Conflict-Resolution Skills Worksheet and Reference

The workplace can be filled with conflict. There can be conflict between employees and their bosses, coworkers, employees and customers, and between customers themselves. These are interpersonal relationships.

Whatever the cause, it is important to understand that there are techniques available to resolve conflicts.

As long as you realize that it is in your employer’s best interest to resolve conflicts as they occur and you are open and willing to do so, there is not a situation you cannot handle. But remember, negotiation relies on compromise, which means that you may not like or totally agree with the solution. The ultimate goal is peace rather than fairness or blame. That said, there is a limit as to what your management expects you to endure to solve these interpersonal issues. In extreme cases, you should be aware of those limits and what you should do once a coworker or customer takes you past them. But in most instances, you are expected to handle conflicts on your own.

Failure to resolve conflict can lead to punishment or even termination whereas successfully resolving conflicts can lead to promotion.

Provide examples for the following:

1. Conflict between an employee and a supervisor, manager, or boss:

As an employee, how would the business or company expect you to handle this situation?

2. Conflict between coworkers:

As an employee, how would the business or company expect you to handle this situation?

3. Conflict between customers and an employee:

As an employee, how would the business or company expect you to handle this situation?
4. Conflict between customers that affects the workplace:

As an employee, how would the business or company expect you to handle this situation?

5. From the company’s perspective, what is ultimately the benefit of resolving these conflicts (in each situation)?

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**Techniques for handling conflicts with difficult people**
(from University of California San Diego)

1. Be honest and direct. (Simplify the problem, but be respectful.)
2. Listen carefully. (Make sure you know the cause of the conflict or complaint.)
3. Avoid blaming. (But no hollow apologies, and don’t be condescending.)
4. Stay focused. (Try not to be distracted by smaller issues.)
5. Say less. (Let the other person do the talking.)

If a customer is being irrational, completely unreceptive to working with you, verbally abusive, or is threatening, follow workplace policy for dealing with him or her. If no policy exists, or if you are in business for yourself, it is time to think about a contingency plan.

**Conflict Management and Resolution Strategies for Small Businesses**
(from Houston Chronical online chron.com)

- **Five Types of Conflict Resolution Strategies** by Eric Dontigney
  - Accommodating
  - Avoiding
  - Collaborating
  - Compromising
  - Competing

- **Five Approaches to Conflict Resolution** by Vanessa Cross
  - Accommodating
  - Avoiding
  - Collaborating
  - Compromise
  - Confrontation

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Examples of Conflicts & Resolutions in the Workplace by David Ingram
Discrimination issues
Performance review conflicts
Conflicts with customers
Leadership conflicts

Ways of Managing Conflict in Organizations by David Ingram
Positive perspective
Grievance procedure
Get to the cause
Equal voices
Resolution participation