

Civility in the Workplace

Collaborating

According to the Search for Common Ground, a non-profit organization that aims to transform conflict into cooperative action, there are four steps to cooperative conflict management:

1. Raise the issue with the other person in a way that invites cooperation.
2. Listen to each other to discover your interests.
3. Create options: possible ways to solve the problem.
4. Develop an agreement that meets as many as possible both of your interests.

Compromising

Compromising, also referred to as bargaining, is the middle ground between collaborating and competing.

When you compromise, just like when you engage in collaboration, you're willing to see the other person's point of view. But unlike in collaborating, you don't aim to go so far as find that ultimate solution equally favorable to both sides. Instead, you're willing to find even just the minimum workable solution, and allow the sacrifice of some interests.

Accommodating

The Accommodating Style of conflict management involves sacrificing most, if not all of your interests in order to satisfy or gain the favor of the other party. Basically, accommodating is deliberately taking a loss on the bargaining table.



Competing

If collaborating involves the merging of two different points of view, competing is the opposite. Instead of working together, competing promotes seeing the other party as an opponent that must be challenged, if not defeated. The objective is clearly to win, and for the other party to lose.

Competing, however, is vulnerable to underhanded tactics and victimization. There are some people who are willing to cross many lines to get to the end goal of winning. For instance, bullying and intimidation can be off-shoots of a competing conflict management style. The same goes with the use of personal attacks and manipulation. Under-the-table campaigns, such as the use of bribery, can also come about because of competing. The winner of the conflict is not always the person who is on the right; rather he or she may simply be the person who holds the most power.