

## 12.12: The Impact of Conflict

### Learning Objectives

- Describe the impact of conflict in the workplace

Before we can discuss the impact of workplace conflict, we need to better define it. Any time individuals interact, there is potential for conflict. Conflict occurs when differing interests and ideas collide, creating tension. Conflict is a natural part of everyday life, especially in the workplace. With compensation, deadlines, clients, etc. on the line, it is normal for the workplace to add additional stress and pressure to the challenges of everyday life. Therefore, it is more likely people will encounter conflict at work.

So if conflict is so common, how can we avoid its impact in the workplace? In reality, we can't. Conflict will always be around, oftentimes in varying levels. Some conflicts may have simple solutions, where others may be accompanied with drama and complex situations. To best understand how conflict impacts the workplace, it is important to explore sources of conflict. Each source will have a different impact on the workplace environment and require their own solution. Check out the information below to learn more about a variety of sources that create conflict.

### Communication

Everyone has different communication styles and they may not always mix well. Someone with a direct communication style may come off as rude or abrasive to someone with a more indirect communication style. Even if the direct individual had no intentions of being rude, their communication style may present them in that way. Additionally, the direct individual may feel like the more indirect communicator is wasting time with unnecessary details. However, each communicator understands the other's communication style, and makes allowances for personal differences, there is less likely to be conflict. Understanding how your coworkers and supervisors communicate is extremely helpful in navigating your workplace.

Poor communication can also create conflict in the workplace. If important tasks and information are not communicated properly, it can create confusion, extra work, and frustration. If someone gets only part of the message, or gets varying versions of the same message, they are more likely to get frustrated and involved in workplace conflict. Poor communication can have a detrimental impact on an organization if it is not addressed.

### Employee Differences

Even if you work in the same field as your coworkers, chances are each of you are very different from one another. Everyone views their world through a different lens which influences their values and outlook. Your values may not align with your coworkers, and while that is expected, it can also lead to workplace conflict. If there is a lack of understanding or a lack of acceptance for your coworkers' differing views and values, conflict is likely to arise and create tension among coworkers.

Employees are also likely to have differing interests. If an employee is more focused on their personal interests as opposed to the interests of the team, conflict is inevitable. While it is important to foster your own goals, it should not be at the detriment of the team.

Personality differences may also create conflict. People approach problem-solving and the workplace differently, which can create conflict if coworkers do not understand one another. Even if a person acts with good intentions, it may not be perceived that way by others they work with. Communication is the best way to avoid conflict from personality differences, but can create other challenges when incorporating multiple communication styles.

### Lack of Resources and Poor Performance

When resources are scarce, people are more likely to get confrontational and competitive about the limited resources available. Fighting for time and resources will most likely always lead to some sort of workplace conflict. A company can help in this scenario to avoid creating conflict by ensuring their employees have the resources they need to be successful and complete their job functions.

If there is an underperformer on the team, it can be frustrating for everyone. Poor performers do not contribute to the success of the team and, equally as concerning, they can even create additional work for their coworkers. Underperformers who take advantage of their team members and their work efforts, are going to draw negative attention and conflict.

## ? PRactice Question

<https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/18195>

### Sources

“What Is Workplace Conflict?” Grand Valley State University, September 14, 2014. [www.gvsu.edu/hro/what-is-workplace-conflict-85.htm](http://www.gvsu.edu/hro/what-is-workplace-conflict-85.htm).

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