

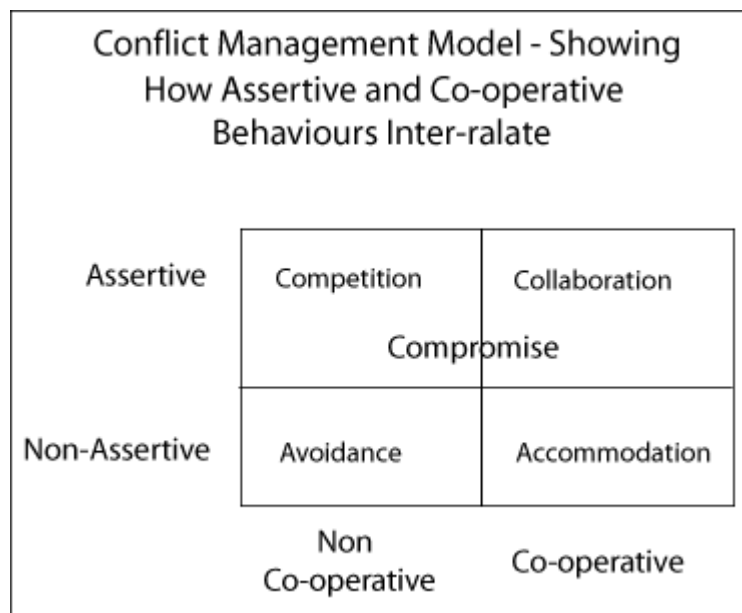
## Workplace Conflict Management: Strategy for Successful Resolution

By Lyndsay Swinton

A successful workplace conflict management strategy will reduce hostility and aggressiveness at work. Conflict management and resolution must address everyone's needs and concerns, including your own, so in turn you will be more effective and have greater job satisfaction. Learn how to improve your conflict management skills, with this conflict management article.

First let's clarify definitions. We call it "conflict management" because we expect hostile, aggressive behaviour from all parties involved in a discussion or issue, and some kind of moderation is required for things to work out. It doesn't have to be like that.

Using the Conflict Management Model, you can see how behaviour can be expressed in terms of co-operation and assertiveness, and how that approach works (or not!).



### **Avoidance - Non assertive, non co-operative**

Avoidance is useful, if there is no pressing need to resolve differences now or in the future. Individuals are indifferent to each other's needs, and issues are evaded or ignored completely. Generally, this is not a useful long term conflict management strategy as the workplace is never small enough to avoid someone completely!

### **Accommodation - Non assertive, co-operative**

Accommodation is allowing the other person's needs to be met, usually at the expense of your own. This is a useful conflict management strategy if you don't care about the issue, or if you have little power in the relationship or situation. Also, letting the other person have their way once in a while may preserve or even build a relationship. However, being too accommodating too often can weaken your position to the point where your voice is never heard.

### **Compromise - Some assertiveness, some cooperation**

Compromise is on the path toward collaboration, somewhere between competition and accommodation. It's about giving up some ground in order to gain other ground elsewhere. You win some, you lose some! This is a useful conflict management strategy if time is tight, or if it's not worth exploring things more fully. Also, compromise is useful when one party can't force their solution on the other.

### **Competition - Assertive, non co-operative**

Competition is the flip-side of accommodation - it's about making sure your own needs are met, no matter the cost. This [win-lose approach](#) is useful if there is an important deadline to meet, or if the relationship with the other party is not important. However, steam-rolling your way around the workplace may get things done, but there will be an army of people who won't catch you if you fall.

### **Collaboration - Assertive, co-operative**

Collaboration is a road not often travelled as it can be long, and requires some skill and effort. Collaboration is about assuming positive intent and seeing things from all sides, in detail. It's about acknowledging and accepting differences, and exploring alternative solutions that meet everyone's needs and concerns. It is a useful conflict management strategy when the issues are important to everyone, and all sides need to be committed to the solution.

## **Choose the Right Conflict Management Strategy**

To make use of the conflict management model, you need to ask some tough questions. Are you assertive or do you let people walk all over you? Do you cooperate or is it win at all cost? Think about a workplace conflict, and assess how cooperative and assertive you are, and how assertive and co-operative the other party is. Maybe changing your approach may change their reaction, and resolve the conflict both now and in the future.

### **Other resources:**

[Win win negotiation skills apply at home and in the boardroom, and this negotiation article tells you how.](#)

[Improve your assertiveness skills with this mp3 download from \[www.hypnosisdownloads.com\]\(http://www.hypnosisdownloads.com\)](#)

**By Lyndsay Swinton**

**Owner, Management for the Rest of Us**

[www.mftrou.com](http://www.mftrou.com)

[Signup for Monthly Management Tips here](#)