



MIM Mediation and Malcolm Guy



Are proud to present our

11 Point Summary of the Global Human Capital Report

on

WORKPLACE CONFLICT AND HOW BUSINESSES CAN HARNESS IT TO THRIVE

1. Conflict cost to the organisation



The survey found that, on average, each employee spends 2.1 hours every week – approximately one day a month – dealing with conflict in some way.

In some organisations, the situation is even worse: 1 in 10 respondents say they spend 6 hours a week or more dealing with conflict.

2. Negative outcomes of workplace conflict witnessed

- Personal insults/attacks - 27%
- Sickness/absence – 25%
- Cross-departmental conflict - 18%
- Bullying - 18%
- People left the organisation - 18%
- People were fired – 16%
- Employees were moved to different departments – 13%
- Project failure - 9%



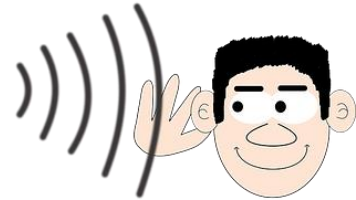
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3. What could managers do to address conflict at work more effectively?

The single most critical activity for effective conflict management is deemed by respondents to be conversation, active listening and seeking to understand underlying emotions

- More informal one-to-one conversations with direct reports (chosen by 42%)
- Acting as mediators (40%)
- Providing more clarity over expected forms of behaviour (40%)



4. The value of training conflict resolution skills

We know that conflict at work is endemic. The study reveals that conflict outcomes can vary widely, and that conflict's negative impact carries substantial personal and organizational cost. It's perhaps surprising, therefore, that formal (or even informal) training in how to manage conflict is not as pervasive as it should be.

Only 44% of those surveyed had received any type of training in dealing with workplace conflict.

It's important to acknowledge that simply "throwing training at the problem" of organisational conflict is not the solution.

Creating a better understanding of oneself and others is the most powerful (& durable) tool in getting the best out of individual differences.

5. Conflict as a force for progress and innovation.

Positive outcomes from effective conflict management demonstrate that conflict is not, per se, a bad thing and can actually benefit the organisation considerably.

- Three quarters (76%) of employees have seen a conflict lead to something positive.
- Four out of ten (41%) found that it led to a better understanding of other people.
- One in three (33%) experienced improved working relationships.



- Three out of ten (29%) even found that conflict led to a better solution to some problem or challenge.
- One in ten (9%) say that conflict resulted in the birth of a major innovation or new idea at work.



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6. What positive outcomes were experienced because of workplace conflict?

- Better understanding of others – 41%
- Improved working relationships – 33%
- Better solution to a problem/challenge – 29%
- Higher performance in the team – 21%
- Major innovation/idea was born – 5%



7. Getting the best out of conflict with customers

If the conflict is handled well, the client's belief in the company can actually increase, through greater trust that their needs are understood and that future problems can also be overcome by working through difficult issues together.

If customer conflict is handled badly, the relationship will certainly be soured and the customer may take their business elsewhere.



When creating good solutions in any conflict it is essential to seek a range of opinions, gaining input from those with diverse experiences or personalities, and manage the process of doing so professionally.

- 76% of those in the study reported positive outcomes from conflict situations.

As with many organisational challenges, conflict is not the problem; badly managed conflict is.



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8. Clarity beats conflict

When the rationale for decisions isn't transparent, if tricky issues are ducked by leaders, or if employees are continually surprised by decisions they know to be at odds with reality, conflict breeds.

Your organisation's policies and procedures need to be clear and consistent.



As policies and procedures can never be static or perfect, leaders need to share their thinking and rationale with their teams at every opportunity and even, sometimes, their feelings.

Organisations should be seen to uphold a consistent system. If people don't get what they feel they deserve, this can be mitigated, at least, by ensuring they know how the decision was made and seeing that it applies to everyone else too.

9. Ensure that everyone "owns" accountability for resolving conflict

You can guide someone through a minefield without having to carve out their footsteps first.

It's true that managers play a critical role in ensuring good outcomes from conflict in the organization, but avoiding the downward spiral of escalating conflict must be a shared responsibility.

Employees who pass the buck to their bosses for sorting out any disagreement they encounter along the way never mature into truly useful organisational citizens, never mind future leaders – and managers deprive them of this chance when they shoulder that burden.



Regular meetings at which employees are coached to handle situations they find "difficult" are essential, as is delegating closely managed tasks of progressively increasing organizational complexity.



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10. Watch out for the tipping points

On the front-line, most negative conflict stems from a relatively small number of issues.

Leaders need to tune in to the “crunch points” around which heated feelings gather in their teams and organizations. These may be issues that barely register on their own radar screens, but which dominate people’s experience of work, such as office space, working hours, or misunderstandings.



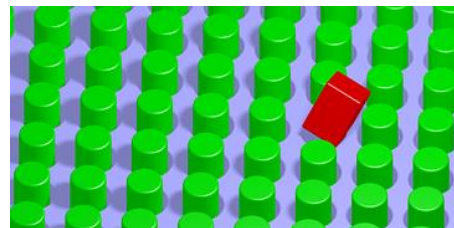
Managers must see things from the perspective of their reports, who may not be in possession of the bigger picture. It’s also key to note which individuals stimulate conflict in an unhealthy way. These are not the same as your opinion-leaders, whom it’s important to keep informed and aligned.

Managers also need the ability to take their egos out of decision-making and being humble enough to admit when they are wrong.

11. Recognize that one size does not fit all

You will almost certainly have a preferred style of handling conflict, to which you will default. The trick is to identify this, and question whether it best suits the situation as you approach each issue.

Using the same approach to conflict in every situation will not get you the best results; different circumstances warrant different approaches, and the law of diminishing returns applies.



It’s important to weigh the best outcome you might achieve against the time needed to get you there.

What’s Next?

So that’s it, the condensed version of the 36 page report. There is a lot more in the full report, if you want to take a look the link is [here](#) .

If you want to engage with me, Malcolm Guy and the resolution work I do in the workplace, or discuss details of the report, then click one of the platforms below;



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