

The IBR Approach

THE IBR APPROACH

To effectively develop a conflict resolution strategy, it is crucial to understand the causes of conflict and your personal approach to dealing with it. Additionally, it is equally important to comprehend the perspective of the other party, regardless of the conflict's nature.

In many situations, it is important to consider the possibility of future interactions with that person and therefore, it is worthwhile to maintain a positive relationship with them.

The Interest-Based Relational approach follows the guidelines listed below:

- **Relationships come first** - maintaining the quality of interaction is crucial and should be the first priority in relationships.
- **The person and the problem are distinct entities** - it is important to recognize that the other party is not difficult or exasperating, but rather it is the problem itself.
- **Pay attention to the concerns presented** – determine why the person is in the position they are in.
- **Listen first, speak later** – to solve problems, you need to understand the other person's point of view before defending your point of view.
- **Explore options together** – be open to the idea that a third place might exist and that you can achieve it together.
- **State the “facts”** – seek to identify and agree on the objective, observable factors that will impact the decision.

The IBR approach focuses on reducing the negative emotions and conflicts that often arise.

The IBR approach to conflict management consists of five core steps:

Step One: Establish the Setting

During the first stage of the process, it is crucial to establish the ground rules with the other party. It is essential to agree to use the IBR (Interest-Based Relational) approach and adhere to the accompanying guidelines. This ensures that both parties are committed to assertiveness without aggression, as well as maintaining respect, openness, and cooperation.

Active listening is an important skill in conflict resolution. It is crucial for effective communication and can help prevent further misunderstandings and conflicts.

Action: Identify a conflict you are currently involved in (or one that remains unresolved to your satisfaction), where maintaining the relationship is crucial for resolution. Summarize the problem and categorize the conflict based on the available information on sources of conflict.

List some guidelines that you feel would be helpful in the conflict resolution process. If you have had conflicts with this person or persons before, consider guidelines that could have facilitated previous discussions.

Establish the Setting
Summary of Conflict
Source of Conflict Category:
Ground Rules to Follow:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Step Two: Collect data

After gaining a basic understanding of the conflict and establishing ground rules, it is essential to analyze your own position as well as that of the other party. What underlying needs or interests are contributing to the root cause of the conflict?

Before meeting with the other person to discuss the issue, it is important to thoroughly prepare your own position and understand your motivations. This will assist in clarifying your needs and possibly identifying any areas where you may be unreasonable or unfair.

Action: Identify your motivations and document them in the first column. Consider the potential influence your needs and motivations may have on the other individual.

Understand Your Own Position	
Your Motivations, Needs, Interests, Concerns	Impact on Other Party's Position

Record your understanding of the other party's position in the first column of the table below.

In order to facilitate effective communication, it is recommended to initiate discussions with the other person. It is also important to review and revise any previously recorded positions, as well as monitor personal biases and assumptions. The bias column can be used to ensure that systematic biases are not affecting the assessment of the other person's motivations.

Understand The Other Person's Position	
Their Motivations, Needs, Interests, Concerns	Biases/Assumptions
Revised :	
Revised:	

Revised:	
Revised:	

Step Three: Recognize the Problem

It is important to have a clear understanding of the problem during the preliminary discussion. Even a slight difference in perspective can derail conflict discussions. Review the list of issues and concerns and ensure that both sides have a solid grasp of the root cause of the problem and the needs of each party for a mutually beneficial solution.

Action : Write down the specific conflict statement and the other person's solution after you have finished your discussion.

Problem Statement Solution Requirements
What I need:
What does the other party need?
What is the agreed upon problem?

After completing this step, it is important to ensure a clear understanding of the conflict before proceeding to the next stage of the process.

Step Four: Brainstorm Solutions

In IBR conflict resolution, the goal is to find a solution that satisfies both sides. The aim is not to compromise, but to come up with a unique solution that each party is fully committed to. To achieve this, it is important to gather all parties involved and encourage them to brainstorm ideas together.

To ensure success in this stage of the IBR approach, it is important to maintain an open mind and avoid becoming too attached to a particular position or solution, as this may hinder the exploration of creative ideas.

Step Five: Find a resolution through negotiation.

After the brainstorming session, if there is still more work to be done, the next step is the negotiating stage. In this stage, the goal is to find a win-win solution where positions can be traded, but ultimately both sides should feel satisfied and not feel like they compromised on a fundamental aspect of their position or need.

KEY LEARNING POINTS

Conflict is a common aspect of organizational life that should not be avoided. As you develop your conflict resolution skills, your confidence in this area will greatly increase. This, in turn, will contribute to a more relaxed mindset and reduce the anxiety that comes with feeling unfulfilled.

Asserting yourself appropriately is important for everyone to feel like a winner. Relationships and productivity improve when people know-how to get what they need without compromising others. Understanding conflict and your own response to it, and practicing IBF conflict resolution, allows you to achieve win-win situations repeatedly. With your current tools, you can deal with conflict positively and resolve it for the benefit of all involved.