Managing Conflict & Difficult People in Your Dental Practice

SDS Summer Dental Symposium
Friday, June 9, 2017
Memorial Education Center – Modesto, CA

Facilitated and Designed by:
Dr. Steven Swafford, IOM
Los Angeles/Ft. Lauderdale/Washington DC/Boston/Hartford
www.leadershipoutfitters.com
### Where Does Conflict Emerge?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual?</th>
<th>Perception?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What’s Your Preferred Style?

How do you usually handle conflicts? Read each technique below, decide if you use it frequently, occasionally, or rarely. If frequently, put a “3” on the appropriate line below, if occasionally, write a “2” on the blank, if rarely, write a “1”.

1. Use all your resources to win.
2. Try to deal with the other person’s point of view.
3. Look for middle ground.
4. Look for ways to let the other person win.
5. Avoid the person.
6. Firmly pursue your own goals.
7. Investigate the problem from many angles.
8. Try to reach a compromise.
9. Give in.
10. Change the subject.
11. Complain and badger until you get your way.
12. Try to get all concerns out in the open.
13. Give a little and encourage the other party to do the same.
14. Make quick agreements if only to keep the peace.
15. Try to joke your way out of it.
16. Threaten to bring in higher and stronger authorities.
17. Present alternatives to consider.
19. Aim to be liked.
20. Try to focus on something else.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I.</th>
<th>II.</th>
<th>III.</th>
<th>IV.</th>
<th>V.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>7.</td>
<td>8.</td>
<td>9.</td>
<td>10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>17.</td>
<td>18.</td>
<td>19.</td>
<td>20.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

(c)2017 Leadership Outfitters    Stanislaus Dental Society    www.leadershipoutfitters.com
Barriers & Catalysts to Move Forward

Positive Conflict Management

I. Directing/Competing - “Every conflict has a winner and a loser. I intend to be the winner.”
- Refusing to give in
- Standing up for your rights
- Personal agendas

II. Collaborating/Problem Solving - “Let’s work it out.”
- Exploring the disagreement
- Examining alternative solutions
- Finding a mutually satisfying solution

III. Compromising - “Let’s split the difference.”
- Seeking middle ground
- Each side gives up something for a solution

IV. Accommodating - “I’m willing to give up a lot to end this conflict.”
- Yielding to another’s point-of-view

V. Avoiding - “This isn’t worth fighting for.”
- Not addressing the conflict
- Withdrawing from the situation to postpone the issue
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Uses</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directing</td>
<td>When immediate action is needed or safety is a concern.</td>
<td>Intimidates others, builds resentment, doesn’t allow others to participate in problem solving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating</td>
<td>Leads to decisions that address everyone’s needs, improves relations between those in conflict, can learn from sharing of points-of-view.</td>
<td>Takes time, all parties must agree to the process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compromising</td>
<td>Quick, easy, when parties of equal strengths have mutually exclusive goals, when all else fails.</td>
<td>Easy to avoid real issues in conflict, no one may be satisfied with the outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodating</td>
<td>Use when the relationship is more important than the issue.</td>
<td>Needs may not get met, some may feel used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding</td>
<td>When confronting is too dangerous, when an issue is unimportant, when the situation needs to “cool down”, when you want to buy time to prepare.</td>
<td>Important issue may never get addressed, conflict may escalate or resurface later.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. **Has the Conflict Been Assessed?** – Each conflict situation is going to be different, no matter how often we’ve addressed similar situations.

2. **What Kind of Conflict Relationship?** – There are three (3) general types of conflict circumstances which are:
   a) One-time or first-time conflict?
   b) Repeated conflict scenario -- again?
   c) Conflict involving some kind of long-term relationship?

3. **What Type of Conflict Will We Face?** There are basically two (2) types of conflict situations in dialogs as well as a blend of the two. They are:
   a) relationship conflict – views, opinions, beliefs, values, or ideology; and
   b) resource conflict – tangible, measurable, or quantifiable.

4. **What is the Purpose?** There are two (2) basic situations that trigger conflict. These are:
   a) Reactive -- Urgency; Emergency; or Survival; or
   b) Proactive -- New Ideas; Initiatives; or Exploratory

5. **Is There a “Ripple Effect” to Consider?** Based on the outcome of this conflict are there other impacts or readjustments to be considered?

6. **Do We Need to make or sign a formal agreement?** In the event of the conflict resolution collapsing at a later date this will impact this consideration. Do other parties need to approve this agreement?

7. **Is There a Time Element?** There two general considerations regarding the time element which are filing or decision deadlines as well as ongoing collaborations take up time – time is money.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What one do you always practice?</th>
<th>Which one(s) do you usually not consider?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Harvard Business Essentials 'partnership' Harvard Business School Press; Leigh Thompson, 'The Heart and Mind of the Negotiator'

(c)2017 Leadership Outfitters Stanislaus Dental Society www.leadershipoutfitters.com
Mental Models

Mental Models are “deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action.” (Senge, Peter. *Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*)

Our brains make models automatically. Like a river, our patterns flow continually over the same path, leaving a deeper and deeper mark each time. The deeper the path, the harder it is to change the pattern. (McGehee, Tom. *Whoosh. Business In The Fast Lane. Unleashing the Power Of A Creation Company*)

**Mental Models**
- Represent our “perception” not what is necessarily real or true;
- Are powerful in their influence over our actions and our responses;
- Prevent us to being open to new ideas, options, or learning.

**Bias or Stereotype**
A bias -- or what is sometimes called a “stereotype” -- is an inflexible positive or negative prejudgment about the nature, character, and abilities of an individual and is based on a generalized idea about the group to which the person belongs. (Theidermann, Sondra. *Making Diversity Work*)

**What are our mental models or bias around?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Profession/Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generations</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultures/Ethnicity</td>
<td>Sexuality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Piercings/Tattoos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ink</td>
<td>Military Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health/Ability</td>
<td>Geographic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Faith</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 General Lenses Impacting Conflict

Logical Approach
Appeals to reason. Your conflict argument is based on the best choice of action based on data and the benefits of the action. Can include an organizational or personal approach.

Notes:

Emotional Approach
You appeal to individual goals or values. There is a clear vision that the other party can support. You describe the action needed with enthusiasm and share the passion or unique need. You make the appeal using a story.

Notes:

Cooperative Approach
You build a connection between you, the person you want to influence an others, to get support for your proposal. Working together to accomplish a mutually important goal means you’re extending a hand to others in the organization. It is an extremely effective way of influencing. Building cooperative connections may involve collaboration (figuring out what you will do together), consultation (finding out what ideas other people have) and partnerships/alliances (drawing on whoever already supports you or has credibility you need).

Notes:

Case Study Development

What is the idea, concept or position in conflict?
(e.g. co-worker issue; vendor partnership; internal initiative; program funding; technology investment; compensation)

Conflict Case Study Scenario

Possible Questions to Consider Regarding the Case Study

1. Who does this conflict affect directly or primarily? Stakeholders?
2. Who can these people influence or resolve the conflict?
3. How will you approach them?
4. Will you convene a group to discuss or approach individuals?
5. Will you approach those in your immediate area or reach further or higher into the organization?
6. Why should they listen to your perspective? Idea?
7. What is compelling or valuable about your conflict resolution?
8. What timing would give you the best conflict resolution results?
Exploring Behavior & Communication Styles

**Analyzer**
Accuracy orientated; needs to be correct; supports standards/guidelines; likes perfection; provide facts/data; settling on a position; enjoys logic.

**Controller**
Results oriented; needs control; supports objectives; likes efficiency; likes immediate results; lower active listening skills; enjoys options.

**Stabilizer**
Relationship oriented; needs security; supports personal goals; likes to be heard; needs to be appreciated; slower decision-making process; enjoys teams.

**Persuader**
People oriented; needs to be liked; supports risk taking; likes praise; follows ‘gut feeling’ over facts; dislikes structure/guidelines; enjoys social interaction.

Adapted from The Effectiveness Institute, Inc.
"Rotating Your Iceberg"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>RESULTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyzer</td>
<td>Persuader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controller</td>
<td>Stabilizer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from The Effectiveness Institute, Inc.
**Instructions:**

- Consider an individual or dental practice conflict you want to address.
- Choose a stakeholder with whom you want to build/improve relations and develop strategies for diffusing conflict for him/her/them toward a particular perspective.
- Make notes in the boxes on your page then discuss your approach to your stakeholder with the rest of your team.

---

**Stakeholder:** _________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establish Credibility</th>
<th>Find Common Ground</th>
<th>Provide Vivid Evidence</th>
<th>Connect Emotionally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expertise and knowledge Listen to others Track record</td>
<td>Clarify the benefits Illuminate the advantages Understand others’ views</td>
<td>Logic and facts Imagery and metaphors Stories and examples Spreadsheets and statistics</td>
<td>Show empathy Demonstrate commitment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Stakeholder Behavior Style and/or Perspective**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establish Credibility</th>
<th>Find Common Ground</th>
<th>Provide Vivid Evidence</th>
<th>Connect Emotionally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How can I build/reinforce my credibility? How can I build trust? (If I don’t have credibility and trust, who can I ask to communicate with this stakeholder?)</td>
<td>Do I understand their views related to this issue? What is in it for them?</td>
<td>Does this person prefer hard data, empirical information, examples, or stories?</td>
<td>Do I understand the sensitivities involved? How will I show my passion while acknowledging their passion?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As we grow as a company, it has become more and more important to explicitly define the core values from which we develop our culture, our brand, and our business strategies. These are the ten core values that we live by:

1. Deliver WOW Through Service
2. Embrace and Drive Change
3. Create Fun and A Little Weirdness
4. Be Adventurous, Creative, and Open-Minded
5. Pursue Growth and Learning
6. Build Open and Honest Relationships With Communication
7. Build a Positive Team and Family Spirit
8. Do More With Less
9. Be Passionate and Determined
10. Be Humble

From http://about.zappos.com/our-unique-culture/zappos-core-values
What are Yours?

- People demonstrate and model the values in action in their personal behaviors, decision making, contribution, and interpersonal interaction.
- Values guide every decision that is made in the organization.
- Organizational goals are grounded in the identified values.
- Only the active participation of all members of the organization will ensure a truly organization-wide, value-based, shared culture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value: __________</td>
<td>Behavior: ___________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value: __________</td>
<td>Behavior: ___________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value: __________</td>
<td>Behavior: ___________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“What you are is revealed by what you do. What you do reveals what you believe.” -- unknown
Alignment: Personal & Professional

A. 44% of Americans surveyed said they knew their core values and they were consistent with their employer's values.

B. 30% reported they knew their core values, but they are not always consistent with their employer's values.

C. 11% said they were not certain what their core values are, but felt uncomfortable working for their employer.

D. 10% said core values don't have much to do with the work they do.

What are your organization's values?
•
•
•
•
•
•

How do your values align with your organization, department or area?

From Core Values Study: www.leadershipchallenge.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-305420.html
Give up the Need to be “Right”

- Why is it important to be right?
- What advantages does it give you?
- Do we associate being right with being successful? Do we need to be right to get the recognition we need?
- How does it feel to be on the other side of the equation?
- What would you get if you didn’t have to be right?
- Is there real resolution if one party gets to be right?

"Let go of your attachment to being right, and suddenly your mind is more open. You're able to benefit from the unique viewpoints of others, without being crippled by your own judgment."
-- Ralph Marston

"The need to be right all the time is the biggest bar to new ideas. It is better to have enough ideas for some of them to be wrong than to be always right by having no ideas at all."
-- Edward de Bono
Examples of Positive Conflict Management

It’s all in the Tone

1. Agree that now is a good time to attempt to resolve the conflict. Allow "prime time" when energy is high and motivation is positive, not when you are angry or tired.

2. Manage feelings and emotions. There must be an underlying attitude of respect, caring, forgiveness and no harm.
   - Take a slow, deep breath.
   - Your voice should be calm, slow and controlled.
   - Avoid angry or too emotional words.

3. Describe the conflict event or issue in chronological order.

4. Discuss the specific issue or specific behavior, not the person, personality or motivation.

5. Listen and check understanding.

6. Identify the other person's goals; check understanding.

7. State your goals; identify how the goals coincide.

8. Stay in the present, do not engage in coercion or fault-finding from the past.

9. Identify alternatives that could meet the goals.

10. Provide "face-saving" mechanisms. Don't corner the other person. Allow a "time out" if emotion gets too heavy.

11. Identify action steps to help achieve the goals.
BONUS:
Supplemental Idea Resource Packet!
Evaluating Forces – Force Field Analysis

- Identify where the strongest forces are; identify by cultural areas.

- Evaluate the forces – if driving forces are stronger – use these as good arguments toward achieving the goal. Build actions to address these.

- If restraining forces are stronger – Identify what must be so compelling it will override restraining forces.

Restraining Forces

*Things that hold back or block change from taking place*

| Negative | Positive |

Conflict/Position:

Driving Forces

*Things that are “pushing” for change or new position*

*Discuss action strategies to eliminate the restraining forces and to capitalize on the driving forces.*
Reactions to New Ideas

Experts say that we react and eventually accept new ideas in a series of stages:

1. It is irrelevant to our situation.
2. It is relevant, but it is unproven.
3. It is proven, but it is dangerous; risky (or scary).
4. It is safe, but it is not sellable.
5. It will sell. What a great idea!

Dealing with objections step-by-step:

1. Is the objection something you were prepared to hear? Is it “institutionalized”? Be ready for what you know will be a reaction.

2. What or who is the source of the objection? Is it someone who is always negative? Expand your sphere of idea sharing.

3. Is the objection really a question? “It’s not in the budget” might really mean “How much will it cost?” Be prepared with answers.

4. Is the objection a function of protecting turf, fear of change, or other emotional reaction? Lay a foundation of support, use data, sell the benefits.

Communication Strategies for New Ideas or Initiatives

• Establish Your Credibility + Credibility of the Source
  – Trust + Expertise = Credibility
  – Three-fold credibility – you, your idea, your organization
  – Listen to what resonates with your receiver
  – Track Record
  – Questions: How can I build credibility with my listener? How can I build trust?

• Find Common Ground
  – Is this something that will benefit my listener or benefit an organization? What are the advantages?
  – Understand others’ views
  – Question: What is in it for them?

• Provide Vivid Evidence
  – Examples as evidence
  – Share facts, data, stories, further information
  – Question: What can I provide them to support this idea?

• Make Emotional Connections
  – Is the idea linked to organizational mission or goals?
  – Can people get passionate about this idea?
  – Demonstrate commitment
  – Question: How can I demonstrate my passion and commitment to this idea?
# Common Objections to New Ideas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objection</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“That might have worked for another dental practice but it won’t work here.”</td>
<td>“Let’s break down the components of the success and see what can work for you and/or what can be adopted with modifications to work for you.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“That’s too radical for us!”</td>
<td>“Let’s not let the whole project intimidate us either by being too costly, too radical, etc.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We don’t have the budget for that project/idea.”</td>
<td>“Let’s scale this into manageable pieces (bite size) - do we have the budget to lay the framework and work on additional pieces down the line.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Are there pieces that we can do in-house or sub out that could reduce our costs?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We tried something like that before, and it didn’t work.”</td>
<td>“Tell me about when you tried it before – was it a different era, different mentality in the membership, different delivery vehicles or methods of communication, promo, printing, etc.? What’s different now that could help with achieving success with this?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Dentist(s) won’t go for it!”</td>
<td>“How can we get buy-in? Are there members of the staff involved in this process? If so, what support might they give?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Consensus Decision Making

**Seeking Consensus:**

- Points of agreement
- Points of disagreement
- Why do we differ?
- Mitigate differences
- Visualize what agreement means

**Consensus Achieved When:**

- All participants are heard
- All honestly express their views
- All ideas given fair consideration
- Information shared completely
- Majority listens to minority views
- Participants support majority decision

**Discussion of the item:**

- Identify opinions and give information on the topic
- General direction of the group and potential proposals for action are often identified during the discussion.

**Formation of a proposal:**

- A formal decision proposal on the issue is presented to the group.

**Call for consensus:**

- The facilitator calls for consensus on the proposal.
- Each member of the group usually must state their agreement actively with the proposal, often by using a hand gesture or raising a colored card, to avoid the group interpreting silence or inaction as agreement.

**Identification and addressing of concerns:**

- If consensus is not achieved, each dissenter presents concerns on the proposal, potentially starting another round of discussion to address or clarify the concern.

**Modification of the proposal:**

- The proposal is amended or re-phrased in an attempt to address the concerns of the decision-makers.
- The process returns to the call for consensus, and the cycle is repeated until a satisfactory decision is made.

Our Core Strengths

- Strategic Thinking/Planning
- Leadership Development
- Staff Retreats
- Communication Skills
- Facilitation Training
- Convention Breakouts
- Conference Keynotes

Dr. Steve Swafford, IOM, Balance Warrior + CEO, has designed education experiences for more than 30 years for several dental components and the California Dental Association, Washington State Dental Association, Oregon Dental Association as well as the American Dental Association in areas of strategy, leadership development, communication, and the guest experience. He brings a practical knowledge of strategy and executive leadership with past organizations such as the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), Club Managers Association of America (CMAA), and American Subcontractors Association (ASA) where he most recently served as the executive director. He is active in California Society of Association Executives (CalSAE) and American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) leadership serving on the Board of Directors; past Membership Committee Chair; past Professional Development Committee Chair (aka Purple Cow Posse); Southern California Regional Council; University leadership advisor; and volunteer staff pastor. Steve is also a 15-year faculty member for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Institute of Management and serves on the Curriculum Committee for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. A native of Kansas, Steve has a B.S. in journalism from Kansas State University; a M.Div. from Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC; and an Ed.D. from Pepperdine University’s School of Education & Psychology with a focus on Strategic Organizational Change. Steve has received the IOM (Institute for Organization Management) designation from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and is adjunct faculty for Pepperdine University’s Fully-Employed and Full-Time MBA Programs. Steve is a co-founder of Leadership Outfitters, LLC.