INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

Overview	Aim	Recommended time to spend
This tool enables a design team to become aware of common issues that may lead to conflict and consider how they would resolve conflict should they occur.	• To raise awareness of common conflicts in design teams • To enable a team to devise an approach to resolve conflict	30 mins

Resolving Conflicts

How to Implement

Ideally, the exercise should be used after a team has been formed, so they can develop their approach to resolving conflict. It is suggested that this exercise is used in the following way:

1. Have students sit together in their groups and provide each group with the student exercise.

2. Explain the background to conflict in a team by highlighting:

• A major advantage a team has over an individual is its diversity of resources, knowledge, and ideas. However, diversity also produces conflict. When individuals come together in teams there are differences in terms of power, values and attitudes, and social factors all contribute to the creation of conflict. It is often difficult to expose the sources of conflict.

• Conflict [1] can arise due to

Communication factors (listening skills; insufficient sharing of information; differences in interpretation and perception)

Organisational factors (organisation, levels of participation)

Personal factors (individual's self-esteem, their personal goals, values and needs)

• Conflict in teams is not necessarily destructive, it can be considered as positive, as it can lead to new ideas and approaches to how the team is organised and deals with problems. So there are opportunities for people to develop their communication and interpersonal skills. In order for conflict to be dealt with successfully, the team must understand its unpredictability and its impact on individuals and the team as a whole.

3. Get students to complete the exercise. Allow students to organise this process themselves. During the exercise help students to clarify, elaborate, and probe for appropriate interventions.

References
1. Varney, G. H. (1989). Building productive teams: An action guide and resource book. San Francisco, CA: Josey-Bass, Inc.

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INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

Resolving Conflicts

Debriefing

At the end of the session, ask each team to share with the whole class:

• How would you define conflict, now that you have completed this exercise?

• Is it the same or different than before?

• What actions will you now take to make sure that conflict is positively addressed?

• How would you like your team mates to handle conflict?

Adapted from

Parker, G. & Kropp, R. (2007). Team workout: 50 interactive activities. Amherst, MA, USA: HRD Press pp.23-5

STUDENT EXERCISE

Resolving Conflicts

Aims
To raise awareness of common conflicts in design teams
To enable a team to devise an approach to resolve conflict

Introduction
A major advantage a team has over an individual is its diversity of resources, knowledge, and ideas. However, diversity also produces conflict and obstructs how the team works. Conflict can occur because of communication, organisational or personal issues. Conflicts can be considered as positive, as they lead to new ideas and approaches to how the team is organised and deals with problems. So there are opportunities for people to develop their communication and interpersonal skills. In order for conflict to be dealt with successfully, the team must understand its unpredictability and its impact on individuals and the team as a whole. This exercise enables a design team to become aware of common issues that may lead to conflict and consider how they would resolve conflict should they occur.

Please note the videos 1 and 2 used for this exercise are located at http://designcollaboration.org/resources/resolving-conflicts.php

Exploring Approaches to Resolve Conflict
Task 1. What is Conflict?
As a team, use the list of open-ended statements below to stimulate a group discussion:
1.   Conflict is…
2.   The time I felt best about dealing with conflict was…
3.   When things are not going well, I tend to…
4.   I sometimes avoid unpleasant situations by…
5.   When someone disagrees with me about something important, I usually…
6.   I feel most vulnerable during a conflict when…
7.   When I get angry, I …
8.   My greatest strength in hanlding conflict is…
9.   The most important outcome of conflict is…

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STUDENT EXERCISE

Resolving Conflicts

Task 2. Conflicts in Design Teams

Review video 1 of Warren Trezevant, Animator and Creative Lead for Dimensional Animation at Pixar Animation Studios, Mariana Zegianini, Director of Alan Bates Design and Nina Belk, User Experience Consultant at Flow Interactive, as well as your own experience to list down 5 conflicts which commonly occur in design teams, they can be big or small problems. Then disscuss appropriate interventions to resolve the 5 issues which have been listed down.

Conflicts which are common in a design team	How do you resolve them?

Task 3. Resolving Conflicts - Write it on the wall!

Review video 2 where Steven Kyffin, Senior Global Director Design Research, Philips, discusses his approach to resolving conflict. As a team, discuss Steven's approach to solving conflict and consider and circle which of the different style(s) of resolving conflict he is using below:

1. Denial: "conflict? What conflict, There is no conflict"
2. Smoothing Over: "Sure, we have some conflict, but it's no big deal. Everything is fine"
3. Power: "Since I have the authority, I'll decide"
4. Compromise: "Let's split the difference. You do this...and I'll do this"
5. Collaboration: "Let's you and I together figure out the problem and come up with the best solution for all concerned"

STUDENT EXERCISE

Resolving Conflicts

Task 4. Summaries

As a team, now decide on which 5 steps you would take to handle conflict, should it occur.

Step 1

_____
_____
_____

Step 2

_____
_____
_____

Step 3

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_____

Step 4

_____
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_____

Step 5

_____
_____
_____

Adapted from
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HRD Press pp.23-5

Resolving Conflicts