



The Role of SOCIAL STYLE Training in Managing Workplace Conflict

Conflict is an inevitable reality of interacting with others. Different perceptions, priorities and personalities cause people to disagree, sometimes with disastrous results. The award-winning “Managers as Negotiators” study revealed that managers spend up to 42% of their work time resolving conflict. But conflict does not always have to be a negative experience, and understanding others’ interpersonal differences can help individuals have more satisfying interactions and help organizations increase productivity and retention.

The TRACOM® Group surveyed 146 people from organizations across North America to understand the impact of conflict in the workplace, as well as the role behavior plays in managing that conflict. All survey respondents had previously received training in SOCIAL STYLE™, the behavior model developed by the TRACOM® Group.

KEY FINDINGS

Major Sources of Conflict

- 63% of respondents identified lack of information or different understanding of information as a top source of conflict
- 60% blamed competing priorities
- 50% cited deadlines or limited resources
- 41% identified interpersonal behavior/Style differences

Effects of Workplace Conflict

- 67% of respondents said team productivity had decreased as a result of conflict
- 54% said organizational productivity had decreased
- 41% said "My personal productivity has decreased"
- 31% said "Someone I know has left a job"
- 67% said that regardless of the source of conflict,

individuals' SOCIAL STYLE differences made conflicts worse

- 92% said that when in conflict, taking Style differences into account made it easier to address the underlying issues

Since SOCIAL STYLE Training

- 86% of respondents stated they were more confident in their ability to handle conflict
- 71% said they had used their knowledge of Style to avoid or prevent potential conflict situations
- 47% said the number or intensity of conflicts they were involved in had decreased
- 71% said they were more likely to quickly recover and move beyond conflicts than they were before training

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

While conflicts occur for a variety of external reasons, this survey and other research demonstrate that the majority of conflicts arise from internal sources: Style differences. Conflict hurts productivity at all levels. The "Managing Conflict in Work Teams" article says, "The consequences of poorly handled team conflict are a lowering of team energy, disruption of healthy relationships, and the prevention of job accomplishment."

The good news is that understanding behavior differences can dramatically improve workplace conflict. "Research indicates that high performing teams are capable of mediating their own conflicts while improving productivity and strengthening relationships," according to the article. Employees who apply their SOCIAL STYLE training are confident in their ability to deal with conflict, can avoid or lessen conflict, and are able to move beyond conflict once it has occurred. Being able to adapt one's behavior when dealing with others has proven to be a marker of success.

Another TRACOM study showed that managers with a higher degree of SOCIAL STYLE skills are better at leading teams and coaching others and are more likely to be promoted.¹ When people use their knowledge of SOCIAL STYLE in the workplace, improved productivity and more satisfying personal interactions result.

¹ "Documenting the Relationship Between Versatility and Job Performance" by The TRACOM Group