

## CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AT A GLANCE

### What Causes Conflict in the Workplace?

Human differences make conflict in the workplace unavoidable—but it is manageable. Disagreements or disputes can occur at work for a variety of reasons. Some common examples:

- Personality, ego, or cultural clashes
- Problematic or annoying behaviors
- Perceived inequities or favoritism
- Unequal distribution of/access to resources
- Organizational disruptions (layoffs, mergers, etc.)
- Heavy workloads
- Disagreements about work goals or projects
- Unclear role expectations
- Mismanagement of work situations
- Competing job responsibilities/duties
- Lack of clear communication
- Differing work styles and values
- Stress

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### Key Statistics on Workplace Conflict

- **\$359 billion** – estimated annual cost of workplace conflict in employee-paid hours
- **385 million** – estimated working days lost per year to workplace conflict
- **2.1 hours** – average weekly time spent by employees in dealing with workplace conflict
- **85%** – employees who say they have to handle conflict at work at least to some extent
- **29%** – employees who report having to deal with workplace conflict frequently or always
- **1 in 4** – percentage of employees reporting illness or absence from work due to conflict
- **27%** – employees who say they've seen workplace conflict lead to personal attacks
- **1 in 10** – employees who say workplace conflict sabotages projects
- **70%** – employees who rate conflict management skills vitally important
- **54%** – employees who say managers could handle conflict better by addressing disputes before they escalate

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### Implications for Organizations: Risks and Benefits

#### Common Risks of Unaddressed Workplace Conflict

- Decreased organizational performance
- Decreased productivity
- Greater turnover, increased illness/absence
- Lower employee morale/engagement
- Failure of work projects/negative business results
- Negative effects on organizational culture (bullying, disrespect, discrimination, etc.)

#### Leading Benefits of Managing Workplace Conflict

- Improvement in workplace relationships
- Enhanced performance and productivity (from individual to organizational levels)
- Greater employee morale/engagement and retention
- Improved business results
- Enhanced innovation/creativity
- Positive organizational culture (greater understanding/respect, etc.)

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### About Conflict Management Training

- Fewer than ½ of employees receive conflict management training (yet 1/3 of conflict happens at the entry or front-line level)
- Top benefits of conflict management training cited by employees who do receive training:
  - Greater comfort handling conflict
  - Enhanced ability to avoid conflict
  - Better understanding of others
  - Greater ability to achieve win/win outcomes
  - Better solutions to work projects

Statistical Sources: [CPP](#), [SHRM](#)