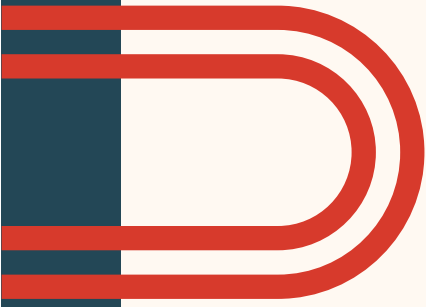




Advancing Workplace Communication

STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATION:
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT TRAINING FOR
GOVERNMENT & MILITARY CONTRACTING
AGENCIES

MADISON RUDDEN

Comm 351

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Introduction

In high-pressure government and military contracting environments, clear and effective communication is very important for success. Projects often involve multiple departments, strict deadlines, a decision making structure with multiple people, and having a setting where misunderstandings and conflicts are common. Left unresolved or avoided, these conflicts can reduce productivity, increase stress, and interfere with set goals. Conflict is not just a theoretical concern, but it's present in daily operations in government and military contracting agencies at all levels. As Burks (2019) notes, "Disputes and conflicts are present in daily military operations across all levels of the institution" (p. 40), saying that these challenges are constant and inevitable to happen. High-pressure deadlines, decision-making, and limited resources can be intensified even by minor disagreements, making them more disruptive if not addressed correctly. By recognizing how conflicts and the risks it is affecting productivity, the agencies can see the value of structured conflict management training as a very important investment for the companies to make in both effectiveness and mission success.

This White Paper explains a conflict management training program designed to offer leaders and staff useful methods of communication, collaborating skills, and deciding tools to help with effectively handling conflicts. This will show how structured training can turn conflict into working together by drawing on research from military and organizational studies. Coutts stated, "Given the above conception of conflict, transformational negotiation focuses on this transcendence of goals, planting the metaphorical orange trees", (Coutts, pg. 8). Which includes positive communication approaches (Coutts, 2020), the effects of work-life balance on employee satisfaction (Moeser et al., 2021), and decisions made by leadership stress (Wolfberg, 2019). By implementing this program, government and military contracting agencies can expect **improved interdepartmental communication, reduced workplace tension, and enhanced overall operational performance**. Our company is in a position to give training using engaging tasks, researched techniques, and regular consulting, ensuring lasting benefits for employees and leadership.

BACKGROUND / PROBLEM

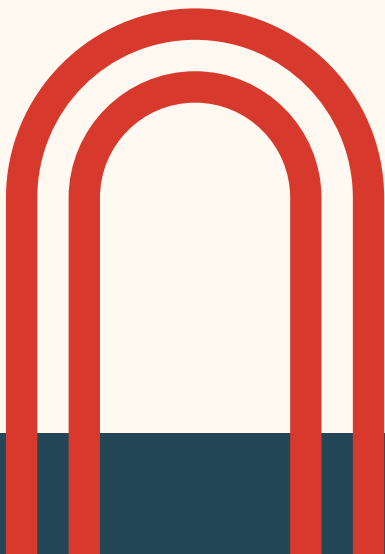
Contracting agencies for the government and military work in possibly high-stakes situations where accuracy, efficiency, and satisfaction is very important. Conflicts between people, departments, and people who are higher rank or are your boss are common issues in high-pressure work environments brought on by these strict regulations.

Conflict in military and governmental situations often comes from disagreements within the chains of command or departments, also misunderstandings between ranks and interpersonal conflicts brought by stress. Wolfberg (2019) stated "Decision conflict. The aforementioned decision contexts were affected by three distinct types of conflicts in the study: (1) psychological, (2) social, and (3) cognitive", has commonly affected Army officers, particularly when managing complex missions and interpersonal relationships. Similarly Moeser et al. (2017) talks about how organizational stresses and work-life imbalance leads to burnout and strained relationships among Department of Defense employees.

Employees may turn to **avoidance, aggression, or passive-aggressive behavior** which affects teamwork and the accomplishment of whichever goal or project. By giving staff the skills, they need to communicate clearly, settle conflicts properly, and promote an environment of accountability and respect for one another, conflict management training provides a proper approach and methods. If left conflicts can lead to **reduced efficiency, loss of trust, and costly project delays**. However, structured **conflict management training** can help organizations proactively equip employees with the skills to manage disputes constructively.

Stated in Dispute and Conflict Transformation

Basics Burks said, "*disputes and conflicts are present in daily military operations across all levels of the institution*" (Burks, p. 40)

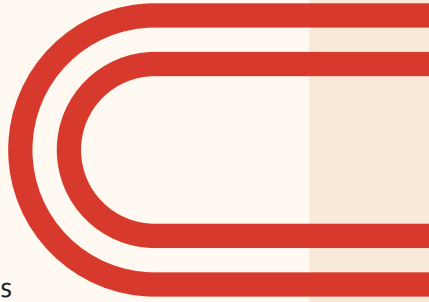


Solutions

SOLUTION: PROPOSED CONFLICT MANAGEMENT TRAINING

This program is a **three-module training** made for government and military workers. The design came from Coutts' (2020) concept of **transformational negotiation**, prioritizing long-term relationship ("planting metaphorical orange trees") rather than solely focusing on short-term wins. There are in-person workshops with online modules if the companies would like their employees to follow up. There are one day or halfway courses over three weeks, with quarterly refreshers or follow ups. Employees will be going through speakers, interactive activities, role-playing, and scenario-based exercises instead of only doing lectures. This is so people are interacting and retaining the knowledge, instead of lectures only where many times people will zone out and not listen. The program enables government and military contracting organizations with strategies to reduce workplace conflicts and create a more productive, high performing staff through the combination of research backed methods with a hands on and interactive training approaches. *"Conflicting priorities and rapid decision cycles increase the potential for breakdowns in communication among leaders"* (Wolfberg, 2018). Investing the time could ultimately result in specific improvements and benefits in worker efficiency, staff satisfaction, and mission readiness. Stronger communication across the different levels reduces delays and misunderstandings, while using stress-management skills create teams that can perform more effectively even under stressful moments. In the end, the program prepares employers to thrive in stressful situations, complex situations by making sure their employees have the skills of handling possible disagreements in a positive way. Ultimately, the program prepares organizations to thrive in complex, high-stakes environments by ensuring their people are equipped to handle disputes constructively and channel conflict into opportunities for growth and collaboration.

VISUAL DATA



The conflict management program is structured into targeted modules that address the most common sources of workplace conflict in government and military contracting environments. Each module combines research-backed strategies with hands-on, interactive exercises designed to help participants **recognize, address, and resolve disputes effectively**.

Training Modules

- 1. Understanding Conflict in Military/Government Environments**
 - Types of workplace conflict: interpersonal, intragroup, and interdepartmental
 - How work dynamics, deadlines, and high stakes can intensify conflicts
 - Case study discussions from military scenarios
- 2. Communication & Negotiation Strategies**
 - Transformational negotiation techniques (Coutts, 2020)
 - Active listening across different ranks and departments
 - Chain-of-command communication exercises
 - Conflict de-escalation role-plays exercises based on Wolfberg's (2018) findings
- 3. Building Resilience & Work-Life Balance Awareness**
 - Stress management and team strategies
 - Recognizing work-family conflict and its effect on communication (Moeser et al., 2020).
 - Working together and collaborating problem-solving activities under time pressure

Expected Outcomes

Upon completion, participants will:

Stronger communication skills across ranks/departments
Strategies that help with long-term collaboration teamwork skills
Use better conflict approaches and have resilience during high pressure work moments

For organizations, this translates to:

Fewer internal conflicts made between workers
Improved efficiency and stronger trust in departments and leaderships
More successful contract execution and missions

CONCLUSION

In government and military contracting companies, conflict is an unavoidable reality, especially in high pressure settings where every day operations are affected by the tight deadlines, limited resources, and management or military chain of command structures. If these conflicts are not handled, they can start affecting teamwork, decrease productivity, and hinder collaboration between workers. *"Transformational negotiation focuses on the transcendence of goals, planting the metaphorical orange trees."* (Coutts, 2020). With carrying out the targeted conflict management training in the workplace, companies can give leaders and staff the tools they need to resolve conflicts easily, improve communication between levels of the chain of commands, efficiency throughout the workplace, and improve making decisions under stress.

The training course outlined in this white paper provides helpful strategies that are based on research and can be tailored to the specific challenges faced by government and military contracting settings specifically. It enables the workers to manage conflicts in ways that will improve company efficiency and project or mission success by emphasizing compromise, communication, and stress management. Investing in improving conflict management training essentially aims to create a healthier and stronger work environment that can thrive under the pressures instead of struggle, not just to settle disputes but improve everything as a whole.

Citations

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