

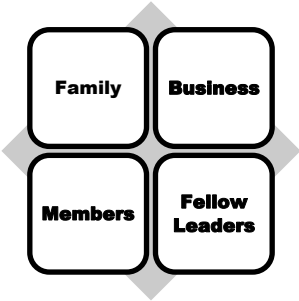
# CONFLICTS AND THE ART OF CONSENSUS-BUILDING

FEBRUARY 2, 2024

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## CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

LEADERS SHOULD EXPECT & PREPARE FOR CONFLICTS, ESPECIALLY DURING THESE TURBULENT TIMES IN OUR INDUSTRY.



**WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF CONFLICT?** *(Source: Merriam Webster dictionary)*

1. **Strong disagreement between people, groups, etc. that often results in angry arguments.**
2. *Divergent ideas, interests, or persons.*

### WHAT CAUSES CONFLICT?

Conflicts arise because people are different. Sources of conflict include:

- Needs
- Values
- Pressures
- Perceptions
- Leadership and communication styles
- Personalities

### HOW CAN CONFLICT AFFECT THE ASSOCIATION?

Negative Conflict:

1. Blocks the association from reaching its goals and can increase stagnancy
2. Gives rise to tension, anxiety, stress and low trust.
3. Creates a lack of engagement.

Positive Conflict:

1. Moves the association’s goals and can improve creativity and productivity.
2. Unearths different viewpoints and creates trust.
3. Enhances engagement.

## START WITH YOURSELF!

- Your attitude and behaviors about conflicts are critical. Remember – you only have control over yourself.
- Enhance your Emotional Intelligence skills regularly
  - o Self-awareness
  - o Self-regulation
  - o Internal motivation
  - o Develop empathy
  - o Develop good social skills
- Avoid these behaviors
  - o You don't address conflicts in a timely manner.
  - o You aren't neutral and take sides in disputes.
  - o You believe people can keep secrets.
  - o You don't take constructive criticism well.

## RESPONDING TO CONFLICT (Source: Wayne Shirley, Oureverydaylife.com)

### What are some common responses to conflict?

<b>Avoidance</b>	You fear failure or harm if you enter the conflict.	You don't want to deal with it and want to reduce tensions.	Potential challenge: the other party may be more powerful than you.
<b>Competition</b>	You approach it with a high degree of assertiveness.	Use if it is important that your goals are achieved.	You want to debate your point and have your view considered
<b>Accommodation</b>	You agree to the other party's goals.	May ensure goodwill among parties. May be productive at work.	Can be counter productive if you try to leverage the situation.
<b>Compromise</b>	You seek out areas of compromise. Want a win - win solution.	When your goal is equal to maintaining a good relationship.	Involves negotiation between parties on common ground.
<b>Collaboration</b>	You aim to meet the needs of all parties.	Very smart and productive strategy at work.	Critical when stability of the relationship is needed to achieve goals

## SELECTING YOUR BEST RESPONSE TO CONFLICT:

Using our emotional intelligence, we all have the ability to assess and utilize the type of response that might best "calm" the conflict. The situation causing the conflict should determine your response:

1. Assess the situation. Actively listen. question and communicate clearly with the other party.
2. Weigh your best response options and select the style(s) that makes the most sense.
3. Work towards a win-win solution.

## WHAT OUTCOME DO YOU WANT? (Source: 7 Sure-Fire Tips for Conflict Resolution, Lifehack.org)

1. Keep a cool head.
2. Decide on the outcome you want and adjust your response accordingly.
3. Be willing to compromise.
4. Listen, really listen.
5. Avoid personal attacks.
6. Detach yourself from the result.
7. Once it is over, drop it.

## REMEMBER, YOU ONLY HAVE CONTROL OF YOUR OWN BEHAVIOR!

(Source: Karen Kane: *Managing Difficult People Effectively* - Connection 2014)

Pay close attention to your own actions and what results you are generating.

1. You must be able to take clear stands and articulate them to others.
2. You must stay genuinely connected and attuned to others.
3. You must effectively manage your own reactivity when you feel threatened or challenged.

## WHEN IN CONFLICT, WORDS AND TONE MATTER!

WORDS THAT INCITE CONFLICT	WORDS THAT DEFUSE CONFLICT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You never...</li><li>• I told you...</li><li>• Whatever...</li><li>• I never said that</li><li>• You never said that...</li><li>• Never mind...</li><li>• Good for you...</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How might we...</li><li>• Might I suggest...</li><li>• Have you considered...</li><li>• If you could...</li><li>• One option is...</li><li>• Let me explain...</li><li>• I understand that...</li></ul>

**USE THIS SIMPLE SENTENCE WHEN IN CONFLICT** (SOURCE: *Associations Now*, *Communication Skills for Navigating Board Conflict*, by Rasheeda Childress interview with Mary Byers, March 2021)

### ***I feel [blank] when [blank] because [blank].***

EXAMPLE: "I feel frustrated when I'm interrupted because I feel I'm not being heard."

- "I" statements put the focus and responsibility on the communicator.
- "I" messages are less likely to be resented.
- "I" statements are a way to convey your message without alienating your listener.
- "I" statements do not guarantee success, but they are your best chance of getting your message heard.

## ADDRESSING THE CONFLICT SUCCESSFULLY

1. Make sure you have a clear understanding of the issue.
2. Communicate how you feel; focus on the issue, NOT the people.
3. Listen without interruption. Have others do so too.
4. Understand that everyone must be satisfied with the solution.
5. Work to develop agreement on resolution. Focus on win-win and areas of mutual agreement.

## DEALING WITH CONFLICT AT BOARD OR COMMITTEE MEETINGS

### WHAT'S THE CONFLICT ABOUT?

Because associations depend on interaction among people with different needs, values, pressures, perspectives, personalities and leadership/communication styles, it is inevitable that conflict will sometimes occur. When someone raises a negative point of view, he or she at least gives others a chance to address the issue. When they can't express differences, people may enter into covert forms of conflict that aren't readily apparent. Encourage candid discussion as uncontrolled conflict can lead to hurt feelings, withdrawal, and have a significant impact on the group. The impact of conflict depends on what the conflict is about, how it is initiated, how it is managed, AND is it a conflict about behaviors OR about ideas?

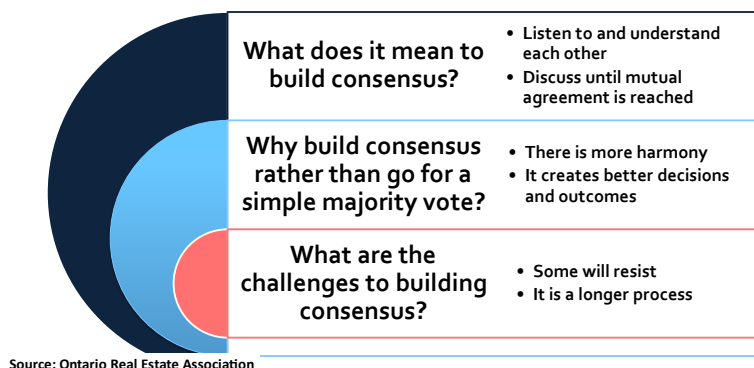
What is the conflict about?	
BEHAVIORS	SOLUTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disruptive personalities</li> <li>• Underlying tensions</li> <li>• Lack of respect</li> <li>• Bad behaviors</li> <li>• No accountability</li> <li>• In a meeting -a weak Chairperson</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polices on behaviors</li> <li>• Develop culture statements on acceptable behaviors</li> <li>• Training – Chairs &amp; Vice-chairs</li> <li>• Address behaviors outside of the meeting</li> </ul>

## ADDRESS CONFLICTS ABOUT IDEAS WITH CONSENSUS-BUILDING

**REMEMBER THE DEFINITION OF CONFLICT!** (Merriam Webster dictionary)

1. *Strong disagreement between people, groups, etc. that often results in angry arguments.*
2. *Divergent ideas, interests, or persons.*

### Handle controversial issues & discussions by building consensus



### ADOPT A “CULTURE OF INQUIRY” DURING BOARD OR COMMITTEE DEBATES

*“A culture of inquiry is where Board or Committee members:*

- *solicit, acknowledge, and respectfully listen to different points of view;*
  - *they seek more information, question assumptions, and challenge and advocate for solutions based on data and analysis;*
  - *they are able to voice their individual concerns before reaching a collective decision, which, once made, is supported by the entire board or committee.”*
- BoardSource, July 2020*

### TYPICAL DEBATE BETWEEN BOARD OR COMMITTEE MEMBERS (SOURCE: ONTARIO REAL ESTATE ASSOCIATION)

1. Someone speaks for the issue.
2. Someone speaks against the issue.
3. Neither person really listens because they are too busy defending their position and thinking about their next argument.
4. Usually ends without a mutually satisfactory agreement!

### **TEACH MEMBERS TO DEBATE AN ISSUE THIS WAY! (SOURCE: ONTARIO REAL ESTATE ASSOCIATION)**

1. The 1st person presents his/her position on the issue.
2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> person:
  - listens & asks questions (if unclear, to clarify what he/she heard)
  - restates what was said to the satisfaction of the 1st person
3. Repeat the process:
  - The 2nd person now presents his/her position on the issue
  - The 1<sup>st</sup> person listens, asks questions and restates to the satisfaction of the 2<sup>nd</sup> person

***When we listen, question and clarify what we have heard, we apply 3 key skills that are necessary to build consensus!***

### **5 TIPS FOR THE CHAIR - TURN CONFLICT INTO CONSENSUS IN MEETINGS**

**YOUR GOAL IS TO ENSURE DIRECTORS UNDERSTAND THE CONSENSUS-BUILDING PROCESS.**

1. Ensure that the disagreement is expressed sensitively.
2. Use the debate technique above.
  - Listen.
  - Ask questions to gain a deeper understanding of a member's perspective & position on the issue.
  - Restate what you hear to the satisfaction of the speaker.
3. Engage all members.
4. Focus on commonalities and ask the group to build on areas of agreement.
5. Continue this process until the Directors say: *"I can live with that decision."*

### **GROUND RULES (CHAIR SHOULD ANNOUNCE AND MONITOR BOARD PERFORMANCE):**

**We are going to be discussing a controversial issue and the goal is for us to reach consensus.**

- Our goal is to work towards consensus on a decision we can live with.
- Everyone has an opportunity to speak and present their position. I ask that you do so.
- Present your position concisely and explain why you hold it. What data supports your position?
- Engage in respectful, thoughtful discussion and listen to the differing viewpoints.
- Do *not* change your opinion simply to avoid conflict.
- Disagree with the idea – state why you disagree and don't criticize the individual.
- Respond to the disagreement with a spirit of inquiry. Ask for clarification or examples.

## **LASTLY, IN TIMES OF CHALLENGES, UNCERTAINTY AND CONFLICT**

Always focus on the organization's "True North" – the Mission Statement

***Our Mission: We are a network of successful REALTORS®, advancing women as business leaders in the industry and in the communities we serve.***

**Do you know it? Can you repeat and promote it to fellow volunteers and the members?**



## NEVER FORGET...ALWAYS FOCUS ON BRINGING VALUE TO THE MEMBERS!

(SOURCE: GINGER DOWNS, RCE, CAE, IOM)



## INSPIRE OTHERS BY DISPLAYING 3 LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES:

(Source: *The Art of Professional Poise*, Elizabeth Mendenhall and Ron Phipps)

1. Uphold Professionalism
  - Professionalism is not just a label you earn. It's a pledge you make to uphold exceptional leadership qualities every day.
2. Maintain Poise in turbulence
  - Poise is the raised beacon of an exceptional leader, shining bright in the darkest of times.
3. Gain trust
  - "Trust is the glue of life. It's the foundational principle that holds all relationships together."*  
- Steven Covey