Dealing with Difficult People

Presented by Nelnet Partner Solutions
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Agenda for Today’s Workshop

- Introductions
- Identifying your Personality/Communication Style
- Identifying the Personality/Communication Style of Others
- Understanding Difficult Behavior
- How to Deal with Different Personalities
- Do’s and Don’ts for Managing Difficult Interactions
- Suggestions for Solving Issues Effectively
- Conflict Management
Take a few minutes to complete this exercise before we proceed.
FINDING YOUR BEHAVIORAL STYLE

PASSIVE/DOMINANT AXIS

PLACE AN “X” ON THE PASSIVE/DOMINANT AXIS FOR EACH QUESTION. NOTE THE FIRST OPTION IS MORE PASSIVE.

- ARE YOU RELATIONSHIP – OR TASK-ORIENTED?
- ARE YOU PASSIVE OR AGGRESSIVE?
- ARE YOU EASY-GOING OR TAKE CHARGE?
- ARE YOU ACCEPTING OR CHALLENGING?
- ARE YOU SUBTLE OR DIRECT?
- ARE YOU QUIET OR TALKATIVE?
- ARE YOU AN INTROVERT OR EXTROVERT?

FORMAL/INFORMAL AXIS

PLACE AN “X” ON THE FORMAL/INFORMAL AXIS FOR EACH QUESTION. NOTE THE FIRST OPTION IS MORE FORMAL.

- ARE YOU DISCIPLINED OR SPONTANEOUS?
- ARE YOU RESERVED OR FUN-LOVING?
- DO YOU WITHHOLD FEELINGS OR EXPRESS THEM?
- ARE YOU CAUTIOUS OR IMPULSIVE?
- ARE YOU COOL OR WARM?
- ARE YOU ORGANIZED OR UNORGANIZED?
The Personality Matrix

- Identifying Your Personality
- Supporter
- Promoter
- Analytic
- Controller
- Any Surprises?
Supporter

- Characteristics
- Advantages
- Pitfalls
Recognizing Supporters

- Slow at making decisions
- Likes close, personal relationships
- Avoids conflict
- Good listeners
- Seeks security
- Works at a steady pace
- Responsive to others ideas, tries to be fair
What Do Supporters Want?

- Motivated by stability
- People Oriented
- Often perceived as stubborn
- Demonstrates patience
- Specializes
- Concentrates on task
- Listens well
- Calms excited people
- Performs accepted work pattern
- Fears change
Recognizing Analytic Style

- Cautious actions and decisions
- Likes organization and structure
- Asks questions, wants detail, relies on data
- Wants intellectual, task-oriented work
- Wants to be right
- Thrifty with time, money
- Works slowly and precisely alone
What do Analytics Want?

- Motivated by logic, details
- Attends to key directives
- Concentrates on detail – task oriented
- Works best under known conditions
- Diplomatic with people
- Checks for accuracy
- Thinks critically
- Critiques performance
- Complies with authority
- Often perceived as unemotional
- Fears criticism, being wrong
Recognizing Promoter Style

- Very expressive and spontaneous
- Likes involvement with others
- Dislikes being alone
- Exaggerates and generalizes
- Seeks harmony
- Makes quick decisions
- Wants to belong and have fun!
- Energetic, flexible and charming
Promoters - What They Want

- Motivated by recognition
- Likes people contact – People oriented
- Makes favorable impression
- Verbalizes, articulates
- Motivates
- Generates enthusiasm
- Entertains – Often perceived as flighty
- Wants to help
- Participates in Groups
- Fears loss of influence
Recognizing Controller Style

- Decisive actions and decisions
- Needs freedom to manage himself and others
- Cool, keeps emotions to himself
- Competitive, independent
- Believes in “time and place” for personal problems
- Efficient, competent
What do Controller Styles Want?

- Motivated by time
- Gets immediate results – Task oriented
- Causes action – Problem solver
- Accepts challenges
- Makes quick decisions
- Questions status quo
- Takes authority/control
- Often perceived as rude
- Fears being taken advantage of
Understanding Difficult Behavior

- People have different motivations
- People have different needs
- People communicate difficult issues differently
- People have different fears
How to Deal with Different Personalities

- The “Sherman Tank”
- The “Exploder”
- The “Complainer”
- The “Clam”
- The “Wet Blanket”
- The “Know-It-All”
- The “Staller”
How They Behave

- **“Sherman Tank”** – Attack, abusive, intimidating and contemptuous manner
- **“The Exploder”** – Temper tantrum. Outbursts filled with rage. Can lose control
- **“The Complainer”** – Finds fault with everything
- **“The Clam”** – The silent one, a grunt, or just responds yes or no
- **“The Wet Blanket”** – Responds with a quick or negative response. “It won’t work”
- **“The Know It All”** – The expert on all matters
- **“The Staller”** – Habitually indecisive
Sherman Tank

- Stand up to them but don’t get into a fight – Don’t argue
- Give them time to run down
- Get your point across any reasonable way you can
- Get them to sit down and discuss the problem
- Maintain eye contact
- State your opinions forcefully and without apology
- Don’t try to cut them down
- Be ready to be friendly and receptive to negotiation
The Exploder

- Get them to wind down and then switch to problem solving mode of interaction
- Give them time to run down and gain self control
- If they don’t, shouting a neutral phrase such as “Stop” or “Quiet, please!”
- Show that you take them and their concerns seriously
- Active listening
- If necessary, suggest moving to private setting for further discussion
The Complainer

- Insist that issues be handled in a problem solving manner
- Listen to their complaints even if you feel guilty or impatient
- Acknowledge, paraphrase to ensure perceptions are correct
- Don’t agree with or apologize for their complaints
- Avoid the accusation-defense-re-accusation pattern
- State the facts without comment
- Try to move to problem solving mode by asking specific questions, assigning fact-finding tasks, or asking for certain complaints to be put down in writing
- If all else fails, ask the Complainer “How do you want the discussion to end?”
The Clam

- Get them to open up and begin to discuss what they want or what’s bothering them
- Ask open-ended questions
- Wait for a response
- Do not fill the silence with chatter
- Plan for extra time
- Ask more open-ended questions if no response
- Comment on what is happening in the interaction
- Develop your skills in eye contact
The Wet Blanket

- Engage them in rational problem solving without getting drawn into the negativism or pessimism
- Make optimistic but realistic statements about past successes in handling similar problems
- Don’t try to argue out of their pessimism
- Don’t offer solutions until problem has been thoroughly discussed
- When alternatives are being discussed, raise questions—offer consequences or outcomes
- View the negativism as problems that can be solved
- Be prepared to take action on your own – Develop plan
The Know-it-All

- Get them to consider alternatives without directly challenging their alleged expertise
- Do your Homework – They want details
- Listen and paraphrase
- Don’t be dogmatic or over-generalize
- Be tentative in any disagreements - Raise questions
- Ask exploratory questions
- Watch out for your own ”Know-it-all” responses
- As a last resort, choose to give in, in order to avoid protracted conflict and build a relationship
The Staller

- Recognize that this is their preferred method of problem solving
- Attempt to engage them in problem solving
- Don’t take on their problems yourself
- Listen for issues and create problem solving solutions
- If reservations involve you, acknowledge past problem and then proceed with problem solving
- Concentrate on examining the facts of the situation
- Give support for any decision they can offer
- Delineate who is responsible for what in resolving problem
Exercise – Conflict Questionnaire

- Twenty Questions
- Scoring
- Conflict Management Strategies
- Five Basic Methods for Resolving Conflict
- Managing Conflict
Five Basic Methods for Resolving Conflict

- Withdrawal
- Smoothing
- Forcing
- Compromise
- Collaboration
Withdrawal

- Neither the goal nor the relationship are important to you
- You withdraw from interaction
Withdrawal Method for Resolving Conflict

- **What Happens When Used:**
  - Person Tries to Solve Problem by Denying Its Existence

- **Appropriate to Use When:**
  - Issue is Relatively unimportant; timing is wrong; cooling off is needed

- **Inappropriate to Use When:**
  - Issue is important; when issue will not disappear but build
Smoothing

- The relationship is more important than the goal
- You want to be liked and accepted
Smoothing Method for Resolving Conflict

♦ What Happens When Used:
  - Differences are played down; surface harmony exists. Results in win/lose resentment situation

♦ Appropriate to Use When:
  - Issue relatively unimportant, also when preservation of the relationship is more important at the moment

♦ Inappropriate to Use When:
  - Reluctance to deal with conflict lead to evasion of an important issue; when others are ready and willing to deal with issue
Forcing

- The goal is important but not the relationship.
- Use all your energy to get the job done
Forcing Method for Resolving Conflict

♦ What Happens When Used:
  - One’s authority, position, majority rule, or a persuasive minority settles the conflict. Results in win/lose if the dominated party see no hope for self

♦ Appropriate to Use When:
  - When power comes with position of authority; when this method has been agreed upon

♦ Inappropriate to Use When:
  - Losers have no way to express needs; could result in future disruptions
Compromise

- Both goals and relationships are important - but there is a lack of time
- You both gain and lose something
Compromise Method for Resolving Conflict

- **What Happens When Used:**
  - Each party gives us something in order to midway. Results in win/lose if differences aren’t recognized

- **Appropriate to Use When:**
  - Both parties have enough leeway to give; resources are limited; when win/lose stance is undesirable

- **Inappropriate to Use When:**
  - Original inflated position is unrealistic; solution is watered down to be effective; commitment is doubted by parties involved
Collaboration

- Goals and relationships are equally important
- You define the conflict as a problem solving situation
Collaboration Method of Resolving Conflict

- What Happens When Used:
  - Abilities, values, and expertise of all are recognized; each person’s position, is clear but emphasis is on group solution. Results in win/win for all

- Appropriate to Use When:
  - Time is available to complete the process; parties are committed and trained in use of the process

- Inappropriate to Use When:
  - The conditions of time, abilities, and commitment are not present
Questions?

- Your HR office is always available to work with you
- Confidentiality