A project professional’s guide to conflict management and resolution

Conflict management is a vital skill for project professionals; it’s the ability to challenge in a neutral and fair manner, persuade and find mutually acceptable positions.

Conflict in project teams usually happens when:
- there are disagreements over tasks
- team members and stakeholders have different values or opinions
- miscommunication and misunderstandings arise
- there’s uncertainty or different priorities in actions

Here are some common things to look out for:
- defensiveness instead of listening to others
- not wanting to collaborate
- direct challenges to decisions
- unexpected changes in the style of communication

How we manage conflict depends on they on our desire to meet our own needs vs the needs of others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desire to meet personal needs</th>
<th>Desire to meet the needs of others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compete</td>
<td>I win, you lose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate</td>
<td>I win, you win</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compromise</td>
<td>We both half win and half lose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid</td>
<td>I lose, you lose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodate</td>
<td>I lose, you win</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Six top tips for conflict resolution

1. Anticipate conflicts happening.
2. Don’t ignore a conflict.
3. Think about a resolution.
4. Encourage discussions.
5. Be a facilitator.

Brought to you by APM Learning