Modules 10.3.d Competitor 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.

Competing is assertive and uncooperative – an individual pursues their own concerns at the other person's expense. This is a power-oriented mode, in which one uses whatever power seems appropriate to win one's own position – one's ability to argue, one's rank, economic sanctions. Competing might mean "standing up for your rights," defending a position that you believe is correct, or simply trying to win.

You may want to review why you over use competing

Contributions: You can be powerful advocate for positions they see as valid. You are a force for moving tings along in the team. Your tough-mindness enables you to face unpleasant facts and push for decisions that may be unpopular. In teams, you can be an effective antidote to others who are too nice or polite to take action or say what needs to be said. You can also force teams to test their assumptions. You often take the lead when quick action is needed – for example, providing direction in a crisis.

Characteristics: You tend to see conflicts as contests between opposing positions and the people who hold them. Believing in your position, you try to win these contests. You regard team members with other views as opponents and will take on the entire team if the issue is important and you are confident. You value tough-mindedness, candor, having the courage of your convictions, and making things happen. You use arguments and hard bargaining to advance your position and are often impatient with others who disagree, wanting to "get things moving."

When Especially Helpful:

1. When the leader needs to impose an unpopular but important decision or to take decisive action in a crisis
2. When a proposed course of action needs challenged
3. When championing a concern that is vital for the team but is being ignored or resisted

Behaviors to Guard Against:

Monopolizing: overriding the agenda with your topic; making long speeches; responding to all comments with out counterarguments
Not Listening: interrupting or talking over others' statements, ignoring others' valid points
Exaggerating: oversimplifying your case as the better way to perform the task; overstating the evidence for you position
Attacking: showing anger toward others; making personal criticisms; making threats
Blocking: holding up a decision that is going against you by refusing to yield; stonewalling

Reactions to Different Styles:
As a competitor, 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 maybe sensitive to, even resent, some aspects of each other's styles.

Your Conflict Style in Action:

Imposing or dictating a decision: a contest between opposing positions and the people who hold them

Arguing for a conclusion that fits your data: "Your memo doe not address the proper issues in the project, redo the memo."

Hard bargaining (making no concessions): I won't agree to changing these milestones you must work more hours on this problem."

In Teams:

Conflict Styles in Action: Behavior and Different Types of Issues:

Conflict Styles in Action Behavior and Different Types of Issues in Teams:
 As a Competitor 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.

Perception of Conflict: a contest between opposing positions and the people who hold them
Perception of Team Members: opponents, if their views differ on an issue
Guiding Principle: belief in one's position – and in using tough-minded candor to challenge opposing positions
Values: tough-mindedness, candor, having the courage of one's convictions, making things happen

Intended Contributions to Team Effectiveness: Advocating positions that have merit. You can be powerful advocates for positions you see as valid, serving to move things along. With your tough mindedness you may also force the team to face unpleasant facts and make difficult decisions.

Appropriate Use of Competing:

Use competing sparingly not all the time
Compete on vital issues where collaborating isn't feasible
> When you know you are right but not in learning situations allow for others to explore the issues first
> When unpopular actions need to be taken
> When quick, decisive action is required
> When you're under attack
> When consensus fails
> When people are too considerate

Behavioral Skills for Competing:

Being persuasive
> Lay the groundwork
> Explain your motives
> Appeal to shared concerns
> Be specific and credible

Fighting fair
> Stick to the current issue
> Be respectful
> Listen and respond
> Ask as a referee to others

Using warning instead of threats:
> Don't threaten
> Use warnings

Imposing a decision:
> Assert your authority
> Reward new behavior
> Follow up deviations

Using tough love to enforce standards:
> Be supportive
> Be tough-minded
> Raise the issue of fit

For Team Effectiveness Common Examples:

Conflict styles in action: Behavior on different types of issues:

Agenda pushing for your topic: "We need to talk about the extra time this project is going to take and because I was not present when you began this discussion I have a few issues I wish to discuss now"

Truth arguing for your conclusion: "You're wrong if you continue to press this issue, I will not ant to work with you any longer and there will b consequences."

Goals advocating for your goals: 'this issue is hurting the project , and it is basically an issue that the team just has to complete whether there is time or not and discussion of this issue is a waste on my time."

Action arguing for the action you prefer: "We need to increase the amount of time we spend on this project by 50% and I can't agree to anything less."

Benefits:
Asserting your position: Standing up for your interest and ideas; making sure they are taken seriously
Possibility of quick victory: Making a quick recommendation; pressing for a quick decision if you have enough power to prevail
Self-defense: Protecting your interests and views from attack
Testing assumptions: Debating to expose and test your own and others' assumptions

Costs:
Strained work relationships: Losers feel resentful; exploited
Deciding when to Avoid: Possible win-win solutions are overlooked; information is not exchanged freely
Decreased initiative and motivation: When decisions are imposed; others are less committed to them; show less initiative and motivation

Uses:
1. When quick, decisive action is vital – e.g., emergencies.

2. On important issues where unpopular courses of action need implementing – e.g., cost cutting, enforcing unpopular rules, discipline.

3. On issues vital to company welfare when you know you're right.

4. To protect yourself against people who take advantage of noncompetitive behavior.

If you scored **High**:
1. You are probably surrounded by "yes" men or you are always feel that the people around you are missing the point. (If so, perhaps it's because they have learned that it's unwise to disagree with you, or have given up trying to influence you. This closes you off from information.)

2. Subordinates afraid to admit ignorance and uncertainties to you because you are unwilling to address many of their concerns. (In competitive climates, one must fight for influence and respect – which means acting more certain and confident than one feels. The upshot is that people are less able to ask for information and opinion – they are less able to learn.)

If you scored **Low**:
1. Do you often feel powerless in situations? (It may be because you are unaware of the power you do have, unskilled in its use, or uncomfortable with the idea of using it. This may hinder your effectiveness by restricting your influence.)

2. Do you have trouble taking a firm stand, even when you see the need? (Sometimes concerns for other's feelings or anxieties about the use of power cause us to vacillate, which may mean postponing the decision and adding to the suffering and/or resentment of others.)

How Competitors Interact amongst other Styles on a Team:
Collaborators

How you may see others	How others may seem you
Others win-win assumptions may seem too rosy and utopian to you	You may seem to overlook win-win possibilities – appearing cynical and focused on your own goals rather than the team's
Other may seem naïve – e.g. overlooking real-world conflicts of interest	You may seem more interested in winning than in learning – appearing closed-minded
Others can seem too trusting, open, and vulnerable	You may appear argumentative and defensive – not listening to what they say

Compromisers

How you may see others	How others may seem you
Others may seem to make concessions too easily – taking too soft or weak a stand	You may be a hard liner, unwilling to budge or bend, and missing out on possible deals
Others may seem to eager to make a deal – squandering some of their bargaining power	You may appear not to be acting in good faith – not really trying to find common ground
Others seem to be selling out by compromising their views	You may appear to be unfair – waiting it all your way and violating their norms of reciprocity

Avoiders

How you may see others	How others may seem you
Others may seem too reticent or timid – too cautious to take a risk by standing up and being counted	You may appear to be too rash – rushing into an issue before you understand the costs and risks
Others may appear to ignore important issue, leaving that burden to you	You may seem to be a troublemaker – stirring things up and disrupting the team's activities
Others may try to avoid you when you try to force them to deal with an issue	You may appear to be a squeaky wheel – using up too much of the team's time on your personal agenda

Accommodators

How you may see others	How others may seem you
Others may appear too nice – too concerned with protecting people's feelings	You may appear insensitive to the needs and feelings of people you oppose – even mean or cruel
Others may seem to be losing out by not taking adequate care of their own interests	You may seem selfish – putting your own views and desires ahead of others'
Others' niceness may seem to keep them from telling others the truth	Your behavior may seem to undermine trust and goodwill within the team

With Collaborators

1. Recognize that some win-win outcomes are possible – when conditions permit, allow time for collaborators to look for win-win solutions on important issues before pushing for your position
2. Learn to give collaborators the information they need to problem solve without being defensive – to explain your reasoning or the facts that led to your conclusions.
3. When you see that conditions don't permit collaboration, tell team members why it isn't feasible – e.g., when there isn't enough time or the issue is win-lose

With Compromisers

1. Recognize that compromises are acceptable on issues that aren't vital – allow compromisers to suggest settlements that would break deadlocks
2. Keep track of how many decisions are being settled in your favor – try to give compromisers something in return to preserve a sense of fairness
3. When compromise doesn't seem acceptable on an issue, explain why

With Avoiders

1. Recognize that avoiding is legitimate on some issues – listen to avoiders when they say an issue is not important enough to justify the team's time or would put too much stress on its members
2. Try to give avoiders advance notice of an issue so that they can be fully prepared for a discussion
1. When you feel you must raise an issue, say why it is important enough to justify the group's time

With Accommodators

1. Recognize that there are times when it is wise to give up – hear what accommodators tell you about the costs of pressing your position when you are losing
2. Learn to tone down competitive behaviors that hurt feelings unnecessarily – e.g., threats, blame, sarcasm, or expressed anger
3. Learn how to repair damaged relationships by admitting your mistakes and apologizing when you've hurt others

References

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