

# Navigating Workplace Conflict

Presented by  
IMA Leadership Academy

Lisa Book, CMA, CSCA, CFM

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The Association of  
Accountants and  
Financial Professionals  
in Business



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Q&A

Asking Questions



Participant Quick Guide



Help



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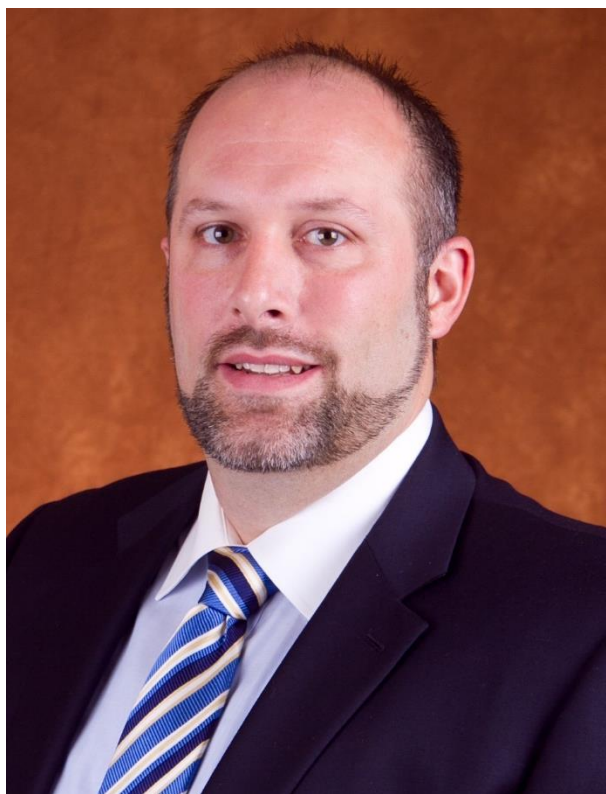
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### Criteria for Full Credit

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# Moderator



**JP Stearns, Ph.D., CMA, CPA**  
**Assistant Professor of Accounting**  
**Eastern Kentucky University**  
**President**  
**IMA Blue Grass Area Chapter**

# Featured Presenter



**Lisa Book, CMA, CSCA, CFM**

**Lecturer in Accounting**

**Indiana University Southeast**

**Past President**

**IMA Lincoln Trail Council**

**Past President**

**IMA Louisville Chapter**

**Member**

**IMA Global Board of Directors**

# Lisa Book's Biography

- Lisa Book, CMA, CFM, CSCA is a Lecturer in Accounting at Indiana University Southeast, where she also earned her B.S. degree in Accounting and her M.B.A. She was honored with 2018 Innovation in Business Education Award by MidAmerican Business Deans Association (MABDA) for “A Business Approach to Improving Outcomes in Introductory Accounting Courses.”
- Prior to joining the faculty at IU Southeast, Lisa had a 15-year career in corporate accounting that included working for manufacturers FireKing Security Group and Kimball International, as well as not-for-profit Goodwill Industries.
- Lisa is a past president of IMA's Louisville Chapter and Lincoln Trail Council. She currently serves on IMA's Global Board of Directors and is the Chair of the board's Volunteer Leadership Committee for 2020-2021. Lisa is also a member of IMA's Leadership Academy Faculty.

# Objectives

After this session, attendees will be able to:

- ▶ Define conflict and conflict management.
- ▶ Recognize different approaches to conflict and determine when each is appropriate.
- ▶ Identify causes of workplace conflict.
- ▶ List the benefits conflict provides.
- ▶ Identify strategies for dealing with conflict.
- ▶ Evaluate your conflict performance.



# What is Conflict?

Tension resulting from forces acting in opposition to each other.

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Disagreement with *strong* emotions which causes us to stop listening.



# What is Conflict Management?

Method of reprocessing  
tension and disagreements

Search for areas of agreement

Identifying facts to support agreement





***“Peace is not absence of conflict, it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means.”***

**— Ronald Reagan**

***“I exhort you also to take part in the great combat, which is the combat of life, and greater than every other earthly conflict.”***

**— Plato**



# Benefits of Conflict

- ▶ Increasing effectiveness, efficiency and productivity
- ▶ Achieving both organizational and individual goals
- ▶ Stimulating and generating growth and learning in performance improvements.



# Polling Question 1

What benefit of conflict have you most recently experienced within your organization?

- a) Increasing effectiveness, efficiency and productivity
- b) Achieving both organizational and individual goals
- c) Stimulating and generating growth and learning in performance improvements
- d) None of the above, at least not yet

# Polling Question 1 Results (Placeholder)

# More Benefits of Constructive Conflict

- ▶ Opens up issues of importance
- ▶ Results in clarification
- ▶ Questions assumptions
- ▶ Results in solutions to problems
- ▶ Increases individual involvement in issues of importance to them
- ▶ Causes authentic communication to occur
- ▶ Serves as release for pent-up emotions, anxiety, stress
- ▶ Helps build cohesiveness through learning more about each other
- ▶ Helps people grow personally



# Categories of Organizational Conflict

- ▶ Multiple role conflict
- ▶ Scarce resources
- ▶ Differing values or priorities
- ▶ Differing perceptions of the problem
- ▶ Insecurity / personal needs



# Polling Question 2

What do you find is the primary source of conflict in your workplace?

- a) Receiving conflicting information or instructions from different people.
- b) People being protective of their personal “turf.”
- c) Dealing with incompetence or lack of motivation with your co-workers.
- d) Other departments having differing objectives than your own.

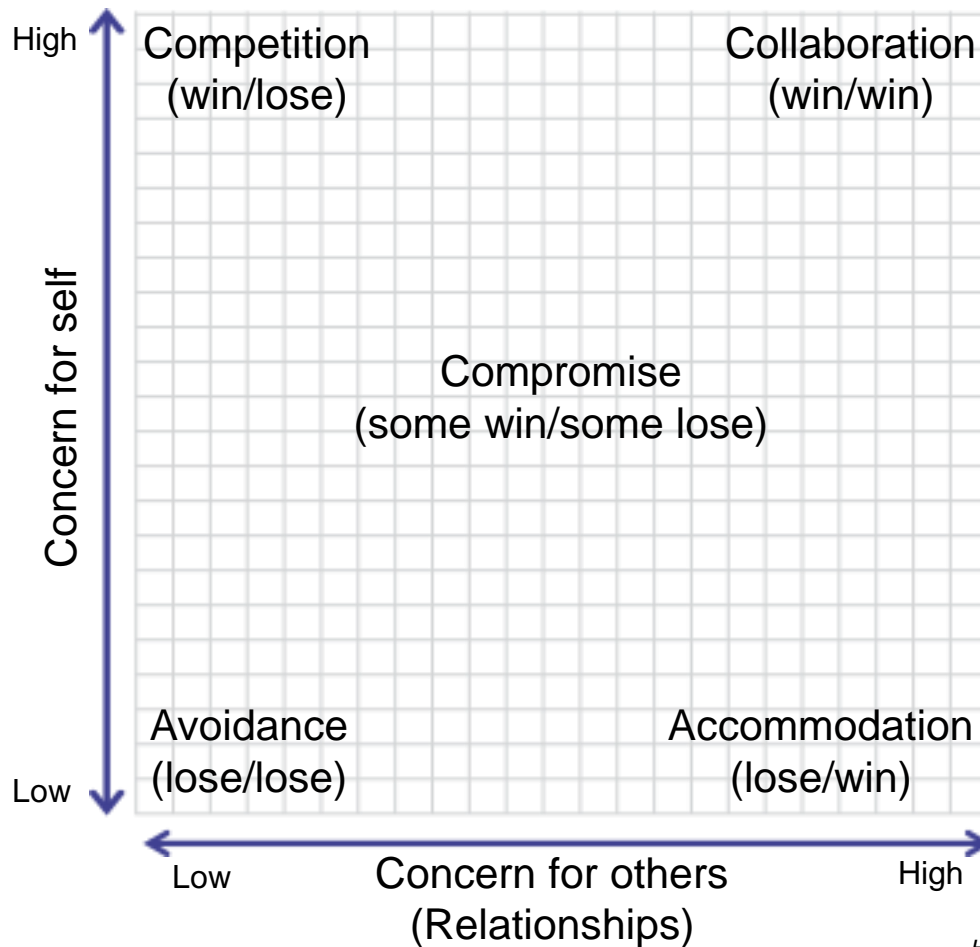
# Polling Question 2 Results (Placeholder)



# Factors Contributing to Workplace Conflict



# Approaches to Conflict



Kilmann, Ralph and Thomas, Kenneth "Interpersonal Conflict – Handling Behavior as Reflection of Jungian Personality Dimensions." *Psychological Reports*. 37, 1975, pp. 971-980.

# Polling Question 3

What is your most usual conflict style?

- a) Accommodation
- b) Avoidance
- c) Collaboration
- d) Competition
- e) Compromise

# Polling Question 3 Results (Placeholder)

# When to Use Each Conflict Style

## OK

## Not OK

### Competition

- Quick decision, action is needed
- This style has been agreed upon

- An on-going relationship will be jeopardized
- It could result in future conflicts

### Accommodation

- Preservation of the relationship is more important at the moment

- It serves to evade an important issue

### Avoidance

- The issue is relatively unimportant
- A cooling off period is needed

- Others are ready to deal with the issue
- The issue is important

### Compromise

- Win/lose is undesirable
- Both parties have enough leeway to give
- Temporary solutions are sought for complex issues

- The solution is too watered down to be effective
- The parties to the conflict doubt each other's commitment

### Collaboration

- The parties are committed to the resolution
- Time is available to complete the process

- Time, abilities, and commitment are not present

# Tips for Dealing with Other Conflict Styles

## Competitors

- Encourage the competitor to elaborate on his or her position
- Agree and elaborate
- Stand up for yourself without fighting

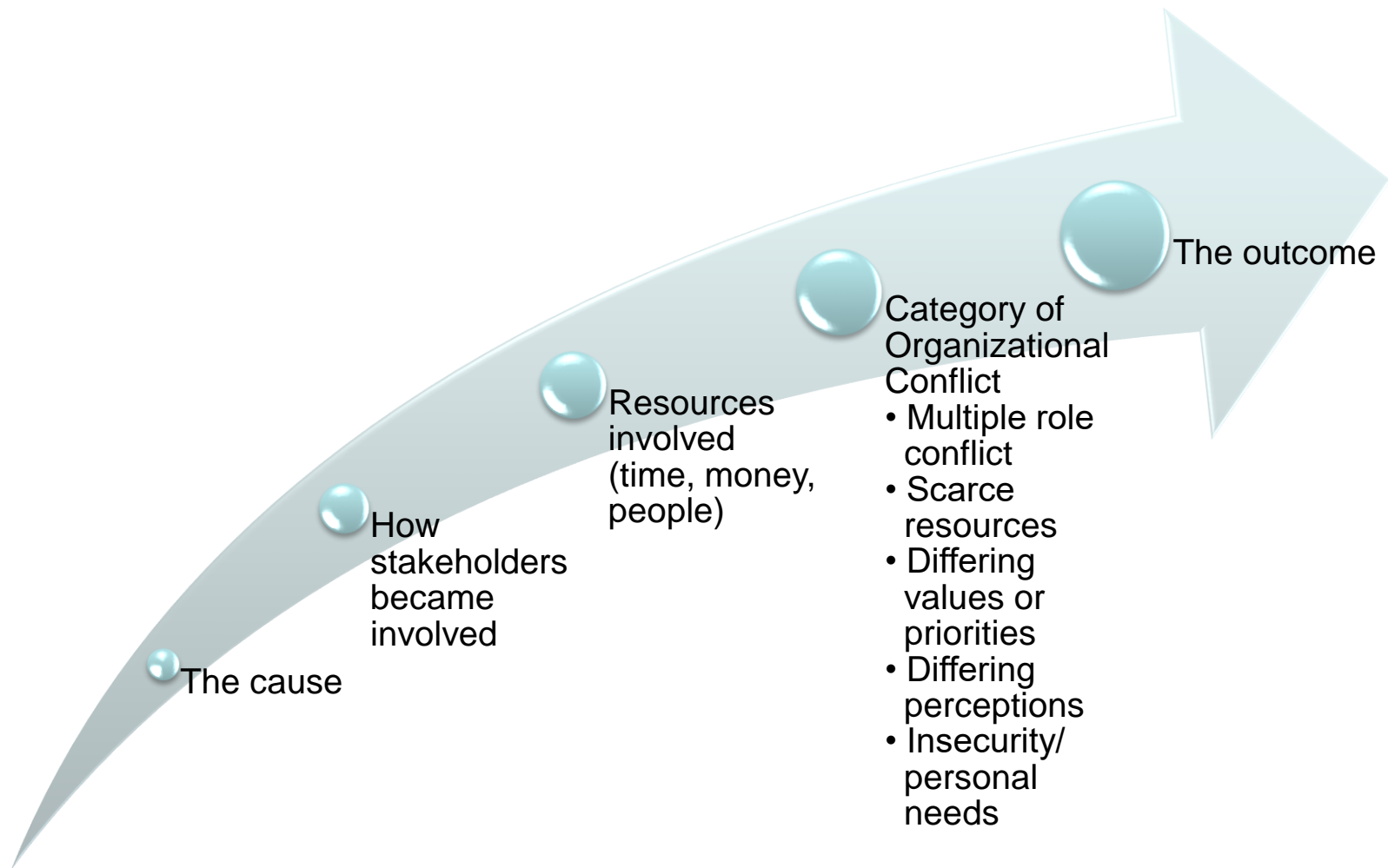
## Accommodators

- Make accommodations undesirable
- Surface the issues
- Level with Accommodators

## Avoiders

- Ask open-ended questions
- Use a friendly, silent stare
- Level with the Avoider

# Components of a Conflict



# Mistakes to Avoid in Dealing with Conflict

- ▶ Defensiveness/reacting
- ▶ Placating
- ▶ Forgetting that understanding is not agreeing
- ▶ Mismatched verbal and nonverbal behaviors
- ▶ Failing to listen appropriately
- ▶ Focusing on details instead of core problem
- ▶ Failing to reflect back what the person is saying
- ▶ Not utilizing the 100 + 1% principle
- ▶ Putting your but in the wrong place





# Categories of Difficult People

- ▶ Hostile / Aggressive
- ▶ Indecisive
- ▶ Complainer
- ▶ Negativist
- ▶ Silent / Unresponsive
- ▶ Know-it-all Expert
- ▶ Super Agreeable
- ▶ Addicted / Compulsive



# Polling Question 4

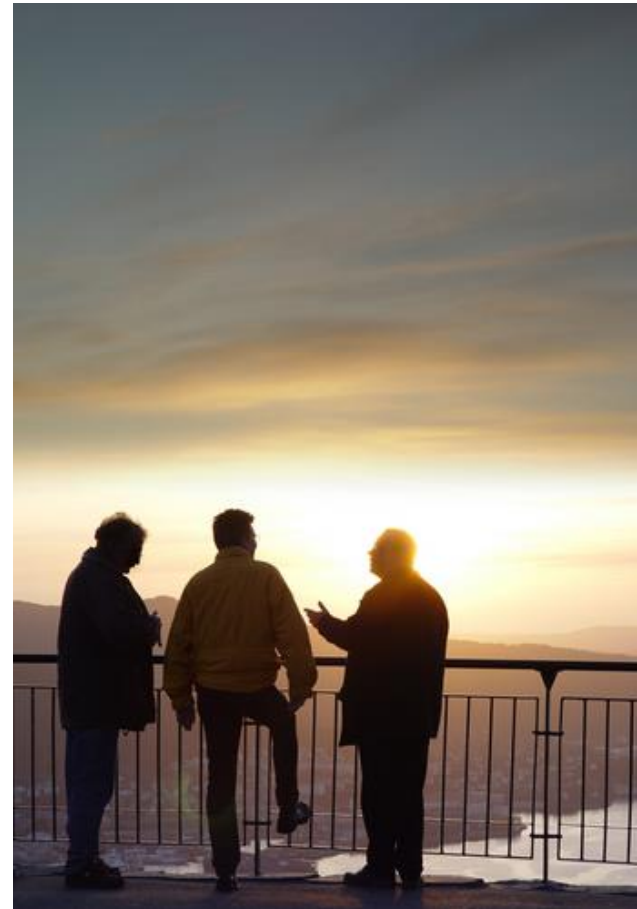
How do you usually cope with difficult people?

- a) Try to avoid them.
- b) Try to trigger them to see what happens.
- c) Try to get them moved to another department.
- d) Confront them and establish ground rules.
- e) Look for the good in their behavior.

# Polling Question 4 Results (Placeholder)

# Ways to Deal with Negative or Angry People

- ▶ Don't react
- ▶ Listen
- ▶ Acknowledge what was said
- ▶ Ask a clarifying question
- ▶ Repeat back
- ▶ Expand upon what was said
- ▶ Offer to explore solutions
- ▶ Establish boundaries



# I vs. You Statements



I

- Is assertive
- Assumes responsibility for my feelings
- Acknowledges my needs
- Focuses attention on the problem



You

- Is passive or aggressive
- Blames others for my feelings
- Denies my own needs
- Focuses attention on the other person

# “You” Statement Rewrites

- ▶ You never let me know the priorities around here.
  - I would like to know the priorities here.
  - I feel shut out because I don’t know the priorities around here.
  - I feel excluded when I am not asked to sit in on the staff meetings and then I don’t know the priorities for the office
  
- ▶ You promised to have the report to me yesterday, and you still don’t have it done.
  - I am concerned that I haven’t received the report.
  - I would like to get a copy of the report you’ve been working on, and to know its status.
  - I know we talked about completing the report yesterday. What can I do to help complete it?



# “You” Statement Rewrites (continued)

- ▶ You better stop yelling at me if you want me to help.
  - I feel anxious when you yell at me. Let’s sit down together and work this out.
  - I am willing to help you, and I know we’ll both do a better job if we’re calm.
  
- ▶ You don’t treat me well.
  - I am really frustrated by the way I am treated, and I would like to be treated with respect and courtesy.
  - I feel hurt by the way you treat me.



# Polling Question 5

What approach would you take when managing conflict between two of your subordinates?

- a) Tell them they need to talk amongst themselves and resolve their conflict.
- b) Speak with them individually to get to the root of their issue.
- c) Speak with their colleagues to gain perspective from uninvolved parties.
- d) Meet with both employees together and give each a chance to state their viewpoint. Then make a decision on their conflict and ask them to revise their behaviors accordingly.



# Polling Question 5 Results (Placeholder)

# Steps to Manage Conflict



# Top 10 Points about Workplace Conflict

1. Conflict is a tension that results from forces acting in opposition to each other, creating strong emotions that prevent one or more of the forces from listening to each other.
2. Conflict Management is a method of reprocessing conflict's tension into an energetic search for areas of agreement or for facts which will support agreement. This process creates new ideas and helps those involved solve issues while maintaining the team.
3. Managing, directing, and using conflict can be a positive by increasing effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity; achieving both organizational and individual goals; and stimulating and generating growth and learning in performance improvements.
4. Five categories of organizational conflict include multiple role conflict, scarce resources, differing values or priorities, differing perceptions of the problem, and insecurity/personal needs.
5. Each of the five conflict styles reflects different attitudes towards conflict. No one style is better or more effective than the others. Each is effective in certain situations. The trick is to be flexible and use the style that is most appropriate for the conflict situation.

# Top 10 Points about Workplace Conflict (continued)

6. Analyzing the five components of a conflict — the cause of the conflict, how stakeholders became involved, resources involved, the category of organizational conflict, and the outcome — helps to improve conflict management skills.
7. To deal with conflict effectively, avoid defensiveness, reacting and placating; remember that understanding is not agreeing; ask for verbal and nonverbal behaviors to match; listen appropriately; focus on the core problem rather than the details; reflect back what the person is saying; utilize the 100 + 1% principle; and put your but in the right place.
8. When dealing with angry or negative people, it is a good idea to not react, to listen, to acknowledge what was said, to ask clarifying questions, to repeat back and expand upon what was said, to offer to explore solutions, and to establish boundaries.
9. Using "I" statements empowers you to more quickly address the situation and then move forward to find a solution.
10. The six steps for managing conflict include focusing on the organization's vision and goals, clarifying roles and responsibilities, empowering employees to solve problems, clarifying perceptions of the issue, making mutual-benefit agreements, and maintaining a sense of humor.

# 3-2-1 Reflection

Reflect on what you've learned today

3 specific things I learned  
or was reminded about

2 specific new strategies  
I will use to navigate  
workplace conflict

1 new thing I will  
try tomorrow



# Questions & Answers

*Use the Q & A Panel to send your questions to our panelists.*



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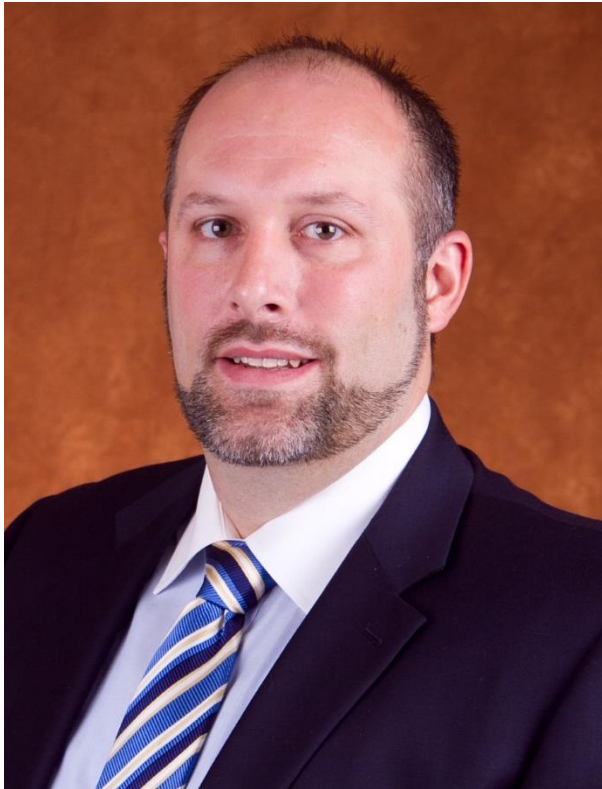
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# Thank You to Our Moderator!



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# Final Reminders

- ▶ **Complete the Evaluation poll – 2 Options**
  - On your screen
  - Click the “Evaluation Survey” icon at the bottom of your screen.
- ▶ **Access to your CPE Certificate – 2 Options**
  - Click the “CPE” icon at the bottom of your console  
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