

Conflict-Resolution Skills Worksheet and Reference

The workplace can be filled with conflict. There can be conflict between employees and their managers or supervisors and among coworkers, employees, customers, and even between the customers themselves. These are interpersonal relationships in the workplace. The goal remains the same: resolve conflicts. The incentive and motivation for resolving conflicts in the workplace is tied to avoiding or limiting the damage and continuing to work at peak productivity and efficiency. Handling conflict poorly might also damage the business's reputation.

Whatever the cause, it is important to understand that there are techniques available to resolve conflicts.

Conflict management often involves negotiation. Negotiation relies on compromise, which means that you may not like or totally agree with the solution and neither may the other party or parties involved. The ultimate goal is peace rather than fairness or blame. That said, there is a limit as to what your management expects you to endure to solve these interpersonal issues. In extreme cases, you should be aware of those limits and what you should do once a coworker or customer takes you past them. But in most instances, you are expected to handle interpersonal conflicts on your own. That means: do not run to your manager, supervisor, or boss every time a conflict arises.

Failure to resolve conflict can lead to punishment or even termination whereas successfully resolving conflicts can lead to promotion and increased business or productivity.

Provide examples for the following:

1. Conflict between an employee and a supervisor, manager, or boss:

As an employee, how would the business or company expect you to handle this situation?

2. Conflict between coworkers:

As an employee, how would the business or company expect you to handle this situation?

3. Conflict between customers and an employee:

As an employee, how would the business or company expect you to handle this situation?

4. Conflict between customers only that affects the workplace:

As an employee, how would the business or company expect you to handle this situation?

5. From the company's perspective, what is ultimately the benefit of resolving these conflicts (in each situation)?

Techniques for handling conflicts with difficult people

(from University of California San Diego)

1. Be honest and direct. (Simplify the problem, but be respectful.)
2. Listen carefully. (Make sure you know the cause of the conflict or complaint.)
3. Avoid blaming. (But no hollow apologies, and don't be condescending.)
4. Stay focused. (Try not to be distracted by smaller issues.)
5. Say less. (Let the other person do the talking.)

If a customer is being irrational, completely unreceptive to working with you, verbally abusive, or is threatening, follow workplace policy for dealing with him or her. If no policy exists, or if you are in business for yourself, it is time to think about a contingency plan. Often, in larger companies, formal processes are in place to help resolve conflicts among employees, including the [grievance](#) and [mediation](#) processes.

Conflict Management and Resolution Strategies for Small Businesses

(from Houston Chronical online [chron.com](#))

[Five Types of Conflict Resolution Strategies](#) by Eric Dontigney

1. Accommodating
2. Avoiding
3. Collaborating
4. Compromising
5. Competing

[Five Approaches to Conflict Resolution](#) by Vanessa Cross

1. Accommodating
2. Avoiding
3. Collaborating
4. Compromise
5. Confrontation

[Examples of Conflicts & Resolutions in the Workplace](#) by David Ingram

Discrimination issues

Performance review conflicts

Conflicts with customers

Leadership conflicts

[Ways of Managing Conflict in Organizations](#) by David Ingram

Positive perspective

Grievance procedure

Get to the cause

Equal voices

Resolution participation