About DecisionWise

Founded 1996
30 countries
70 languages
200+ clients

Inc. 5000

Employee Surveys | 360-degree Feedback | Training | Organization Change
DecisionWise Leadership Development Programs

Transformational training programs

Leadership Excellence, Alignment, and Development (LEAD)
This program is designed for executive and senior-level leaders as well as high-potential leaders in the organization. Participants learn how to lead strategically across functions and to understand their leadership style.

Leadership Acceleration Program (LAP)
This program is designed for mid-level managers and high-potential supervisors. Participants learn how to work effectively as both a manager and a leader and increase basic leadership skills.

Management Excellence
This program is designed for all managers and supervisors. Participants learn the basic principles of effective management and how to deliver results through their teams.
What is Conflict?

**noun**
A serious disagreement or argument, typically a protracted one.
"the eternal conflict between the sexes"
synonyms: dispute, quarrel, squabble, disagreement, dissension, clash;

**verb**
Be incompatible or at variance; clash.
"parents' and children's interests sometimes conflict"
synonyms: clash, be incompatible, vary, be at odds, be in conflict, differ, diverge, disagree, contrast, collide
Causes of Conflict

- Lack of Resources
- Poor Communication
- Differences in Opinion
- Competing Objectives
Reactions to Conflict
Conflict Negotiation Paradigms

- **Transformative Negotiation**
  - Improving a relationship is the issue

- **Integrative Negotiation**
  - Creative problem solving is the issue

- **Performative Negotiation**
  - Improving communication is the issue

- **Distributive Negotiation**
  - Fair exchange of value is the issue

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<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
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<td><strong>Parties' Concern for Relationship</strong></td>
<td><strong>Parties' Concern for Mutual Outcome</strong></td>
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Research on Conflict

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument was developed by Ken Thomas, PhD and Ralph Kilmann, PhD, both professors of management at the University of Pittsburgh.

Inspired by the Managerial Grid Model of Blake and Mouton, the model has become the leading measure of conflict-handling modes, backed up by hundreds of research studies and selling over four million copies.
5 Conflict Handling Modes

- Competing
- Collaborating
- Compromising
- Avoiding
- Accommodating

Axes:
- Assertiveness
- Cooperativeness
Poll Question

What is your typical reaction to conflict?

1. Avoid
2. Accommodate
3. Compromise
4. Collaborate
5. Compete
Competing Uses

1. When quick, *decisive action is vital*—for example, in an emergency
2. On important issues when *unpopular courses of action* need implementing—for example, cost cutting, enforcing unpopular rules, discipline
3. On issues *vital to company welfare* when you know you’re right
4. When you need to *protect yourself* from people who take advantage of noncompetitive behavior
Competing Overuse and Underuse

**Signs of overuse**
Are you surrounded by “yes” people?
Are others afraid to admit ignorance and uncertainties to you?

**Signs of underuse**
Feeling powerless in situations.
Having trouble taking a firm stand, even when one sees the need.
Collaborating Uses

1. When you need to find an integrative solution and the concerns of both parties are too important to be compromised
2. When your objective is to learn and you wish to test your assumptions and understand others’ views
3. When you want to merge insights from people with different perspectives on a problem
4. When you want to gain commitment by incorporating others’ concerns into a consensual decision
5. When you need to work through hard feelings that have been interfering with a relationship
Collaborating Overuse and Underuse

**Signs of overuse**
Spending time discussing issues in depth that don’t seem to warrant it.
Failing to elicit collaborative responses from others.

**Signs of underuse**
Is it difficult for you to see differences as opportunities for joint gain, learning, or problem solving?
Are others uncommitted to your decisions or policies?
Compromising Uses

1. When goals are moderately important but not worth the effort or the potential disruption involved in using more assertive modes
2. When two opponents with equal power are strongly committed to mutually exclusive goals—as in labor–management bargaining
3. When you want to achieve a temporary settlement of a complex issue
4. When you need to arrive at an expedient solution under time pressure
5. As a backup mode when collaboration or competition fails
Compromising Overuse and Underuse

**Signs of overuse**
Do you concentrate so heavily on the practicalities and tactics of compromise that you sometimes lose sight of larger issues?
Does an emphasis on bargaining and trading create a cynical climate of gamesmanship?

**Signs of underuse**
Do you sometimes find yourself too sensitive or embarrassed to engage in the give-and-take of bargaining?
Do you sometimes find it difficult to make concessions?
Avoiding Uses

1. When an issue is unimportant or when other, more important issues are pressing
2. When you perceive no chance of satisfying your concerns—for example, when you have low power or you are frustrated by something that would be very difficult to change
3. When the potential costs of confronting a conflict outweigh the benefits of its resolution
4. When you need to let people cool down—to reduce tensions to a productive level and to regain perspective and composure
5. When gathering more information outweighs the advantages of an immediate decision
6. When others can resolve the issue more effectively
7. When the issue seems tangential or symptomatic of another, more basic issue
Avoiding Overuse and Underuse

**Signs of overuse**
Causing coordination to suffer because people have trouble getting one’s input on issues.
Creating an atmosphere of “walking on eggshells.”
Decisions on important issues getting made by default.

**Signs of underuse**
Do you sometimes find yourself hurting people’s feelings or stirring up hostilities?
Do you sometimes feel harried or overwhelmed by a number of issues?
Accommodating Uses

1. When you realize that you are wrong—to allow a better solution to be considered, to learn from others, and to show that you are reasonable
2. When the issue is much more important to the other person than it is to you—to satisfy the needs of others and as a goodwill gesture to help maintain a cooperative relationship
3. When you want to build up social credits for later issues that are important to you
4. When you are outmatched and losing and more competition would only damage your cause
5. When preserving harmony and avoiding disruption are especially important
6. When you want to help your employees develop by allowing them to experiment and learn from their mistakes
Accommodating Overuse and Underuse

**Signs of overuse**
Do you feel that your ideas and concerns sometimes don’t get the attention they deserve?
Is discipline lax?

**Signs of underuse**
Having trouble building goodwill.
Being viewed as unreasonable.
Having trouble admitting when one is wrong.
Failing to recognize legitimate exceptions to the rules.
Refusing to give up.
Case Study: Competition-R-Us

1. Culture of competitiveness
2. Fear of saying or doing something “wrong”
3. High level of anxiety
4. Poor team dynamics
5. Needed to solve their “communication” problem
Case Study: General Motors

1. Culture of competitiveness
2. Hired “yes-people”
3. Reliance on past success
4. Groupthink
Case Study: The Angry Email
Conflict is something we shouldn’t fear. It can improve performance and productivity when handled well.

When conflict is resolved well, relationships and organizations generally improve overall.

Remember that every conflict mode has value and is important.

Focusing on desired outcomes and being mindful about the different conflict modes, enhances our ability to be better conflict negotiators.