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Groupthink and Conflict



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Groupthink

Groupthink

Occurs within a group of people when the desire for harmony or conformity in the group results in **irrational or dysfunctional** decision-making



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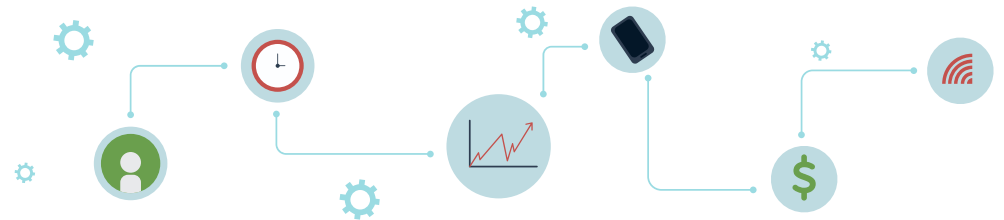
Groupthink

Beware of:

Cascade effects

Polarization

“Common knowledge”



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Preventing Groupthink

Expect groupthink

Engage diverse groups

Engage outsiders / experts

Define group values

Allow ample **time**



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Managing Groupthink

Don't shoot the messenger

Consider alternatives

Challenge assumptions

Manage conflict

Appoint a devil's advocate

Speak last

Test decisions outside the group



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“None of us is as dumb as all of us.”

Mark Kelly, NASA



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Conflict

DISCUSSION

How do you view conflict within your project teams?



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**“Conflict is about issues and ideas, while
accountability is about performance and
behavior.”**

Patrick Lencioni
“The Advantage”

When is conflict ok?

Finding project **inefficiencies**

Understanding team member **concerns**

Generating **new ideas**

And more...



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Some sources of conflict within project teams:

Divided loyalties (matrix organizations)

Scarcity of resources

Prioritization of scheduled tasks

Personal work styles

Poor communication

Lack of openness and honesty or failure to address commitments



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Top Ten Sources of Conflict Within Project Teams

- 1: Unclear roles and responsibilities
- 2: Competing priorities
- 3: Poor communication
- 4: Personality clashes
- 5: Lack of accountability
- 6: Resource constraints
- 7: Scope changes and creep
- 8: Ineffective leadership
- 9: Cultural or hierarchical tension
- 10: Unresolved past friction



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**“The truth is that low-level confrontations
keep the big confrontations from being
necessary.”**

**Stephen Mansfield
“Ten Signs of a Leadership Crash”**

Conflict Resolution

Choose Time & Place

Differentiate wants & needs

Target issues
(Not personalities)

Commit to action



Act Early

Agree on the problem

Provide an open
And fair hearing

Focus on solutions
(Not blame)

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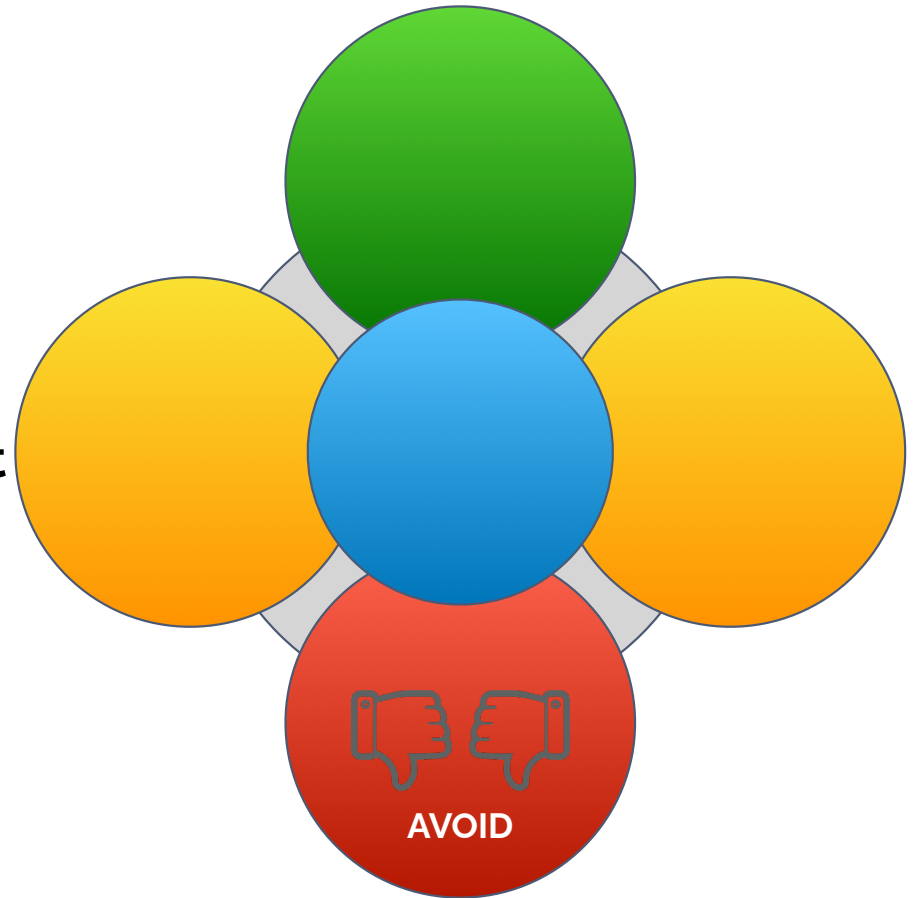


Conflict Management Style: Avoid

The conflict doesn't exist!

This style is typified by delegating controversial decisions, accepting default positions, and not wanting to hurt anyone's feelings.

Weak for the PM to go this route



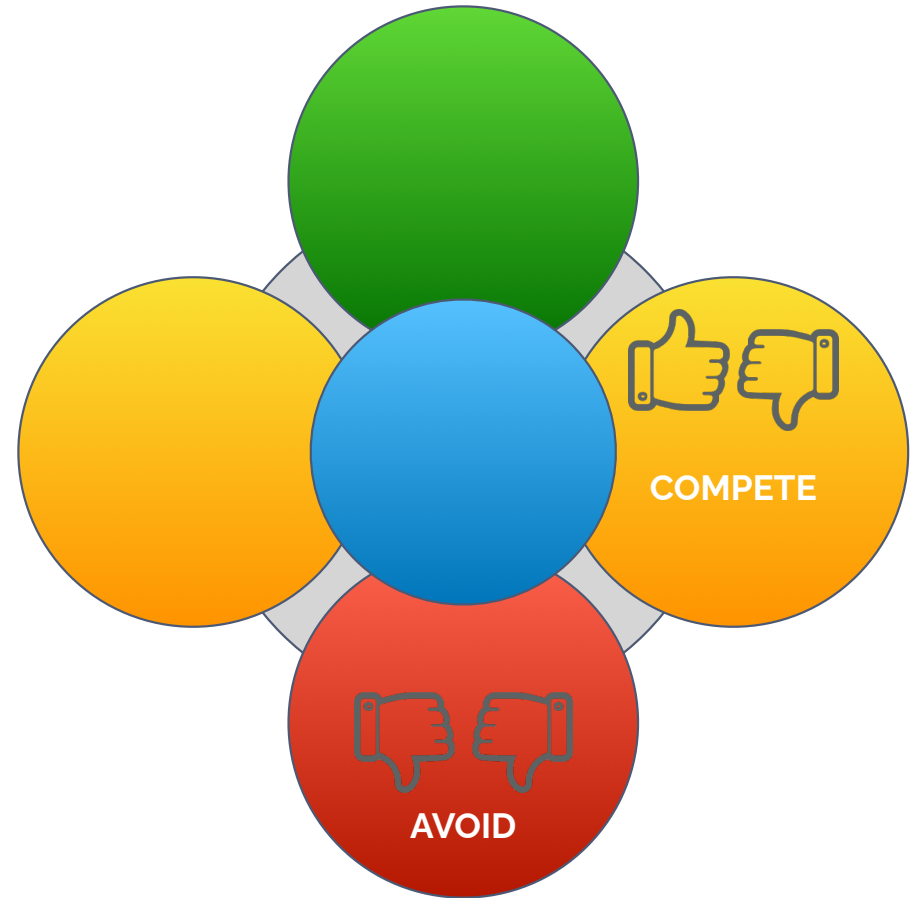
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Conflict Management Style: Compete

People who tend towards a competitive style take a firm stand - and know what they want.

They usually operate from a position of power, drawn from things like position, rank, expertise, or persuasive ability.

Often leaves people feeling bruised, unsatisfied and resentful when used in less urgent situations.



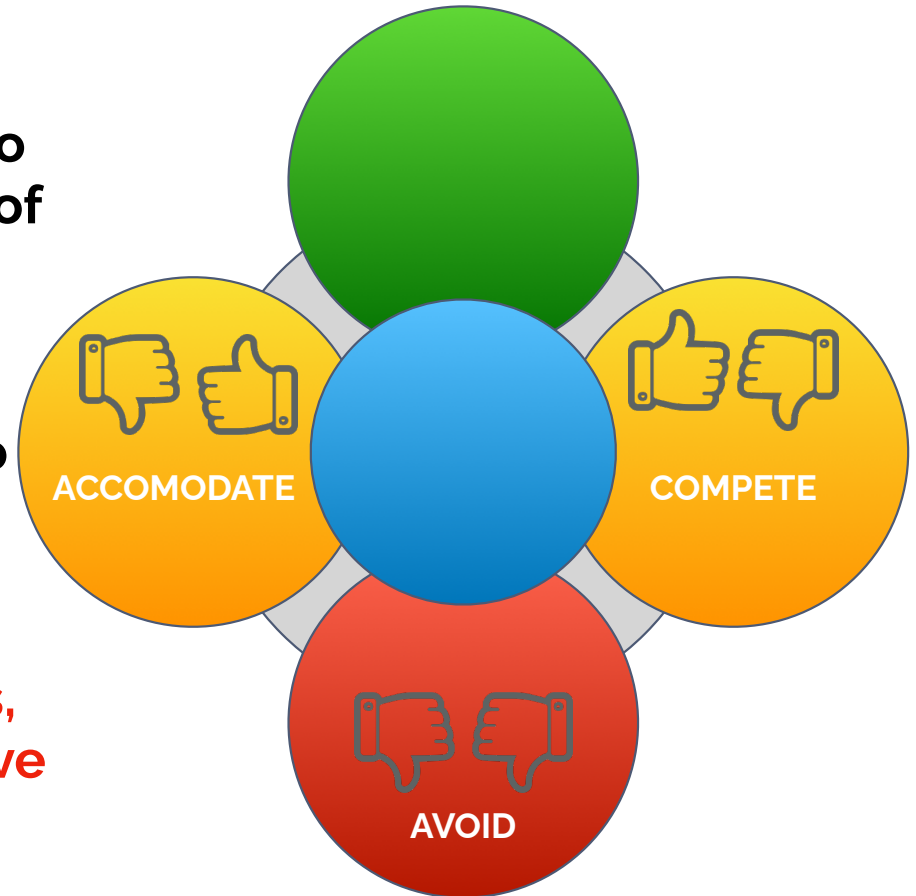
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Conflict Management Style: Accommodate

Accommodating indicates a willingness to meet the needs of others at the expense of the person's own needs.

The accommodator often knows when to give in to others, but can be persuaded to surrender a position even when it is not warranted.

However, people often don't return favors, and overall this approach is unlikely to give the best outcomes to the accommodator.



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Conflict Management Style: Compromise

People who prefer a compromising style try to find a solution that will at least partially satisfy everyone.

Everyone is expected to give up something, and the compromiser themselves also expects to relinquish something.

However, it may come at the cost of 'dumbing down' ideas



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Conflict Management Style: Collaborate

Adopting an approach that meets the needs of the situation, resolves the problem, respects people's legitimate interests and **mends damaged working relationships.**



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Conflict Management Styles Distribution

Style	Approx % Of People
Avoiding	20-25%
Accommodating	15-20%
Competing	10-15%
Compromising	25-30%
Collaborating	10-15%



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Conflict Key Points and Take-aways

Key Points from Conflict



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Conflict is **GOING TO HAPPEN** in your projects. Be prepared for it.

Know yourself and know **your conflict management style.**

Realize that **you may be at fault** and learn to listen when heated debates occur.