

Q: What's a Little Conflict?

A: Time and money.

By Jo DeMars

Research shows we spend 35 to 45% of our time dealing with conflict. That's a high cost to pay when you'd rather be devoting those resources to activities with tangible results, like production or marketing. What do you figure your time is worth? If one-third could be designated to activities you WANT do, what would be the impact on your bottom line?

Just picture some of the costs of unresolved conflict:

- Irresponsibility
- Uncertainty
- Paranoia
- Lost Control
- Prejudice
- Deceit
- Sabotage
- "Going Postal"

Many companies' unresolved conflict shows up as a lack of trust, confidence and the knowledge that people will back you up. Even the President can feel when the support isn't there. That hurt spreads right down the line if the head of operations isn't doing their best work. Let's face it, if your name is on the letterhead, you HAVE to work there.

Creativity, cooperation and synergy do not "just happen". They develop in climates of trustworthy relationships. Think how much more you could accomplish with cooperation and trust supporting you!

Take Action:

1. Take just five minutes to make a list of the sources of conflict you handle on a weekly basis. Is it internal or external?
2. Divide the list into two more categories – those you can do something about and those that are outside your control. Highlight what's within your own control.
3. Prioritize and identify three sources of conflict that have the greatest payoff for your company. Imagine what your day would be like with those problems solved.
4. Design an action strategy that can be implemented in simple, straightforward steps, with weekly deadlines. Define what you need to make it happen: more information, skills, a team partner, consultant, coach, trainer, etc.
5. Get that help and get going!

Copyright 2000, DeMars + Associates