



Taking Control of Conflict

How to Resolve and Minimize Workplace Disputes



Overview



Introduction

When you think of your job, conflict probably—hopefully— isn't the first thing that comes to mind. But have you ever found yourself complaining about having to work with a colleague who is particularly stubborn or bossy? Or perhaps replaying an encounter with your supervisor that left you feeling frustrated? Most people have been involved in some form of conflict in the workplace, its extent ranging from mild disagreements to explosive standoffs.

In fact, a study by CPP, Inc. found that 85 percent of employees at all levels experience conflict to some degree,ⁱ and that employees spend a staggering 2.8 hours per week dealing with conflict—the equivalent of \$359 billion of paid hours in one year. Another study, cited by Psychometrics Canada, found that 76 percent of respondents have seen conflict result in personal insults and attacks, and 81 percent have seen conflict lead to someone leaving the organization.ⁱⁱ



Test Your Knowledge

Read the question, then click on the answer.

If you feel stuck in the Smoothing approach, which action below would best help you move to a more appropriate approach?

A. Learn to say no to a request.

B. Push yourself to meet with the other person as soon as you are aware of the conflict.

C. Consciously allow the other person to have the last word in a conversation.

D. Allow some dissent during the discussion.

