

Conflict Handling Styles

Adapted from Rahim, M. (1983). A measure of styles of handling interpersonal conflict. *Academy of Management*, 26, 368-376.

Avoiding

When employees avoid conflict, they often withdraw and detach themselves from the issue. They are not willing to assert their own wants nor do they want to help others get what they want. For example, they tend to mind their own business and look the other way when other employees are discussing office politics or ways to equalize the workload.

Accommodating

When your employees accommodate others in order to avoid conflict, they will do whatever they can to help the other person get what they want, often to their own detriment. They give in to demands, even unreasonable ones, to avoid disagreement. For example, your employee may choose to do someone else's job rather than suggest that the responsible person complete it.

Competing

When your employees compete to be right, their primary interest is in resolving the conflict their way. They have no interest in helping others get what they want. They become very defensive of their position and have difficulty understanding the reasons others don't see things their way. Employees may insist that everyone else drop what they're doing so *their* project can be completed in *their* timeframe. Those who compete often take advantage of those who accommodate others.

Compromising

When employees compromise in order to resolve a conflict, they are willing to give and take with the others. They want both parties to be either satisfied or dissatisfied with the outcome. Compromising is frequently used because it is expedient and both parties make concessions. For example, your employees in the marketing department may agree on the logo for the new sales initiative and disagree on the color. So, they both may give up their first choices and select a second color that they both marginally agree to use.

Collaborating

When employees collaborate, they are interested in seeing that everyone's wants are fully met. These employees tend to consider themselves a team. They work creatively and are solution oriented. The outcome of the conflict often leads to one that neither party held prior to the collaboration.

To understand your preferred style for dealing with conflict, complete the following questionnaire. Use the following scale to indicate your agreement with each of the following questions.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree

	1. I try to avoid stating my opinion in order not to create disagreements.
	2. When there is a disagreement, I try to satisfy the needs of the other people involved.
	3. I use my influence to get my position accepted by others.
	4. I try to find the middle course to resolve differences.
	5. I try to discuss an issue with others to find a solution acceptable to all of us.
	6. I keep my opinions to myself if they disagree with others' opinions.
	7. I usually go along with the desires of others in a conflict situation.
	8. I am usually firm about advocating my side of an issue.
	9. When I negotiate, I usually win some and lose some.
	10. I like to work with others to find solutions to a problem that satisfy everyone.
	11. I try to avoid disagreements with others.
	12. I often go along with the recommendations of others in a conflict.
	13. I stick to my position during the conflict.
	14. I negotiate openly with others so that a compromise can be reached.
	15. To resolve a conflict, I try to blend the ideas of all of the people involved.

Scoring:

Add questions number 1, 6 and 11 to obtain your **avoidant** score:

Add questions number 2, 7 and 12 to obtain your **accommodation** score:

Add questions number 3, 8 and 13 to obtain your **confrontation** score:

Add questions number 4, 9 and 14 to obtain your **compromise** score:

Add questions number 5, 10 and 15 to obtain your **collaboration** score:

Do you have a preferred conflict handling style? What would encourage you to be more collaborative?
How you deal with people who use a different style of conflict resolution?