



Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI).

Introduction

Conflict and conflict situations are natural to humans. Once we operate in any arena of interaction, there are bound to be areas where we experience interests that are incompatible with ours. It is like friction, without which movement would be impossible. Thus seen, conflict is not to be seen all the time as something bad. It should rather be anticipated and ways of resolving them should equally develop since it is part of human nature.

The fact that conflict is present in almost all spheres of human endeavors means that like fishes which master how to swim in order to survive; one ought to master the art of navigating the pools of conflicting waters around us. A mastery of how to handle conflicts will spearhead progress and development in our world and even help reduce conflict and or situations likely to birth conflicts. The point being made is that conflict and/or conflicting situations enable humans to seek ways to forge ahead in life- be it in the business world or in our everyday encounters.

Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann recognized the importance of finding ways to resolve conflicts. As a result, they formulated a conflict-handling instrument called Thomas-Kilmann Management-of-Differences Exercise, which is popularly known as Thomas-Kilmann MODE Instrument or TKI.

Definition

TKI assesses how individuals handle interpersonal conflict.

Why Thomas Kilmann's Mode?

The Thomas-Kilmann mode is a very effective tool that can be used to discover the conflict-handling behavior and social skills of an organization's staff or management. Thomas-Kilmann's Instrument (TKI). The five styles or modes of handling conflict according to the Thomas-Kilmann MODE Instrument include: Competing, Avoiding, Accommodating, Collaborating and Compromising.

Competing

"Competing" mode occurs when an individual tries to win his/her own position. He/she resorts to being assertive. This strategy is not totally bad. It may be more appropriate when one needs to make a speedy resolution or take difficult decisions, especially in a position of power. The point being made here is that one needn't beg when one is in a position to end hostilities given his advantaged position.

Avoiding

The avoiding mode entails passivity in conflict management. It occurs when an individual tries to run away from unpleasant situations and/or tries to postpone or not worry about issues. Although, from an ideal perspective, we would agree that we should face the problems, there can be situations where confrontation is best avoided. Also, some problems are so trivial; they are not worth stressing over.

This approach involves shunning the conflict and withholding one's views and opinions. People also employ this approach when the cost of confrontation and resolution is far more than the cost of living with the conflict. However, avoiding does not resolve the conflict. On the downside, it just buries it below the surface and may potentially lead to future conflicts.

Accommodating

The accommodating model of conflict resolution is a more amicable means of resolving conflicts. "Accommodating" occurs when an individual is concerned and considerate about the other's interests or claims rather than his/her own. It may be worthwhile in situations when conflict is a total waste of your time. The Thomas and Kilmann positions this mode as high in cooperativeness and low in assertiveness. We sacrifice our own stance to make the other party happy.



Collaborating

“Collaborating” refers to when an individual involves the other in working out a solution and is concerned with satisfying both his/her own and the other’s wishes. It is used when we are on the same page as the opposing party. It happens when both parties are having similar power authority, and are ready to be cooperative with each other. Typically, the first step is a detailed discussion to understand each other’s viewpoints. This leads to a deeper analysis of the situation. The parties also try to understand the expectations of each other and try to reach a solution where both parties may benefit.

Compromising

“Compromising” refers to an individual who tries to find a middle ground position, or to an exchange of concessions with a conflicting party. This is characterized being moderately assertive and moderately cooperative. Each conflicting party gets something they want. Meanwhile, they also give up something they wanted. So it is a mixed win for all. However, some party may get a resolution closer to their expectations while it could be a greater compromise for the other.

Conclusion

An individual may have no particular style of dealing with conflict. In certain situations, one might collaborate and in some other situation, that same individual might resort to avoidance or competition or both.

