



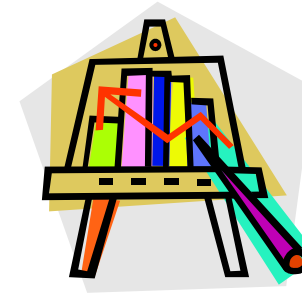
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A Manager's Guide to Resolving Conflicts in Collaborative Networks

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Overview

- Conflict Happens in Collaborative Networks
- Contrasting Approaches to Conflict Negotiations
- Interest-Based Negotiation
- Being an Effective Negotiator
- Communication Skills to Manage Conflict
- Designing Governance Structures That Minimize Conflict
- IBM Resources and Contact Info



“[M]any public managers find themselves ill-equipped for management in a power-shared world. The purpose of this report is to help managers manage and resolve conflicts in collaborative networks.”



Conflict Happens in Collaborative Networks

Conflict in networks is inevitable, given their complex nature. So plan for it in advance. Characteristics that add to the complexity include:

- There are multiple members
- Network members bring both different and common missions.
- Network organizations have different organization cultures
- Network organizations have different methods of operation
- Network members have different stakeholder groups and different funders
- Network members have different degrees of power.
- There are often multiple issues.
- There are multiple forums for decision making.
- Networks are both inter-organizational and interpersonal.
- There are a variety of governance structures available to networks
- Networks may encounter conflict with the public

“[T]he most important skills needed for today’s managers are negotiation, bargaining, collaborative problem solving, conflict management and conflict resolution.”



Contrasting Approaches to Conflict: Position- vs. Interest-Based Negotiations

Position-Based	Interest-Based Collaborative
Views other as adversary	Views other as negotiating partner
Approaches negotiations as a struggle one must survive or win	Approaches negotiation as a challenge for all partners to overcome
Emphasis on claiming value	Emphasis on creating value
Goal is a victory by achieving your predetermined solution	Goal is to create a solution to meet the interests of all parties
Process dictated by belief that one must impose or sell one's position	Process governed by belief that well-meaning, creative people can articulate options to satisfy mutual interests
Relies on salesmanship, manipulation, or lying	Requires honest disclosure of what is important to you
Might force choice between relationship and substantive goals	Allows parties to focus on relationship and substance
Yields reluctantly to pressure from other side	Willingly revises position when presented with good options
Usually results in win-lose, lose-win, lose-lose, or compromise outcomes	Potentially results in collaborative win-win outcomes

Source: Adapted from Katz, 2007.



Interest-Based Negotiation

- **Define the issue** and frame it as a joint task to meet both parties' needs
- **Educate each other** about your interests (disclose, listen, and ask)
- Look for ways to **expand the pie** (create value before you claim value)
- **Generate multiple options** for settlement; if you get stuck, go back and review what people's interests are
- **Evaluate the options** (how well do they meet needs)?
- **Select/modify options** based on which ones meet needs most
- **Use objective criteria** to resolve impasses.
- **Develop a plan** to implement the agreement including monitoring.



Being an Effective Negotiator

Start with an assessment, for example identify the scope and subject of negotiation and define the ground rules for negotiating. **Then:**

- Define the issue and frame it as a joint task to meet both parties' needs
- Educate each other about your interests (disclose and listen)
- Look for ways to expand the pie (create value before you claim value)
- Generate multiple options for settlement; if you get stuck, go back and review what people's interests are
- Evaluate the options (how well do they meet needs)?
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Communication Skills to Manage Conflict

- **Ask problem-solving questions to identify interests.**
 - Use open-ended questions (who, what, where, when, how, why)
 - Listen without interruption
- **Use “chunking” techniques**
 - When asking “why” is awkward, ask clarifying questions such as: “how would it be helpful to get x?” or “what difference would it make to you to have X?”
- **Use “reflective” or “active” listening**
 - Show the other side you’re listening by paraphrasing back the concerns articulated, such as “I want to make sure I understand your concern, your concern is X.”
- **Recognize and respond to hard bargaining**
 - If the other side is not committed to principled bargaining, recognize the tactics and name them openly to rob it of its effectiveness.



Designing Governance Structures That Minimize Conflict

- **A key element of success in creating a sustainable network is to gain consent in advance on how it will manage inevitable conflicts, as part of its initial governance structure.**

- **The following steps can help:**
 - Identify network members whose agreement is necessary
 - Identify the scope and jurisdiction of the network
 - Address issues of the network's legitimacy to do its work
 - Negotiate the ground rules for future discussions
 - Negotiate the processes governing exchanging views within a network
 - Discuss administration and allocation of responsibilities
 - Negotiate the decision rules for bringing discussion on an issue to closure
 - Identify a system for resolving impasse
 - Identify a decision process for ending the network

IBM Resources and Contact Info

“A Manager’s Guide to Resolving Conflict in Collaborative Networks”

- For free copies of the report, visit the IBM Center for The Business of Government website:
- www.businessofgovernment.org

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