

What's Your Conflict Management Style?

Instructions: Each statement below provides a possible strategy for dealing with a conflict. Give each a numerical value. Don't answer as you think you should, answer as you actually behave.

(1=Always, 2=Very often, 3=Sometimes, 4= Not very often, 5= Rarely, if ever.)

- ____ a. I argue my case with peers, colleagues, coworkers to demonstrate the merits of my position.
- ____ b. I try to reach compromises through negotiation.
- ____ c. I attempt to meet the expectation of others.
- ____ d. I seek to investigate issues with others in order to find solutions that are mutually acceptable.
- ____ e. I am firm in resolve when it comes to defending my side of the issue.
- ____ f. I try to avoid being singled out, keeping conflict with others to myself.
- ____ g. I uphold my solutions to problems.
- ____ h. I compromise in order to reach solutions.
- ____ i. I trade important information with others so that problems can be solved together.
- ____ j. I avoid discussing my differences with others.
- ____ k. I try to accommodate the wishes of my peers and colleagues.
- ____ l. I seek to bring everyone's concerns out into the open in order to resolve disputes in the best possible way.
- ____ m. I put forward middle positions in efforts to break deadlocks.
- ____ n. I accept the recommendations of colleagues, peers, and coworkers.
- ____ o. I avoid hard feelings by keeping my disagreements with others to myself.

Scoring: Now, record the number you placed next to each statement in the appropriate box below. Calculate the total under each category.

Style				Total
Competing/Forcing Shark	a. _____	e. _____	g. _____	_____
Collaborating Owl	d. _____	i. _____	l. _____	_____
Avoiding Turtle	f. _____	j. _____	o. _____	_____
Accommodating Teddy Bear	c. _____	k. _____	n. _____	_____
Compromising Fox	b. _____	h. _____	m. _____	_____

Results: My dominant style is _____ (Your **LOWEST** score)

and my back-up style is _____ (Your second Lowest score)

Conflict Management Styles

The Competing Shark



Sharks use a forcing or competing conflict management style

Sharks are highly goal-oriented

Relationships take on a lower priority

Sharks do not hesitate to use aggressive behavior to resolve conflicts

Sharks can be autocratic, authoritative, and uncooperative; threatening and intimidating

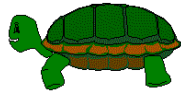
Sharks have a need to win; therefore others must lose, creating win-lose situations

Advantage: If the shark's decision is correct, a better decision without compromise can result

Disadvantage: May breed hostility and resentment toward the person using it

Appropriate times to use a Shark style

- when conflict involves personal differences that are difficult to change
- when fostering intimate or supportive relationships is not critical
- when others are likely to take advantage of noncompetitive behavior
- when conflict resolution is urgent; when decision is vital in crisis
- when unpopular decisions need to be implemented



The Avoiding Turtle

Turtles adopt an avoiding or withdrawing conflict management style

Turtles would rather hide and ignore conflict than resolve it; this leads them uncooperative and unassertive

Turtles tend to give up personal goals and display passive behavior creating lose-lose situations

Advantage: may help to maintain relationships that would be hurt by conflict resolution

Disadvantage: Conflicts remain unresolved, overuse of the style leads to others walking over them

Appropriate times to use a Turtle Style:

- when the stakes are not high or issue is trivial
- when confrontation will hurt a working relationship
- when there is little chance of satisfying your wants
- when disruption outweighs benefit of conflict resolution
- when gathering information is more important than an immediate decision
- when others can more effectively resolve the conflict
- when time constraints demand a delay



The Accommodating Teddy Bear

Teddy bears use a smoothing or accommodating conflict management style with emphasis on human relationships

Teddy bears ignore their own goals and resolve conflict by giving into others; unassertive and cooperative creating a win-lose (bear is loser) situation

Advantage: Accommodating maintains relationships

Disadvantage: Giving in may not be productive, bear may be taken advantage of

Appropriate times to use a Teddy Bear Style

- when maintaining the relationship outweighs other considerations
- when suggestions/changes are not important to the accommodator
- when minimizing losses in situations where outmatched or losing
- when time is limited or when harmony and stability are valued



The Compromising Fox

Foxes use a compromising conflict management style; concern is for goals and relationships

Foxes are willing to sacrifice some of their goals while persuading others to give up part of theirs

Compromise is assertive and cooperative-result is either win-lose or lose-lose

Advantage: relationships are maintained and conflicts are removed

Disadvantage: compromise may create less than ideal outcome and game playing can result

Appropriate times to use a Fox Style

- when important/complex issues leave no clear or simple solutions
- when all parties are equal in power and have strong interests in different solutions
- when there are no time restraints



The Collaborating Owl

Owls use collaborating or problem solving conflict management style valuing their goals **and** relationships

Owls view conflicts as problems to be solved finding solutions agreeable to all sides (win-win)

Advantage: both sides get what they want and negative feelings eliminated

Disadvantage: takes a great deal of time and effort

Appropriate times to use an Owl Style

- when maintaining relationships is important
- when time is not a concern
- when peer conflict is involved
- when trying to gain commitment through consensus building
- when learning and trying to merge differing perspectives