of reducing it." (6)

Values of Conflict

The interactionists readily accept and encourage conflict. They have expanded the term "conflict management" through recognition that it is a two-sided coin. They acknowledge that few have recognized its stimulation counterpart, whereas, much has been made of the resolution side. The interactionist believes that just as the level of conflict may be too high and require a reduction, it is also often too low and in need of increased intensity. The interactionists believe organizations that do not stimulate conflict increase the probability of stagnant thinking, inadequate decisions, and at the extreme, organizational demise.

Additionally, they find some strong evidence to support their claims. Hall and Williams (7) conclude ". . . established groups tended to improve more when there was conflict among members than when there was fairly close agreement . . ." They observed that when groups were formed to further analyze decisions that had been made by individuals, the average improvement by groups that exhibited high conflict was 73 percent greater than in those characterized by low conflict conditions. Several relevant real-life examples will dramatize the results from inadequately low levels of conflict.

The bankruptcy of the Penn Central Railroad has been generally attributed to mismanagement and a failure of the firm's board of directors to question actions taken by management. (8) The board was composed of outside directors who met monthly to oversee the railroad's operations. Few questioned the decisions made by the operating management, though there was evidence that several board members were uncomfortable with many major decisions made by the management. Apathy and a desire to avoid friction allowed poor decisions to stand unquestioned. The value of the Penn Central of an inquiring and demanding board which sought to force management to discuss and justify key decisions and the alternatives from which they were selected can only be postulated.

Assael's study of conflict between manufacturers and dealers in the automobile industry (9) demonstrated Studebaker to be largely conflict-free. One writer's (10) analysis of Assael's findings underscores the relationship between conflict and organizational success: "Perhaps more conflict between Studebaker and its dealers and employees might have saved the organization."

Reports on top-level discussions in the early 1960s concerning America's role in Vietnam indicate that those individuals who privately questioned the views of the majority of the presidential advisors refrained from openly questioning some obviously weak assumptions and poor logic. The environment created by both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson was not one to support minority disagreement. (11) As with the Penn Central debacle, it can be postulated how decisions might have differed had conflict been encouraged.

As the above examples indicate, complex organizations may be in need of techniques for stimulation far more frequently than they require techniques for resolution. Constructive conflict is both valuable and necessary. Without conflict, there would be few new challenges; there would be no stimulation to think through ideas; organizations would be only apathetic and stagnant. Rico (12) further elaborates that "the absence of conflict may indicate autocracy, uniformity, stagnation, and mental fixity; the presence of conflict may be indicative of democracy, diversity, growth, and self-actualization." Conflict is **the** vital seed from which growth and success germinate.

Survival Requires Change

There are but few things we can predict with certainty. One of these is that change will occur. A major responsibility of an administrator is to guide his organizational unit in reacting to change. External factors in society are dynamic in nature and those organizations that do not adapt will not survive. The truth of the Hegelian dialectic still appears to hold. Hegel recognized that all changes develop from conflict or through the clash of opposites.

The interaction in this clash postulated that for every thesis there existed an antithesis. Out of this confrontation develops a synthesis stronger than either the thesis or the antithesis. As will be demonstrated later in this section, this confrontation or conflict "is the root of personal and social change." (13)

The belief that conflict is both a source and result of change is not universally accepted. Most writers have recognized only that change brings about conflict. "Social change involves a redistribution of power and privilege; therefore, it will be resisted by some and sought by others; hence conflict." (14)

The interactionist philosophy acknowledges that change develops from dissatisfaction, from the desire for improvement, and from creative development of alternatives. Changes do not just happen, but are inspired by conflict. Desegregation in the south is illustrative of conflict's role in change. Sherif (15) describes a 1965 study of desegregation decisions in ten of the largest cities

in the southern United States. Changes were found to follow a pattern of crisis initiating from various forms of open conflict.

Another recent example demonstrates the impact conflict has had on altering the direction and role of higher education in America. The student-administration confrontations during the last half of the 1960s warrant recognition as a significant change stimulator. Out of these conflicts has come a concern for reduction of archaic traditions that were irrelevant to the learning process of the 1970s. Additionally, other conflicts between legislators, administrators, and faculty have resulted in greater awareness of the organization's objectives, accountability for its performance, and better utilization of the public and private resources allocated to higher education. Again, change does not just happen. It requires a seed—the seed of conflict!

Paradox of Conflict

The purpose of openly challenging ideas and philosophies is to force reevaluation. Where we have an environment that supports conflict, perceived differences can be discussed and analyzed. The additional thought and discussion generated by conflict only acts to reinforce the merit of a position that is the strongest of the available alternatives. A paradox is created because tolerance of conflict is counter to most cultures in developed nations. The United States, Canadian, and advanced European cultures have successfully engendered in their inhabitants a "fear of conflict," and a desire for at least tacit agreement. Most organizations today reinforce this sentiment. Let us take a closer look at the sources of this philosophy.

The early years of our development are when we are most susceptible to influence. From the time we reach an age of understanding through the primary school years, we have been inculcated with the value of getting along with others and avoiding conflicts. The home, school, and church are the three major institutions that share the responsibility for reinforcing anti-conflict values during the developing years of a child.

The home has historically reinforced the authority pattern through the parent figure. Parents knew what was right and children complied. Conflict between children, or between parents and children, has generally been actively discouraged. The traditional school systems in developed countries have reflected the structure of the home. Teachers had **the** answers and were not to be challenged. Disagreements at all levels were viewed negatively. The last major influencing institution, the church, also has supported anti-conflict values. Church doctrines, for the most part, advocate acceptance without questioning. The religious perspective emphasizes peace, harmony, and tranquillity. Such dogma has discouraged questioning the teachings of the church.

In addition to the influence of the institutions mentioned above, entire countries such as the United States have further fostered an anti-conflict image by developing a national pride as a peace-loving nation. Multi-billion dollar expenditures are made each year for defense, not offense. Preparation to fight is made only because others may initiate force and, therefore, protection is justified. If it is survival of the fittest, America will be prepared, although the striving for the attainment of peace dominates the thinking of the nation's people.

We are still operating under the influence of traditional philosophical teaching. Conflicts of any type or form are bad. The vast majority of us have been influenced at home, in school, and through the church to eliminate, suppress, or avoid conflict. Further, it has made us uncomfortable to be in its presence. Abraham Maslow expressed this view vividly in describing our society as one where there generally exists " . . . a fear of conflict, of disagreement, of hostility, antagonism, enmity. There is much stress on getting along with other people, even if you don't like them." (16)

The term conflict has a negative connotation for many in our society. The semantic problem has resulted in viewing conflict only from a negative perspective—as destructive or annihilatory. As we already recognize, conflict has a position side that is repressed in our culture. We are inculcated with anti-conflict views from childhood, and as a result most of us grow up with mores sanctioning unquestioned authority. Disagreement is considered unacceptable; all conflicts are bad. Might makes right, and if not might, at least formal authority. Bergen and Haney (17) report an American Management Association study that supports our contention. An overwhelming majority of 200 managers agreed that the most important single skill of an executive is his ability to get along with people.

We live in a society that has been built upon anti-conflict values. Parents in the home, teachers and administrators in the schools, teachings of the church, and authority figures in social groups all traditionally reinforce the belief that disagreement breeds discontent, which acts to dissolve common ties, and eventually leads to destruction of the system. Certainly we should not be surprised that children raised to view all conflict as destructive will mature into adults who will maintain and encourage the same values.

While these traditional beliefs that all conflict is detrimental are erroneous, we still find few indications that those who administer complex organizations are becoming tolerant of disagreement. Some organizations have established mechanisms to handle friction (18), but they are by far in the minority.

Too few administrators accept, and almost none attempt to stimulate, conflict. It is true that conflict is uncomfortable and that it can be a source of problems. But additionally true, and this is what is paramount to the administrator, conflict is absolutely necessary in organizations if they are to maintain their viability and to increase the probability of their surviving. One may speculate that the reason administrators are paid the highest salaries in organizations is to compensate for their supposed acceptance of conflict. A good part of their remuneration may be viewed as "combat pay" to work in an environment that is, and must be, constantly uncomfortable.

The predominant view of conflict held by most individuals and groups is demonstrated in an enlightening study presented by Elise Boulding (19) illustrating the extent to which anti-conflict sentiments permeate our society. Series of groups were formed to study a problem, some containing a deviant, who challenged and questioned dominant positions; others without. As we might expect, in every case, the group containing a deviant developed a richer analysis of the problem and a more elegant solution. When each group was then asked to drop one member, in every group that had a deviant member, it was he who was ousted. When given the opportunity, the childhood socialization that conflict was undesirable arose and the confronting force was eliminated, irrespective of its positive value. Our desire for consensus and agreement influences us more than the desire for effective performance.

Because individuals are products of their culture, we should not be surprised to find that anti-disagreement values dominate the literature; scholars in the administrative disciplines are enamored with the idea of a smoothly operating enterprise. They see the administrator as the great resolver of disagreement. It should also not be surprising to find little effort expended on a comprehensive study of conflict management. Rather, the overriding desire for peace and tranquillity within organizations has resulted in confusing the study of conflict resolution with conflict management.

The "greater peacemakers" have made a weak basic assumption. They accept the notion that since conflict does exist in organizations, it must be in excess of the level that is desired. They assume it is the administrator's role to reduce tensions. Their conclusion then is to initiate actions to reduce conflict. But the goal of management is not harmony and cooperation—it is effective goal attainment! Elimination of conflict is not realistic in complex organizations, nor would such elimination be desirable. As Rico has noted, "The individuals or groups who are most vocal in advocating 'harmony and happiness' in an environment devoid of conflict may only be protecting their vested interests in the **status quo**." (20)

It seems entirely likely that many, if not most, organizations need more conflict, not less. More organizations are dying from complacency and apathy, than are dying from an overabundance of conflict. The unsuccessful have failed to perceive alterations in society's values, in the community, and in their employees. Organizations must therefore adapt to the rapid change in their environment, and this requires change. Those administrators who naively succeed in eliminating conflict dramatically increase the probability that their organization will not survive.

Summary

Three philosophies describe the progression of conflict thought: traditional, which sought elimination of all conflict; behavioral, which accepted it; and interactionist, which actively encouraged conflict. It is the interactionist perspective that becomes the framework for the remaining chapters.

Managing conflict is the nucleus of successful administration. An organization and its administrators must be primarily concerned with survival, which can only result from adaptive change. Because change is an output of conflict, an understanding of conflict should be a significant part of the study of administration.

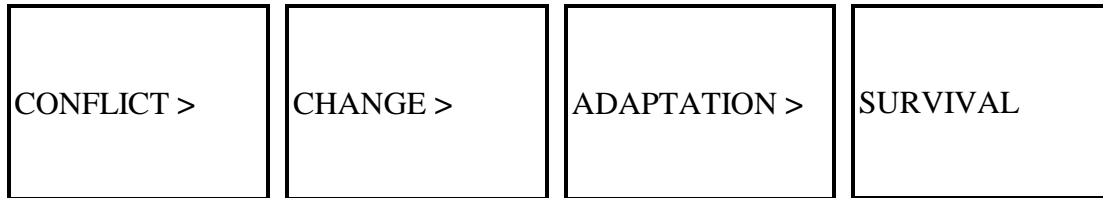


Figure 2-1 Conflict-Survival Model

The conflict-management process is not executed easily. Planning and evaluating conflict intensity makes administration one of the most difficult professions. Each administrator is responsible for creating an environment that supports conflict and allows for appreciation of differences. Further, he needs to understand that conflict management is not merely conflict resolution, but simulation as well. He knows that it is only by chance that conflict levels are that which he seeks.

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2. Bertram M. Gross, The Managing of Organizations (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964).
3. A significant exception is the work of Mary Parker Follett. She was cognizant of the value of constructive conflict in the 1920s. Her strong behavioral orientation placed her a quarter of a century ahead of her time.
4. Chapter 9, "Approaches to Managing Conflict," by Daniel Katz, in Power and Conflict in Organizations, edited by Robert L. Kahn and Elise Boulding, (c 1964) by the Foundation of Human Behavior, Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, New York.
5. Warren G. Bennis, Kenneth D. Benne, and Robert Chin, eds., The Planning of Change (2nd ed.) (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1969), p. 152.
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12. Leonard Rico, "Organizational Conflict: A Framework for Reappraisal," Industrial Management Review, Fall, 1964, p. 67.
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14. Joe Kelly, Organizational Behaviour (Homewood, IL.: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1969), p. 503.
15. Muzafer Sherif, In Common Predicament: Social Psychology of Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1966), p. 103.
16. Abraham Maslow, Eupsychian Management (Homewood, IL.: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1965), p. 185.
17. Garret L. Bergen and William V. Haney, Organizational Relations and Management Action (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966).
18. Note the increase in the number of organizations that have created the position of Ombudsman, to act as a conflict resolver.
19. Elise Boulding, "Further Reflections on Conflict Management," in Kahn and Boulding's text Power and Conflict in Organizations (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1964), pp. 147-48.
20. Leonard Rico, "Organizational Conflict: A Framework for Reappraisal," Industrial Management Review, Fall, 1964, p. 67.

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A POINT OF DEPARTURE

by Stephen R. Robbins

Conflict is a term that has acquired a multitude of meanings. Much of the semantic jungle has been created by the number of disciplines, including anthropology, economics, political science, psychiatry, psychology, sociology, and management that are concerned with conflict. Further, the term has a preconceived meaning to most individuals whose value systems strongly influence their interpretations of conflict. Unlike many other words, conflict holds strong negative connotations to many, is neutral to some, and is viewed positively by others.

"Conflict may connote animality, violence, destruction, barbarization, loss of civilized control, irrationality. Alternatively, conflict may connote adventure, novelty, clarification, creation, growth, dialectical rationality." (1)

The negative connotations with which many view the term result from reference to overt action. For example, when reference is made to the Arab-Israeli conflict, few individuals respond in a positive manner. A more normal response is concern over troublesome fighting, alarm at one nation's attempt to annihilate the other, and the desire to resolve the conflict that exists. Clearly, conflict of this type is viewed in negative terms, and correctly so. But conflict has a vital positive side. When the Israelis' Assistant Minister of Defense questions the Minister's strategy for logistic support at the front line, conflict also exists. Here, conflict **supports** the overall objective of the Minister's office, through questioning and rethinking of a particular decision. Conflict, therefore, describes a broad range of actions. It ranges from a minimum level of doubt, up through and including the extreme of annihilating the opponent. But such a description is too broad and, hence, inadequate for our use. Clearly, we need a tighter definition if we are to understand the subject.

Definition

Conflict, as the term will be used throughout this book, refers to all kinds of opposition or antagonistic interaction. It is based on scarcity of power, resources or social position, and differing value structures. Fink (2) views it as comprising two forms: (1) antagonistic psychological relations, and (2) antagonistic interaction. He differentiates the two by describing the former in terms of incompatible goals, mutually exclusive interests, emotional hostility, and differing value structures. Antagonistic interactions are overt; they can range from subtle, indirect and highly controlled forms of interference to direct, violent and uncontrolled struggle. Our definition covers the extremes from latent conflict, whether issues are formulated or not, to overt acts including strikes, riots, and war.

The above definition is purposely broad. It does not assume that inherent incompatibilities must exist in the situation. Subtle interferences need not require basic incompatibilities. Further, our definition does not assume overt struggle. Some writers require signs of manifest fighting as criteria for existence of conflict, but this obviously is only a part of the concept of conflict. If we

assume that overt struggle is necessary in any conflict, we have adversely and negatively influenced the reaction in any conflict; we have adversely and negatively influenced the reaction to the concept. Any action that requires open struggle is in almost all cases undesirable, and results in clouding and misconstruing the ideas and value of conflict.

An additional requirement of our definition is awareness. For an administrator to study conflict, it is necessary that he perceive it. Some theoreticians might find this constraint too limiting, but it appears necessary for the practitioner. It is necessary to appraise situations as they are seen, recognizing, of course, that conflicts perceived may not be real, while many actual conflicts may not be perceived. When two doctors cannot agree on the correct diagnosis of a mutual patient, it becomes irrelevant that they in fact are both saying the same thing. If one talks about a psychological problem and the other a physiological problem, though each recognizes it as initiating from mental strain, a conflict exists. In truth, there may be no conflict, but for our purposes, if one is perceived then it exists. It may be easily adjudicated through problem solving on the semantic difference, but in our terms such a perceived difference is a conflict.

The conflict we are describing is a social phenomenon, and is made up of interpersonal, intergroup, and intragroup interactions. These three types of conflict consist of interactions between two or more persons, two or more groups, and between individuals in the same group. It excludes conflict as the term is used in psychology or psychiatry. In those disciplines, the term means internal human conflict—conflict within the individual. Role conflict, for example, is not relevant to this study, except in the impact that conflict has upon social interaction and group goal attainment. Our analysis will concern itself with the sociological view of interpersonal, intergroup, and intragroup interactions, and exclude the psychological ramifications, except where they may have impact on the social framework.

Functional Versus Dysfunctional

Although to this point we have made strong arguments in favor of conflict in organizations, clearly we do not and cannot advocate all types of intensities of conflict. Some support the goals of the organization and improve performance; these are functional, constructive forms of conflict. Additionally, there are those that hinder organizational performance; these are dysfunctional or destructive forms.

A major thesis . . . is that conflict has significant value to any organization. Concern has been expressed about the need to rid organizations of "peacemakers" who have traditionally sought to abolish all forms of conflict. We now must qualify our analysis by differentiating between those forms that are functional and those that are not. The former represents confrontation that benefits or supports the goals of the organization. Any conflict that cannot meet this standard is undesirable and the administrator should seek its eradication. The demarcation between functional and dysfunctional is neither clear nor precise. No level of conflict can be adopted at face value as acceptable or unacceptable. We will find that the level that creates healthy and

positive involvement towards one group's goals may, in another group or in the same group at another time, be highly dysfunctional, requiring immediate conciliatory attention by the administrator.

A final point is needed on the two types of conflict before we leave the topic. Our differentiation between functional and dysfunctional has been in terms of organizational performance. Some administrators inadvertently err by determining a conflict's constructiveness relative to the participants involved. In terms of functional or dysfunctional value, it is irrelevant how the participants perceive the conflict. The participants may perceive an action as dysfunctional in that the outcome is personally dissatisfying to them. In our framework, it would be functional if it furthers the objectives of the organization.

If Professors Jones and Smith at the local university each desire a promotion from associate professor to full professor next year, but only one will be selected, they may view this conflict as dysfunctional. They are each busy improving their classroom teaching, expanding their participation on university committees, and burning the midnight oil in order to increase the number of their publications, while at the same time getting an ulcer from this pressure—all due to the desire for that promotion. The result, in terms of the organization, is extremely functional. Two faculty members are excelling. They are improving the offering they give to their students, are aiding and improving the internal functioning of the university, and are increasing the academic recognition of the school through publications. Now if you should ask our Professors Smith or Jones if they think this conflict and competition resulting from a scarce resource (one promotion slot) is functional or dysfunctional, they might rightly see it as the latter on a personal level. But an administrator is concerned with total performance of his group or organization. This example has resulted in improved organization performance and would be a functional conflict.

Competition

Our example of Professors Smith and Jones' effort to achieve a promotion was an example not only of conflict, but also of competition. There existed rivalry between two or more parties to gain advantage over another person or group, but not with the ultimate aim of annihilating the rival. Can we then say that all competitions are conflicts or that all conflicts are competition? The terms are frequently used as synonyms for each other, which is erroneous. There is a difference.

If all competitions were conflicts, we would be saying that all rivalries involved a form of opposition. Clearly, we can cite numerous examples in which this requirement is not met. There need be no opposition or antagonistic interaction when two departments compete for the monthly performance award. Is there antagonism among the five supermarket chains in an urban area who each seek to get the highest percentage of employee subscribers to the United Fund? Need there be opposition between school districts in a region competing for top honors in nationwide performance reviews? When battalions compete among themselves in various performance

categories for specific honors or recognition, must there be conflict? The answer to these questions is no: there **can** be, but there need not be conflict.

When we look at the other relationship, we again find exceptions. If all conflicts included competition, we would be stating that rivalry existed in all antagonistic interactions. In many cases this is probably correct, but not all conflicts have one party seeking to gain advantage over another. The military officer who after presenting a proposal asks his staff to look it over for loopholes and inconsistencies is encouraging conflict, but there is no reason to believe that either the officer or the staff have gained advantage from this conflict-supporting environment.

We have conflicts that do not involve competition, we have competition that does not involve conflict, and we have an area of overlap where they are synonymous. Interestingly, there is a frequent cause-effect relationship between the two. Intense competition can lead to conflict. We can expect this to occur when competition is based on scarcity of a resource—where one gains at another's expense. Our Professors Smith and Jones episode began in competition and resulted in conflict. If three fire station units are competing for the number one performance rating, the scarceness created by the availability of only one top position can result in conflict.

Where resources can expand, we need not expect conflict to develop. Volkswagen, Toyota, Fiat, Opel, and numerous other foreign automobile importers were able to compete throughout the 1960s without conflict developing because the market was expanding. When the market stagnated in the early 1970s, attempts to gain advantage over the competition resulted in antagonistic opposition developing among the manufacturers, distributors, and retailers as they sought to take sales from each other. As long as the base was expanding, **each** could compete and gain, but when the base no longer grew, one organization's gain was at the cost of one or more of its rivals.

Cooperation

Conflict's relationship with cooperation is considerably clearer, but surprisingly as misunderstood as the relationship with competition. Many practitioners perceive cooperation as being the opposite of conflict. They have traditionally sought the former and attempted to eliminate the latter. The opposite of conflict is no conflict, and the opposite of cooperation is no cooperation. The strength of this view becomes clear when it is emphasized that the elimination of conflict does

not assure cooperation; nor does the loss of cooperation imply the occurrence of conflict, nor do attempts to reduce conflict necessarily utilize techniques that increase cooperation. The elimination of one does not create the other. Whereas, cooperation, which we define as working together towards mutual goals, is frequently mentioned as a quality that organizations must have, it will become clear that cooperation can exist to too great an extent. Gross (3) has directed attention to, and has been critical of, those placing extensive emphasis on cooperation due to its association with stability and routinization. When cooperation exists to the extent of absence of conflict, it is usually associated with avoidance of change and the continuation of outmoded

forms of action. Therefore, we can literally conceive of an organization's cooperating itself to death.

Summary

This chapter defined conflict as opposition or antagonistic interaction, which can be dichotomized into functional and dysfunctional segments. The conflict that is functional and therefore leads to goal attainment should be encouraged, while the administrator should seek to eliminate all dysfunctional forms. Additionally, competition, which is frequently used interchangeably with conflict by practicing managers, was found to be similar to, but not always synonymous with, conflict. Further, conflict and cooperation were described as two separate concepts that co-exist in an organization.

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