

SECTION 12

GOVERNANCE: OUR CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER IN ACTION

City of Marco Island City Council Governance Topics

1. House Rules: Code of Conduct and Civility
2. Operating Protocols: Guidelines for City Council and City Manager
3. Staff Reports
4. Micromanaging by Councilors
5. Work Session/Workshop
6. Respect for Governance
7. Departmental Silos vs. Teamwork
8. Community Engagement

12 Points of an Effective City Council

1. Focus on and Use Vision, Goals and Priority

- Define the city's preferred future
- Establish outcome-based goals
- Think about value to the community
- Use to allocate resources, to develop plans and policies, to invest in the future

2. Make Timely and Courageous Decisions

- Use vision, goals and priorities to use decisions
- Seek and use input from community and city staff
- Evaluate options through committees and work sessions
- Decide on what is "best for the city"

3. Provide Clear Direction and Expectations

- Obtain clear closure
- Define outcomes, measures of success and time frames
- Delegate assignments to Boards and Committees, and to city staff
- Make sure to summarize and test closure to make sure that everyone has the same understanding

4. Negotiate

- Know your own bottom line
- Look for common ground and areas of agreement first
- Use work session and committees to negotiate
- Win with grace, lose with grace

5. Treat Others with Respect

- Be courteous, polite and trustworthy – avoid personal attacks
- Deliver on your commitments
- Act within your defined roles
- Value the contributions of others

6. Have Open Communications

- Communicate using direct, open messages
- Keep everyone informed and avoid surprises or hidden agendas
- Listen and understand before judging
- Use simple and focused messages that people can remember

7. Monitor Performance

- Obtain regular progress updates/status reports
- Meet quarterly to review and refine direction
- Evaluate the outcome and actions, and make modifications
- Take responsibility for the actions and be accountable for the results.

8. Have a Community Presence

- Be accessible to the citizens and community
- Go into the community beyond your political supporters
- Take time to develop effective working relationships with community partners
- Be a positive advocate for the city

9. Act as a Board of Directors

- Know your community – view it as the “market place”
- Focus on providing policy direction
- Delegate clear responsibility to the city manager as the C.E.O.
- Avoid micromanaging and the daily operations

10. Think Strategically

- Institutionalize the goal setting process
- Identify key partners who can bring resources to the table
- Define alternative routes and steps to destination – the vision
- Keep the “big” picture in mind

11. Align the City Organization

- Appoint individuals to Boards and Committees who share your passion for the city and the vision for the future
- Define the core values to guide “how the city should operate and be managed”
- Employ the “right” city manager for your city
- Hold other accountable for their behaviors, actions and the results

12. Share Success and Celebrate

- Communicate “Our City Success” in terms that the average citizen will understand
- Use celebrations that create a positive memory – value that the city has added to people’s lives
- Recognize others who have contributed to the city’s success
- Remember people want to be associated with “winners”

City Council Success and Image

► **City Council Success means . . .**

► **City Council Image means . . .**

House Rules

Our Code of Conduct and Civility

City Council Protocol Operating Guidelines

Protocol 1

Simple Information

Protocol 2

Research on a Topic

Protocol 3

Citizen Service Request

Protocol 4

Agenda

A. Placing an item

B. Question on item

Protocol 5

Urgent Information

Protocol 6	Communications: Council and Staff
-------------------	--

Protocol 7	Employee Contact
-------------------	-------------------------

A. Employee initiated

B. Council initiated

Protocol 8	Email
-------------------	--------------

Protocol 9	Representative/Liaison
-------------------	-------------------------------

Protocol 10	Work/Study Sessions
--------------------	----------------------------

Protocol 11	
--------------------	--

Protocol 12	
--------------------	--

Protocol 13	
--------------------	--

Protocol 14	
--------------------	--

Protocol 15	
--------------------	--

Protocol 16	
--------------------	--

Protocol 17	
--------------------	--

Expectations and Actions Chair

► Expectations

► Actions

Expectations and Actions City Council

► Expectations

► Actions

Expectations and Actions

City Manager

► Expectations

► Actions

Conflict

A Process to be Managed

Consider These Assumptions:

- Conflict is an inevitable and important human process.
- Conflicts are likely to increase in times of change.
- Conflicts can lead to creative or destructive results.
- Those who understand the processes and dynamics of conflict are better able to manage this important process, increasing the chances of creative outcomes and minimizing destructive results.

In recent years, these considerations have led a growing number of managers and scholars, leaders, and social scientists to study conflict more carefully. The cost of un-managed conflict can be high but the gains from using differences effectively can also be great.

The purpose of this "basic idea" essay is to help you think about conflict in a systematic way to – unpack this important process so its component parts can be better understood.

A Definition

"Conflict" is one of those words that can be used in different ways. We have found the following definition helpful:

Conflict occurs when two or more parties believe that what each wants is incompatible with what the other wants.

The "parties" can be individuals, groups, organizations, or nations. Their wants may range from having an idea accepted to gaining control of a limited resource.

The definition specifies that conflict is a condition that exists when these seemingly incompatible concerns or drives exist. It may be very temporary or of long duration. It may be a condition that results in vigorous activity or an internal ferment that reveals itself only indirectly. Fighting is only one way of dealing with conflict. There are often more productive ways.

(Material in this essay is copyrighted by Xicom, Incorporated, 1974 and 1977. All rights reserved by Xicom, Incorporated)

The Positive and Negative Potential of Conflict

Like any other important human process, conflict can produce both desirable and undesirable results. When we asked groups of managers and leaders of organizations to reflect on recent conflicts they had observed and to identify the results, the following common themes emerged:

A Partial List of Positive Results of Conflict:

- People were forced to search for new approaches
- Long-standing problems surfaced and were dealt with
- People were forced to clarify points of view
- The tension of conflict stimulated interest and activity
- People had a chance to test their capabilities
- Better ideas were produced

Properly managed, conflict can help to maintain an organization of vigorous, resilient, and creative people.

A Partial List of Negative Results of Conflict:

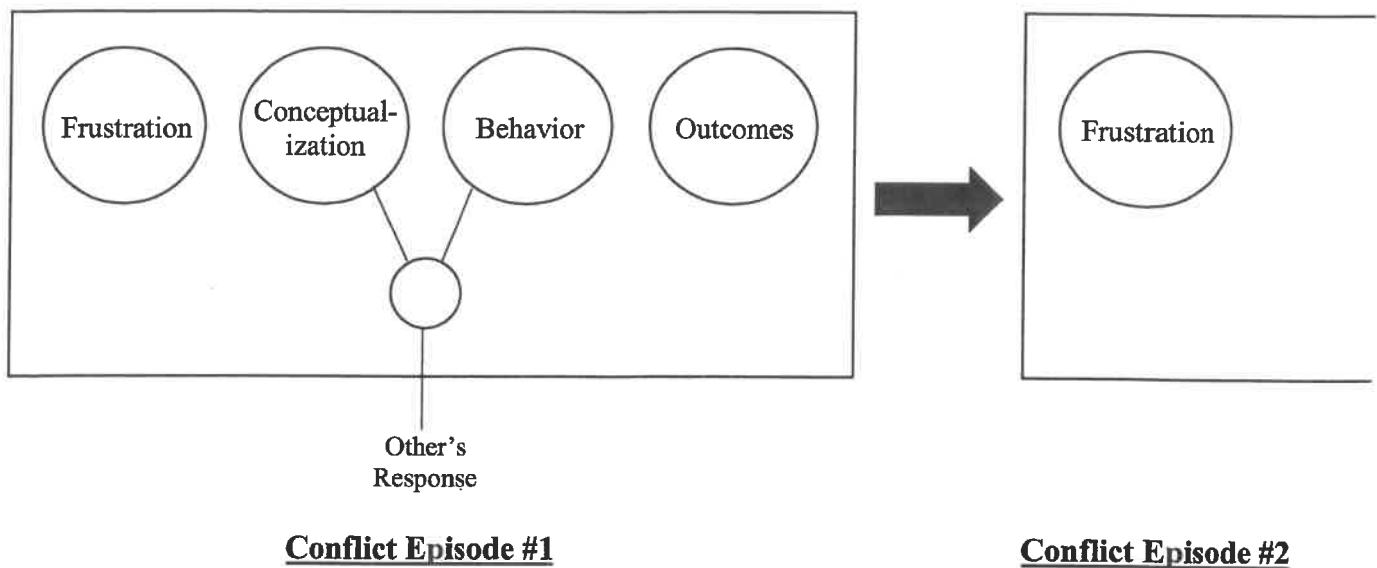
- Some people may feel defeated, demeaned
- The distance between people may be increased
- A climate of distrust, anxiety and suspicion may develop
- Turbulence may cause some good people to leave their jobs
- People or departments that ought to cooperate may become concerned only with their narrow interests
- Various kinds of active or passive resistance may develop where teamwork is needed

The goal of understanding and managing conflict is to reduce the likelihood that such negatives will occur or become excessive.

Unpacking the Conflict Process

Obviously, the positive or negative consequences of a conflict depend upon how well the conflict is managed. In turn, the ability to manage a conflict requires that one understand what goes on during a conflict.

Conflict occurs in episodes. Within any episode there tends to be a common sequence of events, as diagrammed on the following page:



Looking at these events:

Frustration:

Occurs when a person or group feels blocked from satisfying a goal-directed activity or concern. The concern may be clear or only vaguely defined; it may be of casual or critical importance. However, there is a clear feeling that someone or some group is getting in the way of movement toward a desired objective.

Examples:

- You may frustrate me when you do not agree with my ideas
- You may frustrate me when you prevent me from getting the information, the money or the time I need to accomplish something I want to do
- You may frustrate me when you undermine my power or influence with someone else

Conceptualize:

Involves answering the questions, “What’s going on here?” – “Is it good or bad?” – “What’s the problem?” – What issues are at stake?” – “What are the causes?” This conceptualization may be almost instantaneous, or it may develop from considerable thought; it may be very sharp and clear, or fairly fuzzy. Regardless of its accuracy or clarity, however, the conceptualization forms the basis of one’s reaction to frustration.

- You may conceptualize a disagreement with another person as being the result of “ignorance” (on his part, of course) or “willful deceit” or you can stereotype: “that kind of person always takes that stand.”
- A labor dispute with management can be conceptualized as “deciding who is really going to run this plant” or “showing workers who can do the most for them” or simply “determining what a fair share of profits is for the workers.”

- A dispute between a marketing department and a production department can be conceptualized as determining whether “customers are more important than a production schedule,” or whether “sales people” should be expected to adhere to realistic company policies.”

Obviously, the way the parties define the problem has a great deal of influence over the chances for a constructive outcome and the kinds of feelings that will be mobilized during the confrontation.

Behaviors:

Behaviors and intentions flow out of conceptualization and strategizing and set in motion a pattern of interaction between the parties involved. During this process of action-reaction-reaction, the way each party conceptualizes the conflict may change or may become further entrenched. The longer the pattern continues, of course, the actions of the participants themselves may create new frustrations, reasons for hostility, and continued resistance.

Outcome:

Outcome is defined as the state of affairs that exists at the end of the episode, including decisions or actions taken and the feelings of the parties involved. Residual frustration from conflict episodes can start new conflict episodes. Some people have found it helpful to assess the outcome of a conflict episode along three dimensions:

1. The quality of decision or action that results. (How creative, realistic and practical?)
2. The condition of the conflicting parties at the end of the conflict. (How psychologically and physically healthy; how good do the parties feel about themselves?)
3. The quality of the relationship between the conflicting parties. (How much mutual respect, understanding, willingness to work together versus hostility, determination to hurt, etc.?)

Some Guidelines for Diagnosing a Conflict

The manner in which a conflict is conceptualized is often the key to a group’s ability to manage conflict constructively, i.e., to arrive at positive outcomes. The parties are not likely to reach an outcome which truly resolves the conflict and leaves them satisfied unless they have a clear understanding of the differences between the concerns of the two parties and the sources of those differences. Thus, before responding to a frustrating situation, it is useful to pause and ask two questions:

1. What is the nature of the differences between us?
2. What might be the reasons for our differences?

The Nature of the Differences

People may differ on the following four aspects of an issue:

- We may differ over **FACTS** (the present situation, the present problem, etc.)
- We may differ over **GOALS** (how things ought to be, future conditions we want)

- We may differ over **METHODS** to reach goals (the best, the easiest, the most economical, and the most ethical route to follow)
- We may differ over **VALUES** (the long-range beliefs about the priorities which should be observed in choosing goals and methods)

Differences over facts are usually easier to manage than differences over values, which are the most difficult. The latter come much closer to the fundamental beliefs of the parties and are thus much more threatening. Disagreements that begin over facts sometimes persist until they appear to be conflicts over goals or values and become almost impossible to reconcile.

The implication is that it pays to identify the area of disagreement as quickly as possible. The chances for managing conflict effectively increase if you can say something like: “We seem to agree on what the problem is and what we’d like to achieve, but we disagree over the best way to reach that goals.”

The Reasons for the Differences

As part of the conceptualizing process, it is useful not only to identify the nature of the difference, but to seek the reasons for it as well. Among the most common reasons are these:

Informational – The two parties have been exposed to different information – and thus have arrived at a different understanding of what the problem or issue is and what course of action makes the most sense.

Perceptual – Sometimes people have been exposed to the same data but their past experience causes them to interpret in different ways. Two witnesses may view the same event, but experience it in two different ways, since the past of each causes them to attend to different aspects of the same situation or to arrive at different meaning.

Role – Sometimes the different roles (e.g., boss, mother, volunteer) of people cause them to take different positions. The representatives of labor are expected to look at things differently, advocating different positions and priorities than the representatives of management. The roles of each cause them to attend to different data and to perceive it differently, as well as to advocate different goals and values.

Practical Values of This Analysis

What is the practical value of going through this kind of diagnostic process? Like solving any problem, the conflict problem-solver is likely to do a more effective job if he knows the parameters of the situation with which he is dealing. A key process in conflict is that of influence – the effort of each party to get the other to understand, appreciate, and accept the validity of its own particular points of view or sets of objectives. If parties want to influence each other, obviously it helps if they have a clear picture of where they stand and how they got there.

- If the two parties realize that they have probably been exposed to different data, they may view the job to be done as one of mutual education, rather than conflict. The task is to increase the pool of information to which both are privy.

- If the parties determine that their informational base is very similar, but they have just perceived it differently because of differing past experiences, these perceptions need to be reexamined. Then the question becomes: “Why is it that we view the same information in such different ways?”
- If the parties suspect that the principle reason for different views grows out of their different roles, they can often take a less personalized view of the conflict. If each can say, “If I were in his place, I would probably be advocating the same point of view,” they will deal with the other party in a somewhat different and more understanding way. The task then takes on an added dimension, e.g., “How can I help a person in that role better understand and appreciate my concern and what does he need from me?” By recognizing the constraints within which the other party must operate, you can be more realistic in knowing what to expect and what posture makes the most sense.

As soon as you are finished, reflect on the key issues, which seem important to you and be prepared to discuss them with the group

Policy Discussion Guide

THINK ABOUT ...

- Is it Consistent with *OUR VISION*?
- Does it Contribute to Achieving *OUR GOAL*?
- Is it a *RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CITY*?
- Does it *ADD VALUE TO CITIZEN'S LIVES*?
- Is it *BEST FOR OUR CITY*?

(AVOID STARTING WITH SOLUTIONS/ACTIONS)

FOCUS ON ...

1. Problem(s)
2. Issues/Concerns
3. Outcomes
4. Parameters/Guidelines for Policy Development
5. Expectations

Work Session – Typology

WORK SESSION TYPE I PRE-REPORT	WORK SESSION TYPE II DRAFT REPORTS	WORK SESSION TYPE III BRIEFING
<p>Provide direction and guidance on major issues before staff analysis and report preparation</p>	<p>Refine proposed reports and recommendations prior to formal presentation and action</p>	<p>Brief City Council on major issues, upcoming opportunities and operational matters</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>TOPICS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define the Problems 2. Identify Issues 3. Establish Parameters and Guidelines 4. Focus on Possible Outcomes 5. Outline Process and Possible Next Steps 6. Decide Whether or Not Worth Pursuing 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>TOPICS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Present Background Information 2. Review and Highlights of Analysis and Options 3. Review and Refine Recommendations 4. Finalize Desired Goals and Outcomes 5. Outline Next Steps 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>TOPICS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Present Background 2. Discuss Topics 3. Explore City's Role or Need for Action 4. Focus on Overall Policy Direction and Guidelines