

MANAGING ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT: TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE FRAMEWORK OF OUTCOMES, PRACTICES, AND COMPETENCIES

Alan Clardy, PhD

Conflict is a constant possibility that degrades performance, making conflict management an important HPT intervention. Most approaches to conflict-management processes are incomplete. This article proposes a framework of eight goals for conflict-management programs and practices that involve surfacing conflicts early on, developing conflict-management competencies, implementing routine conflict-management processes, dealing with various causes and effects of conflict, and resolving problems of chronic conflict. Needed practices and competencies to achieve each goal are recommended.

CONFLICT EXISTS BETWEEN people (individually or as members of a group of some kind) when the nature of their relationship is understood as being a contest, a struggle, or a fight because they see the other party as actively threatening or opposing their goals and interests (typically in a winner-take-all context). Conflict is an inevitable feature of organizational life and a universal aspect of organizational behavior (Brett, 1990). When it occurs, conflict has the ever-present possibility of subverting individual and organizational performance by

- Diverting the attention, motives, and energy of organizational members
- Reducing trust and goodwill
- Increasing animosity and ill-will
- Aggravating stress, and, in the process, diminishing the effective performance of individuals and the larger organization to which they belong.

In short, conflict becomes an embedded barrier to current performance, impeding efforts to improve

performance, and degrading the motivation and commitment of organizational members to work together more effectively. Under certain circumstances, though, conflict may also contribute to better performance.

Given conflict's universal presence in organizational dynamics and its potential positive or negative amplifying effect on performance, the practices of conflict management are an important intervention for the practice of human performance technology (HPT). Long ago, Robbins (1978) cautioned that the proper orientation is not the *elimination* of conflict but rather its *management*—that is, using techniques for both minimizing its dysfunctional effects while enhancing its constructive functions. To develop conflict management as an HPT capability and intervention, what is needed is a comprehensive framework of the *goals, practices, and competencies*¹ required. With this, the most effective curriculum for educating and guiding managers and specialists who work on conflict management can be provided. Surprisingly, though, efforts to outline a comprehensive framework for conflict-management practices and competencies have been sparse and partial.

Conflict becomes an embedded barrier to current performance, impeding efforts to improve performance and degrading the motivation and commitment of organizational members to work together more effectively.

The purpose of this article is to redress this deficiency by proposing a comprehensive framework of organizational conflict-management practices and competencies, anchored to a set of possible conflict-management outcomes. Inspired by goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1990), these outcomes are the desired “deliverables” of a conflict-management system in organizations. Eight distinctive outcomes are noted here along with each one’s distinctive set of practices and related competencies. The first section of this article outlines this comprehensive framework. The middle section reviews this framework in detail, and the concluding section considers important research questions as well as implications for practice.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: AN OVERVIEW

The ever-present potentiality for conflict in organizations leads to the inescapable conclusion that the methods and procedures for dealing with conflict effectively can be just as important as methods and procedures for customer service or for human resource management and development. Brett, Goldberg, and Ury (1990) offered four principles for designing any such conflict-management system:

1. If conflict is inevitable, organizations should make every effort to surface issues preemptively using employee voice mechanisms. This minimizes the risk of open conflicts.
2. Since negotiation is almost always an option for dealing with problems such as conflict, interest-based negotiations should be promoted (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 2011). This enables the parties to search for a solution that will satisfy all their interests and not end up in a debilitating struggle to see who will be victorious.
3. Some form of third-party facilitation should be available.

4. An array of conflict management mechanisms should be available, beginning with practices that are the least costly, informal, and preemptive.

A number of these differing methods and techniques available for dealing with conflict are noted in this article. The issue here is how to assemble those pieces into a comprehensive conflict-management framework. Such a framework is not common (Lipinsky, Seeber, & Fincher, 2003). Rather, conflict-management procedures are often presented as piecemeal or stand-alone techniques for handling certain kinds of conflict. Kolb and Putnam (1992), for example, identified three classes of conflict-management interventions:

1. Using various mechanisms of organizational integration (to reduce the unnecessary occurrence of conflict)
2. Implementing various procedural or voice mechanisms (to resolve contentious and ongoing conflict)
3. Managing the use of conflict in non-routine situations

More recent attempts have proposed *integrated conflict-management systems* (ICMS) as comprehensive programs for recognizing and addressing conflicts and disputes (Lipinsky, Seeber, & Fincher, 2003). Such systems provide a comprehensive set of institutionalized procedures for handling routine and recurring conflicts. Lipinsky, Seeber, and Fincher (2003) provided a playbook of sorts for designing an ICMS, beginning by identifying the posture of the organization’s top management about conflict: do they want to fight, settle, or prevent conflict? Of course, while there will be mixed motives, the basic posture will say a lot about the kind of conflict-management systems that will be followed.

The next major design issue involves resolving certain policy issues, such as what kinds of problems or conflicts can be considered or excluded (e.g., employee-benefits claim problems are usually excluded), and who is eligible to participate (usually all employees but not retirees, job applicants, or consultants). Of course, the main design issue is to identify the kinds of practices that should be used and available, including many of the practices noted herein. Such a system would seem appropriate for any organization, particularly organizations whose workforce is not unionized.

While ICMS’s have become *de rigueur* in the recent conflict literature, there has been little empirical study of them (Roche & Teague, 2012). The promise (whether explicit or implicit) of effective conflict-management systems is that they should lead to certain desired organizational outcomes, such as

- Increased productivity
- Lower voluntary turnover and absenteeism
- Better capacity to handle change
- A better employee-relations climate

They obtained self-report survey data from 360 Irish firms that generally found that there were no effects on any of these outcome variables. There are three concerns about the study, though. First, its definition of conflict-management system practices was rather broad and general, making it hard to draw clear conclusions, because the ICMSs included were not all the same. Second, each firm's performance on the outcome variables was basically a comparative ordinal ranking (basically, to what extent did they *think* their firm's productivity was better, the same as, or below other firms in their industry). Finally, the survey was cross-sectional so that it's impossible to say whether reported results, regardless of what they were, had changed as a result of implementing a conflict-management system. Thus, its conclusion must be understood as perhaps suggestive but certainly far from definitive.

One problem with all these frameworks is that they do not provide a detailed listing of desirable outcomes to which conflict-management activities should be applied. Is it sufficient to recognize the technique without fully knowing the outcome that is sought? Instead, as argued here, conflict-management practices and competencies and their uses are contingent on the outcomes the organization desires to close the performance gap.

A TYPOLOGY OF CONFLICT-MANAGEMENT OUTCOMES

The first issue in defining the complete set of conflict-management practices and competencies should be to define the various outcomes toward which organizational conflict management activities should be directed. Each outcome suggests its own distinctive set of practices and competencies. These practices are techniques that can be used by managers, human resource professionals, and change agents whose duties invariably involve dealing with conflicts. These actors should be able to select the outcome that is most appropriate for a potential or actual episode of conflict. These outcomes are not mutually exclusive, and several conflict-management outcomes may be pursued at the same time. Eight distinctive kinds of conflict management outcomes are identified along with their respective practices and required competencies (see Table 1). Each is then reviewed more fully in the subsections that follow.

The first issue in defining the complete set of conflict-management practices and competencies should be to define the various outcomes to which organizational conflict management activities should be directed. Each outcome suggests its own distinctive set of practices and competencies.

The first three outcomes are infrastructural, focusing on establishing a policy, practice, and competency capability for the organization and its agents to handle conflicts effectively. The infrastructure should exist regardless of whether there are specific active and ongoing conflicts. The last five are operational in nature, applicable to specific instances of conflict.

A. To Preemptively Surface Latent Conflicts or Problems

Given the inevitability of conflict and its often harmful effects, "a conflict avoided from the beginning is better than a conflict managed" after the fact, because, in part, by the time a conflict finally emerges in full bloom, it "has probably proceeded far enough that rectifying the original cause may not be sufficient" (Wall & Callister, 1995, p. 549). This means that mechanisms must be available to recognize and address potential or festering conflicts before they erupt into real problems that sap organizational functioning.

The classic statement on this point is Hirschman's (1970) exit-voice theory.² When people (customers in Hirschman's initial formulation, employees in subsequent works) have a grievance or problem (reflecting an underlying conflict), they can either leave (or exit) *from* the organization or voice those grievances *to* the organization. Their choice depends on the person's loyalty *with* the organization. *Employee voice practices* permit and even solicit information from employees about their complaints, problems, constraints, uncertainties, and so on, seeking to surface conflicts that otherwise may go on simmering. Employee voice practices can take various forms, such as employee opinion surveys, hotlines, open-door policies,

TABLE 1

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES FOR CONFLICT-MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN ORGANIZATIONS

CONFLICT-MANAGEMENT GOAL	CONFLICT-MANAGEMENT METHODS
A. To surface preemptively latent conflict-based problems	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employee-voice mechanisms 2. Shared participative governance 3. Ombudsman
B. To institutionalize effective practices for addressing recurring sources of conflict	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Disciplinary procedures 2. Grievance procedures 3. Mediation 4. Arbitration 5. Collective bargaining
C. To develop effective conflict-management competencies among relevant actors to enable better handling of conflict	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Diagnosing nature of conflict 2. Personal conflict-management competencies 3. Communication skills 4. Negotiation skills 5. Dealing with personality conflict
D. To remove the underlying sources or causes of conflict	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comprehensive management system 2. Organizational redesign and better workflow coordination 3. Team building
E. To re-channel adverse and oppositional energies and motivations from conflict to competition or cooperation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a common vision or mission 2. Establish processes to create a strong organizational identity (business literacy) 3. Identify a common enemy 4. Design the performance-management system to focus on common outcomes
F. To reduce the frequency of conflict	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Loosen controls or increase empowerment 2. Remove unnecessary approvals
G. To increase the value from task conflict while reducing the intensity and toxicity of affective conflict	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish norms of inclusion, tolerance, and openness 2. Majority rule for decisions
H. To soften or resolve the after-effects of conflict	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confrontation meetings 2. Relationship repair interventions

skip-level meetings, suggestion systems, and so on. Their distinguishing feature is formal or structured communications channels for signaling problems and issues for consideration to organizational leaders or agents.

Voice mechanisms do not depend upon a union contract and can be used in any kind of organization. Longtime Nebraska football coaching legend Tom Osborne (1999), for example, set up a “unity council” of 18 players from all parts of the team. They would meet to hear about player issues and problems and to address disciplinary issues. Osborne credited this process with helping improve overall team performance and morale. Voice practices that actively seek to hear and to address, thereby keeping complaints internal, are particularly important today when employees can communicate their issues so easily through

social media, no doubt to the embarrassment of the organization (Miles & Mangold, 2014).

A second kind of voice practice is the *ombudsman* function (Kolb, 1987; McCabe & Lewin, 1992). Called by various names, ombudsmen are specifically authorized to hear and address employee concerns. For Kolb, “the preservation of working relationships must be an important objective of any organizational complaint mechanism. . . . Ombudsmen work quietly and, in doing so, try to restore and maintain harmony in the system” (p. 688). To this end, ombudsmen are involved in both fact-finding about raised problems and working to find solutions to those problems. In one example, a woman in a contractual position was placed in a no-win liaison role between two managers whose units were in conflict. Believing she had been

promised a full-time position, neither manager was happy and threatened to scuttle her promotion. She contacted the company ombudsman who investigated the issue by interviewing all parties and then found a role for her in a different division in which she was able to perform better and was eventually hired as a full-time employee (Kolb, 1987).

Given their importance, HPT and HR professionals particularly need to be able to design, implement, and administer employee-voice mechanisms. Yet while knowing what these practices are and how to operate them is important, other issues must be considered. For example, Brett, Goldberg, and Ury (1990) offered this cautionary tale: miners at a particular company would frequently resort to wild-cat strikes rather than follow the contractually anchored grievance procedure at the mine. They did this for two reasons. First, they felt that their supervisors would retaliate against them if they were to raise a grievance; second, once their union reps and management were drawn into the dispute, rather than deal with the concrete issue, they would argue abstract points in the contract, seemingly ignoring the specific problem that first triggered the event. On the other hand, any miner could start a collective walkout that would get management's immediate attention. Thus, even though there was a conflict-recognition procedure in place, the miners did not see it as one in which to invest their hopes for a resolution.

In short, as Aram and Salipante (1981) put it, "for voice to function as a recuperative force, it must be more attractive than exit" (p. 200) or collective action. To this end, the organization should establish an internal process that is seen as offering a real chance of conflict resolution. Four specific factors help make the voice option attractive; specifically, employees should believe the following:

1. They will receive a fair hearing and treatment.
2. The process will protect them from retaliation.
3. The process will not require excessive amounts of time or red tape.
4. The process will generate a solution on a timely basis.

Favorable impressions about an employee-voice process will also likely increase if the "judges" deciding on the conflict have some independence from management and if the system is formally documented and explained. The actions of managers and supervisors in endorsing and using (or dismissing) voice mechanism are particularly important (Bashshur & Oc, 2015). When these conditions take hold, the culture and climate will be seen to support employee voice (Morrison, 2011).

In sum, voice practices are ways to achieve the outcome of surfacing issues and problems in such a way as to

allow those issues to be addressed and hopefully resolved early on and prior to their festering into more profound problems later. Designing, implementing, and using them amount to a critical competency.

B. To Institutionalize Effective Practices for Addressing Recurring Sources of Conflict

Certain kinds of conflict can be expected to recur regularly because certain kinds of work conditions and role relationships carry the ever-present potential for conflict. Prototypical examples are conflicts between workers who want a reasonable pace to the work versus supervisors wanting faster production, or between employees who want more compensation versus managers trying to control costs. Thus, conflicts arise from certain kinds of relationships and will reoccur even if different people occupy the roles over time. To deal with these inevitable conflicts, it is important to establish formal or institutionalized practices for processing them on a routine basis. These practices exist in three distinct domains:

1. Disciplinary actions for problematic employee performance
2. Handling employee grievances
3. Labor-management contract negotiations

These institutionalized practices differ from those of employee voice in one important way: these practices are for dealing with conflicts that are active, manifest, and joined with the actors facing themselves in an acknowledged stance of opposition. Each domain includes several different types of conflict-management practices and competencies, and all involve the selection, design, and administration of human resource management policies.

1. Employee disciplinary procedures

This kind of conflict exists because of inadequate employee role performance (as defined by management); the desired conflict-management outcome is to eliminate the performance problem, and if that doesn't work, remove the employee. The standard procedure for processing employee performance problems has been "progressive discipline," where each instance of a performance deficiency is punished by an increasingly more strenuous response, from verbal warnings to written warnings to suspensions and even terminations. The progressive disciplinary process is time consuming and cumbersome (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 2013).

Campbell, Fleming, and Grote (1985) developed an alternative procedure called *discipline without punishment*, in which a second instance of a work-rule violation is

met with a paid “decision leave” day off, whereby the employee decides whether to stop the behavior or not. If the employee returns but then commits the infraction a third time, termination automatically results. Their research found good support for the effectiveness of this procedure.

2. Grievance processing

Disciplinary actions are employer initiated with the conflict problem owned by management, as it were; the process is also one-sided because the employee’s performance either improves or his or her employment is terminated. Grievances, on the other hand, are different; they are employee initiated. Typically, in unionized workplaces, management and supervisors do not have unquestioned unilateral, one-way power and authority that is characteristic of nonunionized workplaces.³ That is, manager actions, such as assigning tasks, demanding better performance, or disciplining the employee, may be challenged and disputed by employees when manager actions seemingly violate the labor contract. These contested disputes are “grievances,” making manager actions always susceptible to employee second-guessing and even reversal. The typical grievance-handling process typically involves several progressively more demanding steps (Masters & Albright, 2002). Initially, an employee claiming a grievance discusses it with the supervisor, perhaps including the union steward. If not successfully resolved at that point, the grievance is put in writing and the issue is reviewed by both a production superintendent and the union steward. If still not resolved, the issue is kicked up to the plant manager/labor-relations staff level (Noe et al., 2013).

If no acceptable resolution has been reached by this point, the grievance could go into a more formalized, quasi-judicial procedure using a third party, such as *mediation*. The U.S. Office of Personnel Management defines *mediation* as “the intervention into a dispute or negotiation by an acceptable, impartial, and neutral third-party who has no decision-making authority. The objective of this intervention is to assist the parties in voluntarily reaching an acceptable resolution of issues in dispute” (cited in Masters & Albright, 2002, p. 144). The actual nature of the mediation process depends in part on the role the mediator assumes, from essentially a reactive, minimalist process facilitator to one that more strongly structures and guides interactions. The mediator acts as a catalyst to move the parties towards a settlement that is voluntary rather than imposed. Mediators may be organizational members, but they could also be trained people external to the organization as might be solicited from, for example, the American Arbitration Association. Beyond

the skills of carrying out minimalist or activist mediator roles, critical competencies and capabilities of a mediator include

- Being impartial, neutral, and fair
- Having the cognitive and analytical capabilities to deal with the issues
- Communicating clearly and diplomatically
- Remaining calm and civil, both patient and creative

Arbitration is another level of grievance conflict resolution. The essence of arbitration is that a presumably neutral or third party renders a judgment and decision as to the outcome of a dispute. That decision may be binding or advisory. In binding arbitration, both parties agree to be bound by the decision, and supposedly, binding decisions are upheld and enforced by the courts. While arbitration could be the final link in the grievance process chain, it does not have to be; parties could jump to it directly. Recently, courts have been increasingly supportive of arbitration: “an employer ... may require that employees, as a condition of employment, agree to arbitrate disputes over issues involving legal rights and essentially forfeit the right to pursue litigation” (Masters & Albright, 2002, p. 164).

In the early 1990s, the practice of peer review or *alternative dispute resolution* emerged to deal with employee grievances in a formal review process (Grote & Wimberly, 1993). In this process, employees with certain kinds of problems (excluding such things as complaints about pay or benefits) pick a group of five other employees (two managers, three employees). This group listens to the employee’s and the supervisor’s side of the issue, and may call witnesses on the way to rendering a final decision. At the start, all parties sign on that they will consider the group’s decision final and binding.

3. Labor relations and collective bargaining

Unions negotiate contracts with employers to establish mutually acceptable terms and conditions of employment (wages, hours, job duties, work rules, etc.). Facing themselves as adversaries in what can seem a zero-sum contest, management and labor try to find an agreement to govern their working relationship. If accepted, these terms and conditions become the contract that governs how each party deals with the other. Persisting into the 1960s, the personnel function of many larger organizations was called the Industrial Relations department whose primary purpose was to administer the labor contract (Kaufman, 1993). The competencies of negotiation and contract administration are vital in this context.

C. To Develop Effective Conflict Management Competencies among Relevant Actors to Enable Better Handling of Conflict

Certainly, some actors in organizations (e.g., managers and supervisors, HR professionals in general, and labor relations or organization development specialists in particular) must deal with conflicts of various kinds as a normal part of their job. Individuals in these positions need certain important interpersonal skills and competencies for dealing with conflict; five such competencies are noted in the following subsections.⁴

1. Diagnosing the nature of a conflict

There are different kinds of conflict, and each kind implies its own somewhat distinctive diagnostic procedures:

- *Personality clashes* would need to be analyzed in terms of traits and characteristics.
- *Intra-team conflict* would presumably involve diagnosing the stage of a group's development or the dysfunctional processes that are interfering with effective team performance.
- *Recurring conflicts* over production output, quality, or service may be traceable to suboptimal structuring of the workflow process or a faulty performance-management system.

To apply the right kind of conflict-management intervention(s), actors need the competency of diagnosing the various dimensions of conflict. As Rahim, Garrett, and Buntzman (1992) put it, in general, "a diagnosis should indicate whether there is a need for intervention and the type of intervention needed" (p. 424).

In the context of organization-wide assessments, an early example of a diagnostic instrument was the *profile of conflict characteristics (PCC)* used as part of the Likert and Likert (1976) System 4 model of organizational management. The PCC assesses a number of organizational characteristics, including communication practices, problem solving, conflict-resolution options, power distribution, and so on, and is designed to identify how an organization resolves the conflicts it faces. Moreover, the PCC comes with a normative or recommended set of organizational operating practices (System 4) that promised the best mechanisms for containing conflict. In effect, the PCC assesses the extent to which a given organization matches to System-4 characteristics, as perceived by the members of that organization. Gaps between actual practices and System-4 norms would indicate likely sources of conflict.

2. Becoming aware of one's personal conflict styles and tendencies

According to Runde and Flanagan (2010), the personal competencies needed for dealing effectively with conflict begin with self-understanding but then expand into three core skills: cooling down, slowing down, and engaging constructively. Self-understanding can presumably occur in several ways. A common starting point is to identify one's personal dispositions for dealing with conflict. These dispositions are acted out in certain typified behaviors that describe how the person will tend to deal with or react to conflict. Knowing one's dispositional style and the set of styles possible for dealing with conflict can become the basis for self-analysis and growth.

Understanding one's typical style for dealing with conflict can be pursued using various kinds of self-report inventories, at least two of which are based on Blake and Mouton's managerial grid (1964). The grid is a two-dimensional space for classifying influence behaviors (management behaviors in general, conflict management styles in particular). One dimension is concern for people (low to high), and the other is for task or production (low to high). One grid-based instrument for measuring conflict management styles is the Thomas-Kilmann (1974) conflict-mode instrument; a second is the Rahim organizational conflict inventory (Rahim, 1983). While the two instruments use somewhat different terminology to refer to the basic properties of the grid, they both refer to five kinds of conflict-management styles:

1. Avoidance (low concern for both people and task)
2. Collaborating (high concern for both)
3. Competing (high task, low people)
4. Accommodating (high people, low task)
5. Compromising (medium concern for both people and task).

The purpose of either instrument is to prompt self-awareness by providing the person with his or her conflict management dispositional profile in the context of a repertoire of other styles.

Using published studies, Van de Vliert and Kabanoff (1990) analyzed and compared the psychometric properties of both instruments. They found that both instruments had a moderately strong relationship to the grid model, but neither showed evidence of high validity. The Thomas-Kilmann measure did a poor job of discriminating between competing and collaborating styles, while the Rahim model may overemphasize competing as a style. Both did a poor job in differentiating between avoiding and compromising on conflict. Desivilya and Yagil

(2005) studied 69 medical teams and found that the use of a conflict-management style, identified as either cooperative (integrating or compromising) or contentious (dominating or avoiding), depended on the person's emotional reactions to group conditions (itself dependent on perceptions of the situation). Positive emotional experiences were associated with cooperative modes, while both positive and negative emotions were associated with contentious modes. Avoidance modes were associated with negative emotions only. This research suggests that conflict-management style can be as much a situational reaction to conflict as a dispositional outcome.

Another approach for gaining awareness of one's responses to conflict, with deep roots in the field of organization development, is "consciousness raising" (Kilmann & Thomas, 1978). This approach immerses a person in a live, extended, laboratory-based leaderless group to help the person experience directly the origins and processes of a conflict and thereby also to gain self-understanding. *T-groups* or *sensitivity training groups* have a long pedigree in this regard (Bradford, Gibb, & Benne, 1964; Campbell & Dunnette, 1968). While this technique is not used for resolving specific organizational conflicts per se, the method does generate quite a bit of conflict within the group's internal dynamics, which in turn can stimulate self-awareness and learning among participants. The extended and intensive nature of this experience no doubt limits its applicability to HPT and HR specialists.

3. Communication skills: Assertiveness and active listening

Practitioners should be able to interact constructively with others during conflict conditions using good communication skills. Love (cited in Koudoo, Schroeder, & Boysen-Rotelli, 2012) recommended a GHOST model of interpersonal skills, in which the healthy expression of conflict occurs when the parties speak *gently* and *honestly*, be *open* to hearing what the other person is saying, use *specific* examples and *talk* in a forthright manner. A more compact and generic communications skill model for dealing with interpersonal problems (conflicts) can be found in Gordon's (1977) effectiveness training model. The key issue is who is experiencing (or "owns") the problem in the relationship. There are three basic options:

- First, if I own the problem (i.e., I am experiencing the problem caused by the other party who is not), the effective response would be *assertive* behaviors.
- Second, if the other party owns the problem (i.e., I'm causing a problem that is bothering him or her but not me), my effective response is *active listening*.

- Third, if both actors in a relationship own the problem, then the effective response is *constructive problem-solving*. Constructive problem-solving is the same basic approach as integrative negotiations, covered next.

The value of this model lies in its simple set of interpersonal skills useful for dealing with any conflict.

4. Negotiation

Negotiation has been typically depicted as bargaining between management and labor over terms of a union contract. Yet negotiation is really a general-purpose communication competency for addressing any number of conflicts (Lewicki, Saunders, & Barry, 2015). The classic approach to negotiations was "distributed bargaining," used when the parties saw themselves locked in a zero-sum contest of offers and counteroffers. For one party to find the best and most favorable outcome for itself, the other party had to make concessions and surrender claims and assets.

The more recent "integrative bargaining" approach involves the parties looking for the best joint solution that will satisfy the needs of each with the least amount of personal sacrifice (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 2011; Gordon, 2002). Since negotiation skills can apply at multiple levels of conflict, being versed in both approaches is a vital competency for all actors to learn.

5. Special case: Dealing with personality conflict

Some conflicts are traceable to personality differences among team or group members. For example, the fundamental interpersonal relations orientation (FIRO) model of Schutz (1958) posits that people have three basic interpersonal needs: inclusion, control, and affection. Any person may have a very high or low score on any of the three dimensions. If two people in a group have very high needs for control, it is possible that they will be in conflict in trying to wrestle control over the group. Alternatively, harmony or cooperation in a group would occur when there is a balance in the personality needs. Comparable outcomes could be predicted using other personality instruments such as the Myers-Briggs type inventory (MBTI), where conflict might be expected in a group that has a strong combination of hard-core different personality types. Regardless of the specific model, the basic idea is that differences in important personality factors can cause conflict within the group.

The issue becomes how to deal with personality-based conflict. Hill's (1977) study of 35 low performing teams was able to isolate personality conflicts in those teams using the FIRO-B instrument. He examined differences in

leaders who managed this conflict effectively and those who didn't. In general, he found that team leaders who were more effective in dealing with personality conflicts had several important characteristics:

- They had a larger repertoire of ideas and approaches for dealing with conflict, such as simply being willing to listen to team members who were disturbed about another person on their team, allowing the person to vent.
- They remained calm and patient, asking questions and listening, and were not intimidated by the expression of negative interpersonal feelings but simply accepted that as a normal aspect of working life.
- They were concerned about how team members felt about the group, initiating conversations to assess member satisfaction.
- They appeared to enjoy interacting with the people around them.
- They "taught" their team members about coping with interpersonal conflict constructively. This meant acting as a role model, listening rather than arguing. The leaders themselves might communicate the importance of acting differently to be more cooperative with any perceived rival, with a strong message to seek out impartial third parties to help facilitate some sort of conciliation.
- They acknowledged that it was okay or normal to experience feelings of anger and hostility.
- They believed that conflict could be harnessed or directed towards constructive team outcomes.
- When conflict seemed ready to bubble over, they also knew when to break off interactions by taking breaks, shifting the emphasis, or using other kinds of tension-reduction mechanisms.

In short, compared with their less effective counterparts, effective leaders were not as afraid of disagreements and were more willing to deal with conflict than to avoid it. All this suggests the importance of training leaders in a wide range of techniques.

D. To Remove the Underlying Sources or Causes of Conflict

In the early 1990s, Xerox faced enormous business challenges, exacerbated by a "stove-piped" organizational structure, repeated production hand-offs from one unit to the next, and multiple levels of check-offs and approval. To confront the strong competition from Japanese copier companies, Xerox needed innovation and improved

process coordination, but, according to Ostroff (1999), found itself with a culture of conflict and abdication where

... finger-pointing and shifting the blame were [commonplace]. People in the manufacturing division contend that they had merely followed the orders of engineers, who in turn said they only did what those in product design and marketing had requested. Marketing blamed salespeople who insisted they could not sell something the customer never wanted in the first place. (p. 131)

Ultimately, the root cause of the conflicts was a faulty organizational structure that created the very conflicts it should have prevented.

If conflict is due to faulty organizational structure and operations, changes to those *structures* and *operations* should better coordinate work activities and thereby remove the embedded sources of conflict. Organizational structure refers to established or institutionalized rules for interactions among and between people in specified roles. For example, business operations are the routine processes, linked to the technological infrastructure and maintained by a system of management controls for producing outputs. As long as the underlying conflict-inducing structures do not change, instantiations of conflict are likely to recur, even if a specific instance is resolved or the specific actors are replaced. As Brett, Goldberg, and Ury (1990) put it, "resolving a dispute will not alter the underlying conflict of interests that generated the dispute. As long as the relationship endures [under the existing structure of rules], future disputes will arise" (p. 164). Thus, one goal for conflict management would be to limit or remove unnecessary and embedded sources of conflict created by ineffective organizational structures, operations, and the management practices in use. At least two kinds of organizational structure solutions are available here.

1. Comprehensive management systems

Likert and Likert's (1976) System 4 proposed a comprehensive set of organizational management practices for minimizing disruptive conflict. Essentially, System 4 attempts to reverse the traditional top-down bureaucratic model with a structure that solicits employee input and ideas, delegates responsibility for decision making, promotes the free exchange of information, shares data about operations, and depends on small-group or team performance. In short, System 4 is a participative, empowered, and cooperative team-based organizational design that should reduce the occurrence of conflict.

2. Better organizational design and workflow coordination

When an organizational structure fragments, confuses, or overloads the production or workflow process and the administration systems that manage it (as in the Xerox example), the resulting socio-technical system embeds unnecessary conflict into organizational operations. Structural solutions to these problems can be more piecemeal and specific, such as

- Clarifying roles and decision-making authorities
- Providing better mechanisms for coordinating action
- Improving management control processes
- Altering measurement and incentive systems

Both Galbraith's (1995) recommendations to better integrate coordinating processes between disparate organizational units and Ostroff's (1999) plan for organizational redesign and reengineering into a *horizontal organization* offer useful guidelines.

There are other examples of partial organizational and workflow solutions to conflict. Consider the example of recurring conflict between the sales and manufacturing functions of an organization. Here, the natural goal of either side is to maximize its own outcome, which has the effect of putting each function into a head-butting, recurring collision with the other. To address this problem, an impersonal decision-making algorithm was established that produced a simple and impersonal joint outcome that optimized the solution for both parties (Brett, 1990). Thus, conflict over the best course of action was eliminated by using a pre-established decision-making routine that identified the best joint outcome. In general, then, the organization's very structure and operations can cause conflict. By changing that structure and/or how it is managed, recurring conflict can be minimized if not avoided.

Often, team malfunctioning can be traced to sub-optimal group structure and process. One form of team building engages team members in identifying the sources of the malfunctions (which often reflect underlying conflicts over roles or norms). Using an action-learning approach, group members articulate and define the problems, develop solutions, and then test their effectiveness (Dyer, 1987). Another source of poor team process can be found in the team's diversity "faultlines," which are the differences between group members based on demographic (age, gender, race), personality, education, occupation, position, and so on. For diversity-based conflicts, solutions can emphasize structural changes in team operations (e.g., more informal meetings or interactions to reduce social distance or purposeful mixing of diverse members in sub-

group tasks) or relational changes that recognize the value of diversity or promote individualization of each member (Antino, Rico, Sanchez-Manzanares, & Lau, 2013).

E. To Re-Channel Adverse and Oppositional Energies and Motivations from Conflict to Competition or Cooperation

Chapple and Sayles (1968) reported the seemingly non-stop conflict between the sales and credit departments in one organization where sales was responsible for (and paid to) drum up business, and credit would then evaluate the creditworthiness of customers after an order was placed. Regularly, credit would unilaterally cancel the orders of suspect customers incurring the wrath, ill-will, and enmity of sales, starting a depressing cycle of mutual recriminations and disrespect. Each unit was doing its job but each operated independently, pursuing its own agenda without any coordination, either personally or through a more formal management or coordinating structure.

In general, given their understanding of what their goals or needs are in a given situation, conflicts can occur because actors pursue different courses of action based on what they think are their best personal interests or their functional mission. Conflicts like this, based on conflicting goals, may arise in at least four ways:

1. Unit or personal *goals may be intentionally put into conflict* with those of other actors. Internal auditing functions are specifically mandated to search for negligence and/or criminality in operating units and personnel, pitting them by design into an adversarial position with the actors they audit.
2. There can be *goal displacement* when a desired organizational outcome is replaced by the procedures used to achieve that outcome. Thus, the goals of the bureaucrat become filling out the form correctly, while the ultimate goal—providing a service—is ignored (Merton, 1968), and employee and service claimant squabble over forms and procedure.
3. *Contracts* (legal or psychological) may establish sub-optimizing incentives that ignore overall organizational outcomes and reward individuals or groups for maximizing their own achievements without regard to overall organizational well-being. This happened at Enron (McLean & Elkind, 2003) and can be seen in the case of professional athletes, where incentives for individual "stats" may trump a player's motivations to help win the game (Jackson & Delehanty, 1995).
4. A *weak organizational culture* does not build or sustain a strong institutional identity, permitting

employees to function without knowledge of or commitment to larger organizational purposes.

In all these conditions, individuals will rationally direct their performance to maximize achievement and results for their specific outcomes, and in the process minimize or ignore organizational goals. When goal conflict, displacement, sub-optimization, and/or fragmentation occur, some mechanisms for inducing overall greater unity of goals and a commitment to larger organizational success are needed. Several methods are indicated in this context. Creating a larger, common purpose was how Sherif and Sherif (1948, 1956) neutralized the conflicts between the two warring groups of young boys at the summer camp in their classic experiment. Thus, communications that publicize and promote a vision or mission for the entire organization can become an important first step. This also implies the need for certain transformational leadership capabilities.

Mechanisms are needed for developing and sustaining a strong organizational identity. This can begin with well-designed on-boarding practices (Kunda, 1992) but should also include routines and events that celebrate organizational identity and recognize good citizens. Southwest Airlines is widely known for using such practices (Freiburg & Freiburg, 1996, 1997). Business-literacy systems also help build employee understanding of and commitment to organizational performance; the “great game of business” (Stack & Burlingham, 1992/2013) offers a most compelling illustration of this process.

Another technique for building a shared identity is to identify a common enemy. Steve Jobs did this by raising a pirate flag over the building of one of his project-development teams, signaling to them that their common enemy was the other divisions in Apple (Isaacson, 2011). Unfortunately, the iconic nature of this symbolic practice had the effect of increasing inter-divisional conflict. What is needed is a common enemy that everyone in the organization can rally against. In profit-making companies, this would be the competition, while in nonprofits, it could be the social problem or issue which they are attempting to solve. Kotter (2008) refers to this as creating a sense of urgency by emphasizing the threats from competitors.

Finally, realigning the organization’s performance-management system can help create a greater sense of unity and common purpose. The primary vehicle here would be the incentive structure. By including some measures of common organizational performance (in addition to whatever individual or departmental set of metrics might be used) as the basis for incentive rewards, actor attention must now take into account and support the performance of the overall organization to earn the reward.

The theme for all these practices is to forge a common and shared interest among all employees to work together to achieve overall organizational goals and outcomes. The implicit assumption is that a stronger shared focus on a common goal should act to dampen and minimize conflicts among organizational members.

F. To Reduce the Frequency or Occurrence of Conflict

When conflicts are intentionally structured into working relationships, it may be possible to reduce the frequency of their occurrence by changing the authority levels or controls over actors or, alternatively, by delegating more discretion and autonomy to subordinates. Lending practices in banks offer a good example. Branch managers can be expected to and are rewarded for the amount or number of loans they bring in and are given a “lending authority” to approve loans up to a certain amount; loans requested above that amount must be reviewed and approved by higher authorities in the bank. When this higher review occurs, denials can result, the branch manager’s efforts are thwarted, and conflict follows. In this situation, the frequency of conflict becomes a function of the level of lending authority in place. The frequency of conflicts can be reduced by increasing lending authority.

G. To Increase the Value from Task Conflict While Reducing the Intensity and Toxicity of Affective Conflict

A premise of group problem solving is that by gathering more and varied ideas about a problem, there should be more insight that should in turn lead to a better solution. In effect, this premise is a call to increase *task* conflict (different ideas about options) in groups that are working on non-routine or innovative problems. Yet, task conflict can bring about *relationship* conflict or personal antagonisms between the actors involved (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Mahoney, Holahan, & Amason, 2007). Conflict management for group problem solving has, thus, a dual concern: how to increase the benefits from task or cognitive conflicts without allowing them to spiral into personal animosities and relationship bellicosity.

Certain communication practices can increase the yield from task conflict by promoting a climate of permitting the free expression of opinions, tolerating and encouraging a diversity of viewpoints, and depersonalizing disagreement. In this regard, leaders should communicate three specific norms for group process:

1. Disagreement is expected and acceptable.
2. Each member of the group should critically evaluate proposals, including their own.

3. It is fine to think “outside the box” where novel, even oddball ideas are valued.

In addition, process procedures can be put in place to generate divergent views and information, such as using sub-groups, outside experts, or devil’s advocates or having people list their personal viewpoints privately before beginning a discussion (Schweiger, Sandberg, & Rechner, 1989).

The decision-making rules used by groups can also play an important role in improving task-conflict yield, as illustrated in the study by Falk (1982). He experimented with 18 4-person groups in a structured decision-making role-play problem. The groups were given one of the following rules for making a decision: majority rule; unanimous, consensus decision; or no decision rule. He found that in the majority-rule groups, there was more task conflict than in any of the other groups, and there were more alternatives created. Thus, majority rule may lead to increased task conflict.

H. To Soften or Resolve the After-Effects of Conflict

If a conflict has been active for some time, it is likely that adverse stereotypes about and malevolent intentions towards the other party have become entrenched, engendering distrust, or in general, producing an accumulation of bad blood that can continue to weaken and even prevent an effective resolution. In short, the parties can carry grudges and harbor motives of revenge. These are all symptoms of an established, enduring, and perhaps even bitterly conflicted relationship. The conflict-management outcome noted here focuses on relieving, dissipating, and perhaps healing the residues of a conflict.

Many of the potential practices available here are premised on the idea of airing animosities in a joint-meeting process, thereby bringing a conflict out in the open for the purposes of a problem-solving discussion. This assumes in turn that the actors in a conflicted relationship are both willing and able to discuss the issues in a constructive manner to reach for a resolution. This also presumes in turn that the actors can overcome a history of bruised egos, personal dislikes, and the residues of distrust and ill-will that may have accumulated.

These presumptions may not be good ones, however. Regardless, these practices invariably involve using a third party to serve as a process facilitator. Needless to say, facilitators should have excellent facilitation skills, such as listening well to all parties, staying neutral, evoking full disclosure from the parties, eliciting participation and input from all, handling flaring animosities and personal feelings, and promoting joint problem solving that works to

reach a mutually satisfactory outcome (Rainey & Jones, 2014).

Inter-group conflict reduction interventions are the family of techniques for addressing conflicts between organizational units. Methods include third-party peacemaking, organization mirroring, and confrontation meetings. They involve a common structured process of group problem solving with members from the different departments to share perspectives and address key inter-unit operational or performance problems along with the underlying conflicts from which they emerge (French & Bell, Jr., 1984).

Persistent and bitter conflict, anchored with grudges and revenge motivation, would require deeper efforts to restore a more effective working relationship. Clardy (2017) identified four kinds of approaches: apology, forgiveness, reconciliation, and restorative justice. The application of these practices to organizational conflict management is still emerging but may well be promising options for changing embittered conflicted relationships.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The framework provided here does beg certain questions for which future research could supply much needed clarification and guidance. One example involves both discipline without punishment and alternative dispute-resolution practices. There is evidence that both are not only effective but also offer the additional benefits of speed, resolution, and employee acceptance. Are such practices in fact better than their respective progressive discipline or grievance-procedure cousins? If so, why are they not the standards for practice and not just alternatives?

Second, there are several questions related to conflict-management styles, beginning with the most critical: how important is it for someone to understand their own conflict-management style? That is, does knowing one’s style help one be better at managing conflict? A related issue is whether style is a trait or a situational behavioral response. How will knowing one’s style assist in either case? Finally, if utility can be shown, can a single overarching model and instrument be used?

Third, as noted, forgiveness and relationship reconciliation practices are still somewhat new to the organizational conflict-management literature (Clardy, 2017). The need is to consolidate a wide-ranging literature into a set of workable practices on each count.

This framework also underscores certain implications for practice. First, managers and conflict-management specialists of all stripes should benefit from knowing about

the kinds of conflicts that may occur in workplaces as well as being trained in the practices most applicable to each. A core curriculum identifying the types of conflict and the goals for dealing with each should be followed by specialized training. Managers would most need to know about such things as listening, disciplinary procedures, and active communication practices; HPT and HR specialists would likely need background training in virtually all the other practices. Regardless, one obvious takeaway from this review is that conflict-management competencies involve much more than simple communication skill, and that practitioners need to be flexible in calling upon a repertoire of practices to address specific conflicts. Finally, one cannot neglect the importance of organizational policies and programs—in disciplinary procedures, employee voice mechanisms, addressing employee problems, training, and so on— for creating an effective conflict-management system.

CONCLUSION

Open, manifest conflict in an organization typically has several dysfunctional effects, making it critical for managers, HPT and HR professionals, and change agents of all kinds to have a complete repertoire of conflict-management practices and competencies that should enable them to preempt, minimize, or manage conflict constructively. In this article, a comprehensive set of conflict-management practices and competencies has been advanced within a broader framework of eight possible goals or outcomes for conflict management. Each outcome has its own associated set of practices and competencies. When confronted with conflict, one of the first actions should be to identify the desired outcome(s) of conflict management. The purpose of this article was to identify a comprehensive framework to establish a complete curriculum for conflict-management practices, education and training. 🌟

ENDNOTES

1. In this article, practices and competencies are treated differently. Practices refer to policies and programs that are embedded in an organization's management routines; many of these practices are "owned" by the human resource function. Competencies refer to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA's) of actors in the organization. Thus, teambuilding is a practice that may be used to achieve certain conflict management outcomes. The competencies for leading teambuilding practices effectively would be the KSA's needed by that practice. Even if teambuilding is an organizational practice in use, the leaders or facilitators of teambuilding practice may or may not have the competencies needed to do it effectively.
2. Employee voice can have some negative outcomes, such as threatening managers or branding employees as complainers. But the unit-level effects on turnover, for example, tend to be good (Bashshur & Oc, 2015). As it has emerged in the literature, employee voice refers not only to employee complaints but can include providing suggestions, opinions, and other information that can be useful for improving the organization.
3. Grievance procedures can also occur in non-unionized settings (Lewin & Mitchell, 1992). When they exist, they often do not include a final arbitration stage, defaulting to senior management as the final judge.
4. A simpler set of competencies was suggested by the Transportation Security Administration's 4R model of Recognizing conflict, Responding to it respectfully, Resolving and managing it, and Reflecting on the causes and resolution efforts made (noted in Runde & Flanagan, 2010). 🌟

References

- Antino, M., Rico, R., Sanchez-Manzanares, M., & Lau, D.C. (2013). Rethinking team diversity management. In E. Salas, S.I. Tannenbaum, D.J. Cohen, & G. Latham (eds.), *Developing and enhancing teamwork in organizations* (pp. 373–405). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Aram, J.D., & Salipante, P.F. (1981). An evaluation of organizational due process in the resolution of employee/ employer conflict. *Academy of Management Review*, 6(2), 197–204.
- Bashshur, M.R., & Oc, B. (2015). When voice matters: A multi-level review of the impact of voice in organizations. *Journal of Management*, 41(5), 1530–1554.
- Blake, R.R., & Mouton, J.S. (1964). *The managerial grid*. Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing.
- Bradford, L.P., Gibb, J.R., & Benne, K.D. (eds.). (1964). *T-group theory and laboratory method*. New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons.
- Brett, J.M. (1990). Managing organizational conflict. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 15(5), 664–678.
- Brett, J.M., Goldberg, S.B., & Ury, W.L. (1990). Designing systems for resolving disputes in organizations. *American Psychologist*, 45(2), 162–170.
- Campbell, D.N., Fleming, R.L., & Grote, R.C. (1985). Discipline without punishment—At last. *Harvard Business Review*, 63(4), 162–169.

- Campbell, J.P., & Dunnette, M.D. (1968). Effectiveness of T-group experiences in managerial training and development. *Psychological Bulletin*, 70(2), 73–104.
- Chapple, E.D., & Sayles, L.R. (1968). Workflow as the basis of organizational design. In D.R. Hampton, C.E. Summer, & R.A. Webber (eds.), *Organizational behavior and the practice of management* (pp. 661–678). Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Company.
- Clardy, A.B. (2017). Injury, grudges and restoration: Forgiveness and relationship repair at the workplace. (Unpublished manuscript).
- De Dreu, C.K.W., & Weingart, L.R. (2003). Task versus relationship conflict, team performance, and team member satisfaction: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(4), 741–749.
- DeSivilya, H.S., & Yagil, D. (2005). The role of emotions in conflict management: The case of work teams. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 16(1), 55–69.
- Dyer, W.G. (1987). *Team building, issues, and alternatives* (2nd ed.). Reading, MA: Addison Wesley.
- Falk, G. (1982). An empirical study measuring conflict in problem-solving groups with assigned different decision rules. *Human Relations*, 35(12), 1123–1138.
- Fisher, R., Ury, W., & Patton, B. (2011). *Getting to yes*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.
- French, W.L., & Bell, Jr., C.H. (1984). *Organization development* (3rd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Galbraith, J.R. (1995). *Designing organizations*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Gordon, J.R. (2002). *Organizational behavior, a diagnostic approach*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Gordon, T. (1977). *Leader effectiveness training*. New York, NY: Wyden Books.
- Grote, D., & Wimberly, J. (1993, March). Peer review. *Training*, 51–55.
- Hill, R.E. (1977). Managing interpersonal conflict in project teams. *Sloan Management Review*, 18(2), 45–61.
- Hirschman, A.O. (1970). *Exit, voice and loyalty*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Isaacson, W. (2011). *Steve Jobs*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Jackson, P., & Delehanty, H. (1995). *Sacred hoops, spiritual lessons of a hardwood warrior*. New York, NY: Hyperion.
- Kaufman, B.E. (1993). *The origins and evolution of the field of industrial relations in the United States*. Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 1993.
- Kilmann, R.H., & Thomas, K.W. (1978). Four perspectives on conflict management: An attributional framework for organizing descriptive and normative theory. *Academy of Management Review*, 3, 59–68.
- Kolb, D.M. (1987). Corporate ombudsman and organizational conflict resolution. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 31(4), 673–691.
- Kolb, D.M., & Putnam, L.L. (1992). Multiple faces of conflict in organizations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 13, 311–324.
- Kotter, J.P. (2008). *A sense of urgency*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Kudonoo, E., Schroeder, K., & Boysen-Rotelli, S. (2012). An Olympic transformation: Creating an organizational culture that promotes healthy conflict. *Organization Development Journal*, 30(2), 51–65.
- Kunda, G. (1992). *Engineering culture, control and commitment in a high-tech corporation*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Lewin, D., & Mitchell, D.J.B. (1992). Systems of employee voice: Theoretical and empirical perspectives. *California Management Review*, 34(3), 95–111.
- Lewicki, R.J., Saunders, D.M., & Barry, B. (2015). *Negotiation* (7th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw Hill.
- Likert, R., & Likert, J.G. (1976). *New ways of managing conflict*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill Books.
- Lipinsky, D.B., Seeber, R.L., & Fincher, R.D. (2003). *Emerging systems for managing workplace conflict*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Locke, E.A., & Latham, G.P. (1990). *A theory of goal setting and task performance*. New York, NY: Prentice-Hall.
- Mahoney, A.C., Holahan, P.J., & Amason, A.C. (2007). Don't take it personally: Exploring cognitive conflict as a mediator of affective conflict. *Journal of Management Studies*, 44, 733–758.
- Masters, M.D., & Albright, R.R. (2002). *The complete guide to conflict resolution in the workplace*. New York, NY: American Management Association.
- McCabe, D.M., & Lewin, D. (1992). Employee voice: A human resource management perspective. *California Management Review*, 34(3), 112–123.

- McLean, B., & Elkind, P. (2003). *The smartest guys in the room*. New York, NY: Portfolio.
- Merton, R.K. (1968). *Social theory and social structure*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Miles, S.J., & Mangold, W.G. (2014). Employee voice: Untapped resource or social media time bomb? *Business Horizons*, 57, 401–411.
- Morrison, E.W. (2011). Employee voice behavior: Integration and directions for future research. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 5(1), 373–412.
- Noe, R.A., Hollenbeck, J.R., Gerhart, B., & Wright, P.M. (2013). *Human resource management: Gaining a competitive advantage* (8th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw Hill Education.
- Osborne, T. (1999). *Faith in the game: Lesson on football, work, and life*. New York, NY: Broadway Books.
- Ostroff, F. (1999). *The horizontal organization*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Rahim, M.A. (1983). A measure of styles for handling interpersonal conflict. *Academy of Management Journal*, 26, 368–376.
- Rahim, M.A., Garrett, J.E., & Buntzman, G.F. (1992). Ethics of managing interpersonal conflict. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 11, 423–432.
- Rainey, M.A., & Jones, B.B. (2014). Use of self as an OD practitioner. In B.B. Jones & M. Brazzel (eds.), *The NTL handbook of organization development and change* (pp. 105–126). San Francisco, CA: Wiley.
- Robbins, S.P. (1978). “Conflict management” and “conflict resolution” are not synonymous terms. *California Management Review*, 21(2), 67–75.
- Roche, W., & Teague, P. (2012). Do conflict management systems matter? *Human Resource Management*, 51(2), 231–258.
- Runde, C.E., & Flanagan, T.A. (2010). *Developing your conflict competence: A hands-on guide for leaders, managers, facilitators, and teams*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Schutz, W.C. (1958). *FIRO: A three dimensional theory of interpersonal behavior*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.
- Schweiger, D.M., Sandberg, W.R., & Rechner, P.L. (1989). Experiential effects of dialectical inquiry, devil’s advocacy, and consensus approaches to strategic decision-making. *Academy of Management Journal*, 32(4), 745–772.
- Sherif, M., & Sherif, C.W. (1948, 1956). *An outline of social psychology* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Harpers.
- Stack, J., with B. Burlingham (1992/2013). *The great game of business*. New York, NY: Crown Business.
- Thomas, K., & Kilmann, R. (1974). *Thomas-Kilmann conflict mode instrument*. Mountain View, CA: Xicom.
- van de Vliert, E., & Kabanoff, B. (1990). Toward theory-based measures of conflict management. *Academy of Management Journal*, 33(1), 199–209.
- Wall, J.A., & Callister, R.R. (1995). Conflict and its management. *Journal of Management*, 21(3), 515–558.

Recommended Reading

- Blake, R.R., Sheppard, H.A., & Mouton, J.S. (1964). *Intergroup conflict in industry*. Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing.
- Cummings, T.G., & Worley, C.G. (1993). *Organization development and change* (3rd ed.). Cincinnati, OH: Southwestern College Publishing.
- Dawson, P. (2003). *Reshaping change: A processual approach*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Dundon, T., Wilkinson, A., Marchington, M., & Ackers, P. (2004). The meaning and purpose of employee voice. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 15(6), 1149–1170.
- Freiberg, K., & Freiberg, J. (1996, 1997). *NUTS! Southwest airlines’ crazy recipe for business and personal success*. New York, NY: Broadway Books.
- Jones, B.B., & Brazzel, M. (eds.) (2014). *The NTL handbook of organization development and change* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Wiley.
- Kozan, M.K. (1997). Culture and conflict management: A theoretical framework. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 8, 338–360.
- Lewicki, R.J., Weiss, S.E., & Lewin, D. (1992). Models of conflict, negotiation and third-party interventions: A review and synthesis. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 13, 209–252.
- Morrill, C., Zald, M.N., & Rao, H. (2003). Covert political conflict in organizations: Challenges from below. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 29, 391–415.

ALAN CLARDY, PhD (University of Maryland College Park), was director of the graduate degree program in Human Resource Development (HRD) at Towson University in Baltimore, MD. He retired in 2016 and is now professor emeritus. Prior to joining Towson, he had 25 years' corporate and consulting experience in human resource management and development. He has published extensively on the legal aspects of HRD. His other interests include relationship repair and forgiveness, ethics for HR professionals, managing the HR function, and the relationship between marketing and human resources. He has published *Studying Your Workforce* (Sage, 1997) and *The Management Training Toolkit* (AMACOM, 2010). He is currently working on a book about future studies. He may be reached at aclardy@towson.edu

Copyright of Performance Improvement is the property of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.