



Module 10.3.a Accommodator Team

Conflict management styles do not solve conflict. Once you develop an understanding that differences of opinion are context specific, you can identify whether the persons involved are managing the conflict effectively. People have fifteen options when managing a conflict. When faced with a difference of opinion with others you choose from five management styles to settle the conflict. Your decision is usually predicated upon what style you are most comfortable with and have used many times in the past rather than the most effective style. Choosing the appropriate style is the major factor in whether the conflict is settled appropriately or not. People are usually unaware that they are choosing a style that they are either under using, over using or appropriately using. If in the survey the person's score is lower than 50% then the person under used the style, over 50% over used the style, and if the score is 50% used the style appropriately.

An accommodating style is unassertive and cooperative – the opposite of competing. When accommodating, an individual neglects their own concerns to satisfy the concerns of the other person; there is an element of self-sacrifice in this mode. Accommodating might take the form of selfless generosity or charity, obeying another person's order when one would prefer not to, or yielding to another's point of view. If you are overusing accommodating you may want to review why you over use this conflict style. Overusing accommodating is being overly acquiescent and cooperative. You may attempt to satisfy your team members' concerns at the expense of your own.

Accommodator's Contributions: When people use the accommodating style appropriately Accommodators' compassion and generosity can serve an important interpersonal relations role when participating on a team – as a kind of shock absorber for the team when it is undergoing stress. Accommodators help to maintain goodwill and trust. They provide psychological support and a sympathetic ear and can serve as peacemakers to restore harmony. This style helps soothe hurt feelings and resentments.

Accommodator's Characteristics: Accommodators tend to see conflict as social and emotional issues to be settled with support and sensitivity. They often believe in the Golden Rule (“Do unto others...”) and that generosity will eventually be rewarded in kind. They regard team members as valued friends – people to be supported and looked after. Accommodators value support, generosity, goodwill, and team cohesiveness. They often feel that compassion and friendship are ultimately more important than the minor issues involved in most conflicts. They help team members meet their concerns and to help build team cohesiveness and goodwill.

Effective Use of Accommodating: When making a small or moderate sacrifice would significantly help the team achieve its goal. When restoring peace is especially important by soothing hurt feelings within the team. When a team member needs support.

Behaviors to Guard Against: Shading the truth: not telling team members the truth out of concern for their feelings, telling white lies.

Sacrificing: Giving up more than you can afford; needing others to look after your welfare.

Allowing questionable decisions to be implemented: Not challenging decisions you have doubts about; avoiding “rocking the boat” by questioning the team’s judgment.

Bending rules: Allowing exceptions to rules or standards out of compassion or desire to be liked; overlooking violations or substandard performance, being too flexible on a task.

Appeasing: Regularly giving in to bullying, anger, or threats, thereby encouraging these tactics.

Reactions to Different Styles: As an accommodator, you may appreciate the value of other styles when they clearly fit the situation and benefit the team. Likewise, people with different styles are likely to respect your contributions when they are clearly appropriate. However, both you and they may be sensitive to, even resent, some aspects of each other’s styles.

Conflict Styles in Action in Teams:

Behavior and Different Types of Issues:

Agenda: Going along with team member’s topics

Example: “Ok, if that’s what you want to discuss”

Truth: Accepting conclusions despite reservations.

Example: “I’m not totally sure about that but okay”

Goals: Sacrificing your goals to help others.

Example: “Don’t worry about me. What do you need?”

Action: Tolerating decisions you don’t like.

Example: “I’d prefer a different decisions, but I won’t stand in the way.”

Foundations of the Conflict Styles: As an Accommodator your perception of conflict and you team members’ perceptions are relevant. When settling a conflict you will use your guiding principles and values and your team members will be doing the same.

These perceptions, guiding principles and values could be an integral part of the conflict and each team member's perception could be different.

Accommodating

Uses:

1. When you realize that you are wrong – to allow a better position to be heard, to from others, and to show that you are reasonable.
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2. When the issue is much more important to the other person than to yourself –to satisfy the needs of others, and as a goodwill gesture to help maintain a cooperative relationship.
3. To build up social credits for later issues that are important to you.
4. When continued competition would only damage your cause – when you are outmatched and losing.
5. When preserving harmony and avoiding disruption are especially important.
6. To aid in the managerial development of subordinates by allowing them to experiment and learn from their own mistakes.

If you scored High:

1. Do you feel that your own ideas and concerns are not getting the attention they deserve? (Deferring too much to the concerns of others can deprive you of influence, respect, and recognition. It also deprives the organization of your potential contributions.)
2. Is discipline lax? (Although discipline for its own sake may be of little value, there are often rules, procedures, and assignments whose implementation is crucial for you or the organization.)

If you scored Low:

1. Do you have trouble building goodwill with others? (Accommodation on minor issues, which are important to others are gestures of goodwill.)
2. Do others often seem to regard you as unreasonable?
3. Do you have trouble admitting it when you are wrong?
4. Do you recognize legitimate exceptions to rules?
5. Do you know when to give up?

For Accommodators:

Perception of conflict: a social/emotional issue to be settled with support and sensitivity.

Perception of team members: valued colleagues – people to be supported and looked after.

Guiding Principle: belief in the Golden Rule (“Do unto others....”)

Values: supportive, generous, goodwill, and team cohesiveness are valued.

Appropriate Use of Accommodating:

For Team Effectiveness: Use accommodating when it is time to build goodwill and cohesiveness. Accommodators with their compassion and generosity, serve an important interpersonal relations role in a team, helping to maintain goodwill and trust. You can provide psychological support and can serve as a peacemaker to restore harmony. Accommodating occurs when you seek or accept a position that would meet the other person’s concerns at the expense of your own. It is a win-lose mode in which you neglect or sacrifice your own concerns in favor of the others.

Common Examples:

Doing a favor to help someone
Being persuaded
Obeying an authority
Differing to another’s expertise
Appeasing someone who is dangerous

Benefits:

Helping someone out: Helping people meet their needs’ by supporting them.

Restoring harmony: Smoothing feathers; calming trouble waters.

Building relationships: Building social capital by doing favors; helping apologizing when necessary.

Choosing a quick ending: Cutting your losses so you can move on.

Costs:

Sacrificed concerns: Something you care about is conceded – your interests or your views are sacrificed.

Loss of respect: Although cooperativeness can build goodwill, low assertiveness can lose you respect; a pattern of accommodating can encourage exploitation by others.

Loss of motivation: More accommodating means less satisfaction; you may find yourself agreeing to things you for which you have little enthusiasm.

Deciding when to Accommodate:

Don’t fall into a pattern of appeasement

Yield to a better position

When you are persuaded
When others know more and there's little time

Concede when you are overruled or losing
When your boss overrules you
When you are outvoted in a group
When you are outmatched and losing

Make a small sacrifice when it's important to others
Doing favors
Letting people test their wings
Boosting confidence

Accommodate to clean up hard feelings
To repair damage you caused
To forgive others so you can move on

Behavioral Skills for Accommodating:

Concede gracefully
Don't be a sore loser
Explain your motives

Planting Seeds

Satisfying a complaint
Accept anger (but not abuse)
Explain (but don't defend) what happened
Use active listening
Apologize
Make reparations when appropriate

How Accommodators Interact amongst other Styles on a Team:

Competitors

How others may seem to you	How you may seem to others
Insensitive to the needs and feelings of people they oppose – even mean-spirited	Too nice – too concerned with protecting people’s feelings
Selfish – putting their own views and desires ahead of other’s	To be losing out not taking adequate care of your own interests
Their behavior may seem to undermine trust and goodwill within the team	Your niceness may seem to keep you from telling the truth

Collaborators

How others may seem to you	How you may seem to others
Demanding- pushing the team to pursue win- win solutions	To make unnecessary sacrifices-abandoning your concerns too quickly
Confrontational digging into issues that may cause hard feelings	To interfere with problem-solving –smoothing issues over to keep peace
Eager to raise uncomfortable issues for the team- challenging conventional wisdom	Too protective trying to keep the team in its comfort zone

Compromisers

How others may seem to you	How you may seem to others
To place settlements ahead of relationships	Too worried about offending others to negotiate a settlement
Bargaining seems to cost more than a compromise is worth settlement	Too unassertive to ask for a fair settlement-failing to get what you deserve

Avoiders

How others may seem to you	How you may seem to others
Invest too little time in building work relationships squandering their social capital	Too concerned with pleasing people at the expense of your own affairs

Ignore resentments allowing them to fester and become destructive	Too sympathetic –encouraging others to vent their complaints and gripes
As unresponsive to team members' concerns and detached from the team	To protect yourself and your time enough

Dealing Constructively with Other Styles

1. Accommodators can build on their existing strengths if they can incorporate some key insights into their thinking. You can also reduce the cost of accommodating by learning to address the special concerns of people with different dominant conflict styles.

With Competitors:

1. Recognize there are vital issues on which your team needs to take a firm stand.
2. Listen to competitors' reasoning to these issues.
3. Learn to say no when you mean it.
4. When you see that competing would only damage the team, explain why.
5. Example - When it is time to cut losses, when it now appears the team's position was wrong, or when an apology is warranted.

With Collaborators:

1. Recognize that win-win solutions are possible on many issues.
2. When you can satisfy others' concerns without sacrificing your own.
3. Learn not to smooth over issues prematurely.
4. Give collaborators time to look for a win-win solution first.
5. When you see that collaborators are stirring up hard feelings by digging into sensitive issues, point it out.
6. Explain to them when and why it is time for peacemaking.

With Compromisers:

1. Recognize that in a win-lose negotiation, compromises are often the fairest solutions.
2. Try to resist the urge to make concessions too quickly in negotiations.
3. Learn negotiation tactics from the compromisers on the team.
4. When you see that accommodating will be more appropriate than compromise, say so. Example – Compromise when it would cost the team little to do an important favor for others.

With Avoiders:

1. Recognize that some issues raised by others are too unimportant and time-consuming to be addressed by the team.
2. Learn to protect the team's time as well as its interpersonal relations.
3. Tell the team when you see some members needing to air their feelings on an issue.
Example - explain that it is worth the team's time to make sure that these resentments don't build up and fester.

References

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