



Understanding conflict

*The Thomas-Kilmann
Conflict Mode Instrument*



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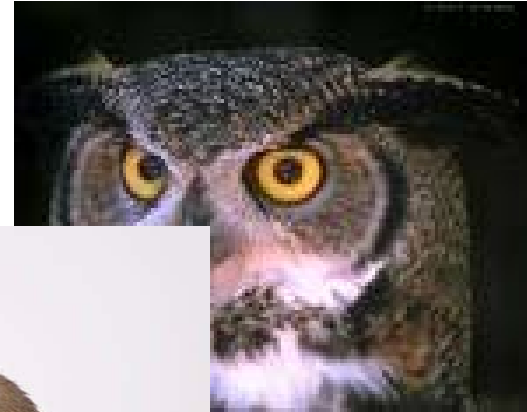
Dimensions of behaviour in conflict situations

- **Assertiveness** – The extent to which individuals attempt to satisfy their own concerns
- **Cooperativeness** - The extent to which individuals attempt to satisfy the other person's concerns

Blake & Mouton 1964

Five methods of dealing with conflict

Assertive



Un-assertive



Un-cooperative

Cooperative

Using the TKI

- We all use each of the styles but usually have a preference for 2 or 3 of them
- Be aware of your own styles
- Observe the styles of others
- Context, context, context
- Practice using less preferred styles

Competing (I win - you lose)



Characteristics

- Pursuit of own objectives regardless of others
- Use of power
- May lead to *affective* conflict
- May cause resentment

When to use?

- Emergencies – quick & decisive action needed
- Important and unpopular issues
- When you know that you are right (important issues)
- To defend yourself against others who are taking advantage

Collaborating

(I win - you win)



Characteristics

- Working with others to find a mutually satisfactory solution
- Detailed examination of the issue to uncover concerns
- Involves cognitive conflict
- May be time consuming

When to use?

- When compromise is not acceptable to either party
- To gain commitment to a decision
- To protect or mend relationships
- To merge perspectives

Avoiding (Neither of us wins)



Characteristics

- Neglect own concerns as well as the other person's
- Conflict remains unresolved
- Delaying tactic

When to use?

- Hopeless situations that are beyond your control/power
- Trivial situations, especially when time is short
- To let people cool off
- When others can resolve the conflict more effectively

Accommodating

(I lose - you win)



Characteristics

- The opposite of competing
- Self sacrifice
- Selfless generosity
- Push over, doormat, etc

When to use?

- When it matters far more to the other person
- Build up social credits
- When you are outmatched and losing!
- When preserving harmony is particularly important
- To develop subordinates

Compromising (Middle ground)



Characteristics

- Intermediate to assertiveness and cooperativeness
- Middle-ground position
- Splitting the difference
- A fudge?

When to use?

- To achieve temporary settlements to complex issues
- Two opponents of equal power strongly committed to mutually exclusive goals
- When under time pressure
- A back-up mode to collaboration or competition