



Conflict Management: A Win-Win Leadership Skill

Maybe you've got a coworker with whom you just don't jell. A workplace change may have thrown your office into turmoil. Perhaps a feisty colleague's confrontational style causes trouble.

These and other situations create conflict – and it isn't pretty. Tension-creating conflict is counter-productive, unhealthy and unavoidable. It looks like arguing, misrepresentation, or passive/aggressive behavior. People avoid certain people or situations because of it.

"Conflict in any form poses tough challenges to businesses and relationships," says Kaie Pohi Latterner, president and founder, TEC, Inc. "When conflict is not managed, it drains energy, feeds doubt, creates unproductive 'buzz,' and reduces trust in co-workers and the organization. It sows costly seeds of discontent among employees.

"But when properly managed and controlled," she continues, "conflict presents opportunities to grow and develop."

Kaie says conflict management can actually help solve several organizational concerns and avoid a boatload of others.



Kaie Pohi Latterner
President, TEC, Inc.

"The resolution of one issue can lead to the examination and resolution of related issues that need attention," she explains. "The result? Clarity, progress and a positive environment."

Conflict management also can prevent stagnation by stimulating interest and motivation, and fostering creativity. It

makes financial sense because, with reduced conflict, the work environment becomes more productive. Employee stress and sick time may drop, fewer conflicts escalate into lawsuits, and lasting solutions are created.

Managing Conflict Takes Skills

Conflict management must be handled well; if it's not, morale problems can ensue. A team atmosphere is disrupted, leading to a loss of respect for a supervisor/manager/leader. Turnover can increase.

How you handle conflict can determine your success as a leader in every aspect of your life.

Learn and Use Good Skills

"Everyone can use good conflict management skills for themselves or to help others become more productive and



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- **TEC at Retail Systems 2003**
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TECHniques

Make Better Business Presentations

1. Know your message and really *believe* it.
2. Establish and maintain eye contact.
3. Relax! Be yourself and believe *in* yourself.
4. Use humor to reinforce your messages.
5. Have a strong opening *and* a strong finish.
6. Do more than is expected.
7. Involve your audience with mental tasks, physical movement or written assignments.
8. Style matters – find one that works for you.
9. Finish on time, never late, no matter what!

Source: Larry Winget's *Just Do This Stuff*

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satisfied on the job and at home,” says Kaie. She shares the following steps to help you successfully resolve conflict:

1. Realize that some conflict is healthy.

View conflict as an opportunity for you to grow and develop into the best person and leader you can be. Determine whether the conflict is something small enough to live with or if it will fester into a larger problem if not addressed.

2. Check your emotional involvement while dealing with the conflict.

Being too emotionally involved will cloud your judgment and objectivity. Try to depersonalize the situation, if possible. Consider waiting 24 hours before dealing with the conflict to prepare what you want to say and “cool off” if necessary.

3. Look beyond what the person(s) is saying or doing.

Determine underlying feelings and issues. You need to be able to see beyond immediate emotions and find the “real” source of the conflict.

TEC offers many management workshops, including several that teach conflict management and resolution skills. For more info, call TEC at 727-391-9232.

4. Approach the person(s) involved in the conflict in a neutral setting.

Meet in a neutral setting. State your concern with the conflict. Determine if you

can solve it together. Pay close attention to the other person’s behavioral changes and adjust accordingly. Together you might decide to involve a neutral third party to help resolve matters.

5. Define the conflict with the person(s) involved.

Be sure you are stating the actual cause of the conflict and not focusing the discussion on accompanying and

usually quite unpleasant behaviors (such as rudeness, raised voices, avoidance and lying).

6. Determine what outcome is desired and ensure that all involved parties agree.

All parties must mutually agree on the outcome to avoid a recurrence of the same conflict later.

7. Brainstorm various alternatives to resolving the conflict.

Creative thinking can lead to better ideas/solutions than those originally developed. Be flexible and willing to look at all sides of an idea.



8. Evaluate each solution.

What is the risk to each? Is it a win/win answer? Is it feasible within the existing conditions? Will it achieve the defined outcome?

9. Select a solution and ensure a commitment is made to each other.

This will ensure that the involved parties will work hard to take the steps necessary to resolve the situation. A mutual commitment will become a high priority to both of you.

10. Evaluate the situation at a later date.

If the conflict has been resolved, celebrate with each other. If the conflict is still not resolved, don’t give up! Go back to step 9 and try another solution.

“By following these conflict management and resolution steps,” says Kaie, “you and your teammates will be able to overcome any challenge and work together as a winning team!” •

News and Notes: TEC News from Coast to Coast

TEC Busy with New Client Activity TEC and ProfitLogic recently completed training at Old Navy, a division of Gap, Inc., and are currently working at The Home Depot®. We also are in the process of completing a series of training and documentation projects for Minnesota-based EcoWater Systems, a worldwide leader in the residential, commercial and industrial water industry.

We’re back on KCCO-AM Airwaves! TEC’s broadcast interviews on KCCO-AM in the Twin Cities last year were so successful that the business news and information radio station asked us back for another dozen

spots this year. TEC’s experts will again share business etiquette tips and performance improvement suggestions now through October at 950-AM.

NRF Session a Hit TEC’s “Systems Integrations: The SECRET Formula for Success” educational session was a big success at NRF’s BIG Show in January. Retailers and industry media learned about TEC’s “human factor” philosophy and client experiences. •



Visit www.TECconsultants.com

Introducing: Judy Wallace

When we at TEC say our consultants are “professionals steeped in retail and business experience,” *believe us.*

A terrific example of such a professional is Judy Wallace, whose multi-layered background is a great addition to TEC’s team.

An Ohio native, Judy completed her M.B.A. in Marketing from the University of Cincinnati. She started her retail career at



Judy Wallace

Gold Circle stores as an assistant buyer before moving to NCR as an account manager.

A promotion to handle NCR’s large retail accounts took Judy to Minnesota, where she met longtime friend Kaie Pohi

Latterner in 1981. Judy later joined the former Ernst and Young as a retail consultant who identified system needs and focused on the user/people side of technology – a hallmark of TEC’s operating philosophy.

Judy then crossed the Atlantic to live in Amsterdam and Paris to work for Bull (formerly Honeywell

Information Systems in the U.S.) as marketing manager for a software product geared to large hypermarket and supermarket retailers in western Europe.

Back in the U.S., Judy taught college-level courses in global management and cross-cultural business. Last year she began working with TEC in a marketing and sales capacity to help develop new business.

“My work for TEC includes exploring potential software vendor alliance relationships and helping identify new clients,” explains Judy. Her efforts contributed greatly to TEC’s recently announced alliance with ProfitLogic.

“I also enjoy TEC’s integrity and its genuine personal touch with its consultants and clients,” says this New Englander. “TEC never waivers from maintaining high standards in the quality and delivery of its services and in the highly professional way it conducts business.

“For me,” adds Judy, “work is about creating relationships in which everybody benefits. I take great satisfaction in doing things that help TEC grow.” •

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Client Connection: TEC and ProfitLogic

TEC spoke recently with Steve Leven, Vice President, Client Solutions, ProfitLogic, about our recently formed training alliance.

TEC: Describe the TEC and ProfitLogic association.

Leven: ProfitLogic is the leading solution provider in the fastest growing segment of the retail software market – merchandise optimization. Retailers are very interested in Pricing4Profit (P4P), our flagship markdown optimization solution. P4P helps retailers make better pricing and inventory clearance decisions because it has a compelling value proposition that can be realized within the first season of use, which is typically 3-6 months.

User training and cultural integration of our solutions are critical to the realization of these benefits. Our relationship with TEC allows us to complement our implementations with a world-class partner who focuses on enabling our customers to use our solutions as quickly and effectively as possible.

TEC: How does TEC contribute to your customers’ satisfaction with your RMO solutions?

Leven: Our retail customers evaluate the world in a binary way. They ask: “Was it a good implementation?” and “Is the software working?” We pride ourselves in

exceeding their expectations. TEC operates the same way – their client service philosophy is completely in sync with ours.

TEC: What are your customers telling you about TEC’s work?

Leven: The feedback we’ve received has been very positive.

TEC: What does TEC “bring to the table” that other vendors don’t or can’t?

Leven: TEC’s extensive retail software training knowledge shows in its people. Its consultants have experience as retailers and as professional trainers. They can relate directly to our customers because they have walked in their shoes. TEC consultants also know that, in any implementation, we are competing for “mind share” because of the many other technology initiatives going on in retail companies today.

TEC: Describe TEC’s work with your customer The Home Depot.

Leven: TEC helped us develop a training program for



Steve Leven

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Addressing the human side of your training and systems integration needs.

TEC to Conduct Technology Briefing and Exhibit at Retail Systems 2003

Professionals with Aldata, BearingPoint, BLT Soft, The Home Depot, Marketmax and TEC will share the stage at “Systems Integrations: Partnering for Success,” TEC’s free Pre-show Technology Briefing at Retail Systems 2003 this June in Chicago.



This “must-attend” session is set for **Monday, June 9**, from **8:30 a.m.-12 noon**. It’s for retail executives, IT and business project managers, software providers, system integrators, trainers, and change

management and technology consultants interested in maximizing partner relationships. It will brim with valu-

able ideas, tools and solutions that work.

Aided by TEC’s Kaie Pohl Latterner, the event’s panel of experienced professionals will offer real-life stories of their work with multiple resources on large-scale systems integrations. They’ll also conduct a lengthy Q&A session.

Be sure to visit TEC consultants at booth **#833** on the show’s exhibit floor June 10-12. We’ll energize, inspire and prepare you to find partners who will help you successfully complete your systems integration puzzle!

Visit www.TECconsultants.com for more information. Or, register today at www.retailsystems.com. •



TEC and ProfitLogic, from page 3

the core users of our Pricing4Profit solution at the Home Depot. These users are very senior merchants who are responsible for hundreds of millions of dollars of seasonal merchandise. Because this critical and initial group of users has a demanding “day job,” our training program for them had to be very efficient and targeted.

So far, the feedback has been positive and TEC has been recognized as a value-added contributor to the implementation. We are now preparing to roll the training out to the remaining seasonal department merchants.

TEC: Has the relationship between PL and TEC grown?

Leven: Yes. We started working with TEC on the

development of our own core training materials and then retained TEC as our training delivery partner for Old Navy, a division of Gap, Inc., and The Home Depot.

Customers today want to know that their decision to spend millions of dollars on software and implementation services will deliver on its promise.

ProfitLogic’s and TEC’s best-of-breed capabilities, combined with our shared

focus on customer success, translate to successful implementations, value delivery and satisfied customers.

Companies that work well together typically share the same value system. That’s the case with TEC and ProfitLogic: We share the same goals. We have had some great successes together, and we plan on having a whole lot more. •