



your work life

HOW TO HANDLE CONFLICT IN THE WORKPLACE

This guide will help you to manage *yourself* and to *perform at your best* in conflict situations by:

- Helping you to understand how conflict can arise in your workplace; and
- Offering you practical advice about the steps you can take to manage strongly held differences of opinion.

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WHAT IS CONFLICT?

Conflict occurs when people disagree strongly over something and argue to the point where they are seen by the world to be doing battle with each other. Conflict at some level is a fact of life and can sometimes actually be useful. People get passionate about things and can clash over almost anything; sporting teams, political philosophies, the taste of wine. On most occasions unresolved conflict between people leads to little more than some temporary unpleasantness and a straining of relationships. However from time to time differences of opinion become so bitter and entrenched that they give rise to outcomes that can be costly, damaging, long lasting and far reaching.

Conflict in the workplace is also a fact of life. Every day individuals disagree over what should be done to achieve particular outcomes, who should do the work, how it should be done and who will be to blame if something goes wrong. Arguing over such issues can consume a lot of time, energy and create disruption in the most harmonious of workplaces.

Fortunately conflict can also have a very beneficial impact on the workplace by helping people to build better relationships for the future. *Handled properly*, conflict can bring about new understandings between people and can help to produce a workplace culture where differences of opinion are properly resolved without the appearance of damaging emotional confrontation and dysfunctional behaviour.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Workplace conflict is a challenge that people face to a greater or lesser degree almost every day during their work lives. Moreover a person's career prospects and emotional well-being can hinge on how they behave in conflict situations. This guide will help you to manage *yourself* and to perform *at your best* in conflict situations by:

- Helping you to understand how conflict can arise in your workplace; and
- Offering you practical advice about the steps you can take to help resolve strongly held differences of opinion.