**Independent Banker**

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**Portfolio**

[tag] Leadership at All Levels

**[hed] 8 healthy habits for conflict resolution**

[body]

We're all different. We work differently, and we have different opinions, biases and values. Some of us thrive under pressure, while others shy away from confrontation. Put enough people together in the workplace, even the most harmonious one, and conflict is bound to happen from time to time.

It's never fun to address it, but conflict resolution is an essential leadership skill. Leaving a challenging situation to blow over—or worse, brushing it under the carpet—doesn't solve the underlying problem. Avoiding festering issues is bad for morale and therefore bad for the bank.

That’s why you need to train your team in conflict resolution, if possible, and set the tone as the leader of your organization. Try out these tips the next time you face a challenging situation.

**[subhed] 1. Stay calm**

Yes, this means taking that deep breath as needed! You have more control over your own reactions than you have over other people's actions. Switch to problem-solving mode, and keep your personal feelings out of the dispute.

**[subhed] 2. Think through all the issues in the conflict**

Break down the conflict’s issues by considering the needs of the individuals involved, the team’s needs and the bank's needs.

**[subhed] 3. Keep your focus**

Pay attention to the conflict at hand, not past ones. Dredging up the past isn’t going to help in most situations.

**[subhed] 4. Be an unbiased mediator**

If you are mediating a disagreement, make sure you don't take sides or that you could be seen as taking sides. If you feel like you can't be impartial, find a neutral party to mediate the situation.

**[subhed] 5. Keep lines of communication open**

Listen carefully and actively. Give everyone space to share their perspectives and describe their needs. Be patient with one another.

**[subhed] 6. Pay attention to phrasing and nonverbal cues**

When dealing with conflict, listen to the other person’s phrasing of words. Consider responding using their same phrasing. This demonstrates you were listening carefully. And if the person’s nonverbal cues or body language aren’t matching what is being said, ask for clarification to ensure the facts and feelings of the situation are shared openly.

**[subhed] 7. Look for common ground**

Do all parties in the conflict ultimately have the same goals? Find a way to pull them back to that place. Establishing agreement in goals before moving to resolution can help keep the resolution on track. Then, discuss options and take time for each party to sit with those options. In some instances, you’ll have to find a compromise. For example, if two team members want to take on the same role in a project, split the role into two and make them co-leaders, with slightly different focuses.

**[subhed] 8. Decompress as needed**

Have breaks in the discussion to help alleviate the tension. Give everyone room to breathe.

However you resolve the conflict, act quickly and stay positive. Set the tone for an open and transparent work environment, and encourage healthy discussions, even if getting through them can be painful at times!

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