

## **CONSTRUCTIVE APPLICATION OF CONFLICT MODE STYLES IN MARKETING ORGANIZATIONS**

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### **ABSTRA**

The purpose of this paper is to ascertain that the constructive application of conflict mode styles is a tool for marketing organizations. The design/methodology used secondary data information. The analysis reviewed that individual behaviour in conflict situations is a concern of two people along two basic dimensions. That is either to be assertive or co-operative. Finally the model styles explained that in a particular situation in every organization, a leader is always concerned with results or workers.

**Keywords:** *Management Conflict, Marketing, Organization, Resolution Techniques and Employees.*

## Introduction

Fundamentally, conflict-model styles would never have been developed had it not been for the inherently conflict-laden nature of the work environment. Workers form unions in order to “stand together” and correct the imbalance of power in the workplace. Conflict has to be handled in various ways and on a day-day basis. While trade-union management conflict is dealt with largely by way of collective bargaining, the optimal management of conflict in marketing organization that hopes to succeed in the modern business world entails the use of conflict mode styles.

Most people are of the opinion that the concept conflict has a negative connotation. And they are opposed to conflict. In fact, people would more often than not prefer to avoid it altogether than to handle it. The most likely reason for this is that conflict is very often associated with hostility, defensive behaviour and protracted trouble leading to loss, suffering, damage and bad intentions.

Tension in work situations is common, and specialists in conflict management are therefore constantly searching for new ways of handling conflict in organizations. It should be accepted that conflict is a fact of life and should be understood. As I have mentioned, it is an essential element in all social interaction. If one accepts that a measure of conflict is unavoidable, then the task of conflict management should be to understand why and how various forms of conflict occur, and how they can be identified and used to the advantage of all parties involved. Conflict situations are common in all organizations, and such conflict is usually accompanied by certain types of behaviour. Naturally, conflict is always present in marketing organizations.

## The five conflict handling modes styles

In a normal parlance, “Two wrongs cannot make right” therefore conflict has to be managed. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict mode instrument (TKI) assesses an individual’s behaviour in conflict situations – that is situations in which the concerns of two people appear to be incompatible. In conflict situations, a person’s behaviour falls along two basic dimensions: (1) **assertiveness**, the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns, and (2) **cooperativeness**, the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy the other person’s concerns. These two dimensions of behavior can be used to describe five methods of dealing with conflict as reported by Burrell (2001).



Source: [www.edbatista.com/2007/conflictmodes.html](http://www.edbatista.com/2007/conflictmodes.html)

**The Competing Style:** This is when you stress your position without considering opposing points of view. This style is highly assertive with low cooperativeness. The competing style is used when a person has to take quick action, make unpopular decisions, handle vital issues, or when one needs protection in a situation where noncompetitive behavior can be exploited.

Overuse of this style can lead to lack of necessary feedback, reduced interaction, and low empowerment. The manager is surrounded by “Yes-Men”. When overuse is taken to an extreme, the person will create errors in the implementation of the task by withholding needed information, talking behind another person’s back (or “back-stabbing”), using eye motions and gestures designed to express disapproval, and creating distractions by fiddling or interrupting. Overuse of this style can be exhibited through constant tension or anger and occasional outbursts of violent temper in the work place.

Under use of the competing style leads to a lowered level of influence, indecisiveness, slow action, and withheld contributions. When the competing style is underused some emergent behaviors people exhibit include unethical behaviors, demanding concessions as a condition of solving problem, threatening separation as a way of making others give in, and launching personal attacks on colleagues.

**The Avoiding Style:** This occurs when you do not satisfy your concerns or the concerns of the other person. This style is low assertiveness and low cooperativeness. It is appropriate to use this style when there are issues of low importance, to reduce tensions, or to buy time. Avoidance is also appropriate when you are in a low power position and have little control over the situation, when you need to allow others to deal with the conflict, or when the problem is symptomatic of a much larger issue and you need to work on the core issue.

Overuse of the avoidance style can result in a low level of input, decision-making by default, and allowing issues to linger, which can produce a breakdown in communication between team members. This can inhibit brainstorming sessions from being productive and can prevent the team from functioning. People who overuse avoidance feel they cannot speak frankly without fear of repercussions. The overuse of conflict avoidance can often be a result of childhood experiences, past work-related incidents, and negative experiences with conflict resolution. Behaviors associated with the overuse of avoidance include being silent, sullen, and untruthful when asked if something is wrong being. A milder form of avoidance behavior is when the team member procrastinates about getting work done and deliberately takes an opposing point of view inappropriately during a decision-making situation, or is timid, withdrawn, or shy. Extreme behaviors can occur when avoidance is overused. A person begins to be negative, critical and sarcastic. Other extreme avoidance behaviors include becoming passive aggressive by being late and not paying attention at meetings. It also lends a greater

importance to this style as compared to the other styles because you have devoted such a disproportionate amount of time to the style.

Under use of the avoidance style results in hostility and hurt feelings. In addition, work can become overwhelming because too many issues are taken on at once, resulting in an inability to prioritize and delegate. When avoidance is underused a team member may deny that there is a problem and allow their hurt feelings to prevent communication.

**The Compromising Style:** This style involves finding a middle ground or forgoing some of your concerns and committing to other's concerns. This style is moderately assertive and moderately cooperative; the goal is to find middle ground. The compromising style is used with issues of moderate importance, when both parties are equally powerful and equally committed to opposing views. This style produces temporary solutions and is appropriate when time is a concern, and as a backup for the competing and collaborating styles when they are unsuccessful in resolving the situation. Compromising skills include the ability to communicate and keep the dialogue open, the ability to find an answer that is fair to both parties, the ability to give up part of what you want, and the ability to assign value to all aspects of the issue.

Overuse of the compromising style leads to loss of long-term goals, a lack of trust, creation of a cynical environment, and being viewed as having no firm values. Overuse of compromise can result in making concessions to keep people happy without resolving the original conflict. Under use leads to unnecessary confrontations, frequent power struggles, and ineffective negotiating.

**The Collaborating Style:** This is the situation when the concern is to satisfy both sides. It is highly assertive and highly cooperative; the goal is to find a "win/win" solution. Appropriate uses for the collaborating style include integrating solutions, learning, merging perspectives, gaining commitment, and improving relationships. Using this style can support open discussion of issues, task proficiency, equal distribution of work amongst the team members, better brainstorming, and development of creative problem solving. This style is appropriate to use frequently in a team environment. Collaborating skills include the ability to use active or effective listening, confront situations in a non-threatening way, analyze input, and identify underlying concerns.

Overuse of the collaborating style can lead to spending too much time on trivial matters, diffusion of responsibility, being taken advantage of, and being overloaded with work. Under use can result in using quick fix solutions, lack of commitment by other team members, disempowerment, and loss of innovation.

**The Accommodating Style:** This occurs when the manager foregoes his/her your concerns in order to satisfy the concerns of others. This style is low assertiveness and high cooperativeness; the goal is to yield. The accommodating style is appropriate to use in situations when you want to show that you are reasonable, develop performance, create good will, keep peace, retreat, or for issues of low importance. Accommodating skills include the ability to sacrifice, the ability to be selfless, the ability to obey orders, and the ability to yield.

Overuse of the accommodating style results in ideas getting little attention, restricted influence, loss of contribution, and anarchy. People who overuse the accommodating style exhibit a lack of desire to change and usually demonstrate anxiety over future uncertainties. One of their main desires may be to keep everything the same. When accommodating is overused certain behaviors emerge. Some of these emergent behaviors include giving up personal space, making "me" or other victim statements, being overly helpful and then holding a grudge, and speaking in an extremely quiet almost unintelligible voice. Under use of the accommodating style can result in lack of rapport, low morale, and an inability to yield. When the accommodating style is underused a person may display apathy as a way of not addressing the anger or hurt, and make statements full of innuendo and double meanings.

### **Conclusions**

Knowing that two wrongs cannot make a right, having known more about conflict styles and personal preferences, the goal is to develop skills in all of the styles so that the management can mould conflict into a constructive form. Conflict can be used to help expose important issues, develop learning and creativity, and can help to develop trust and openness (Brake & Walker, 1995). Once you understand your styles you can view conflict management through five interrelated issues: marketing management source issues, strategy issues, context issues, reaction issues, and power issues.

Source issues in teams can result from individuals having different values, beliefs, and perceptions of self-interest. Team members can have conflicting goals and priorities, contrasting methodologies, (the principle of unit of purpose) different perceptions of events, and disparities in the distribution of work;

Strategy issues arise when people don't have the skills to choose the appropriate conflict management style;

Context issues are concerned with where and when the conflict is taking place, which includes culture, environment, and the history of the conflict. Conflict will escalate because of context issues when there is a loyalty to a specific sub group within the team, or when one member feels they must support friends within the team;

Reaction issues involve the emotions being expressed during the conflict. An example of a reaction issue is when team members see themselves as under attack;

Power issues usually involve resources such as money, time, knowledge, skill, information authority, legitimacy, and networking issues;

Recognizing the different aspects of a conflict and the different manners in which conflict escalates allows management to deal with situations more effectively. When a conflict has high intensity and detrimentally effects the entire team the plan should be to narrow the issues down to specific issues so it can be resolved. The SOLVE, the Anger Action Model, allows you to narrow the issues and settle them.

However, in every organization, the manager (leader) is always concerned with results or workers. Pursuing the two objectives at the same time means compromising, the effect is success at the short run and failure at the long run.

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