**Working Effectively with Others**

Anjark Services’ Employee Guide

Copyright 2021

TEIA Ltd and other holders

Any further reproduction or communication of this material is not permitted.

Do not remove this notice.

Copyright in this work may be owned by a variety of third-party owners. It is believed that all copyright provisions have been addressed in the construction of this course. Where a person or organization believes that there has been an infringement of copyright, please inform us immediately so that appropriate action may be taken.

DISCLAIMER STATEMENT

While all care has been taken in preparing this publication, TEIA does not warrant that the content is complete, accurate or current. We expressly disclaim any liability for any damage resulting from the use of the material contained in this publication and will not be responsible for any loss, howsoever arising, from use of, or reliance on this material. If you rely on the information in this publication, you are responsible for ensuring by independent verification its completeness, accuracy, and currency.

Contents

[Work Teams 4](#_Toc79243676)

[Principles of good teamwork 4](#_Toc79243677)

[Clear direction 4](#_Toc79243678)

[Open and honest communication 4](#_Toc79243679)

[Risk taking and change 5](#_Toc79243680)

[Defined roles 5](#_Toc79243681)

[Accountable 5](#_Toc79243682)

[Common goals 5](#_Toc79243683)

[Values difference 6](#_Toc79243684)

[Collaboration 6](#_Toc79243685)

[Time Management 7](#_Toc79243686)

[Interpersonal Skills 8](#_Toc79243687)

[Positivity on the workplace 9](#_Toc79243688)

[Accepting Responsibilities 9](#_Toc79243689)

[Usual Work Responsibilities 10](#_Toc79243690)

[Additional Responsibilities 10](#_Toc79243691)

[Building Positive Working Relationships 10](#_Toc79243692)

[Being Realistic 11](#_Toc79243693)

[Resourcing 11](#_Toc79243694)

[Using Feedback 12](#_Toc79243695)

[Getting feedback 12](#_Toc79243696)

[Giving Feedback 13](#_Toc79243697)

[Effective Positive Feedback 15](#_Toc79243698)

[When to give Feedback 15](#_Toc79243699)

[Activity 1 16](#_Toc79243700)

[Summary 16](#_Toc79243701)

[Contributing to Work Teams 17](#_Toc79243702)

[Contribute Constructively to Goals and Tasks 18](#_Toc79243703)

[Making a positive contribution 20](#_Toc79243704)

[Share Information to Meet Goals 22](#_Toc79243705)

[Planning for Improvements 24](#_Toc79243706)

[Interpersonal attraction 24](#_Toc79243707)

[Reward system 24](#_Toc79243708)

[Decision making systems 24](#_Toc79243709)

[Communication systems 24](#_Toc79243710)

[Task 25](#_Toc79243711)

[Review 25](#_Toc79243712)

[Summary 26](#_Toc79243713)

[Deal with Issues, Problems and Conflict 27](#_Toc79243714)

[Diversity in the Workplace 27](#_Toc79243715)

[Biological diversity 28](#_Toc79243716)

[Psychological diversity 28](#_Toc79243717)

[Workplace Issues 28](#_Toc79243718)

[Language Barriers 29](#_Toc79243719)

[Non-verbal signals 30](#_Toc79243720)

[Politeness 32](#_Toc79243721)

[Conflict in the Workplace 34](#_Toc79243722)

[Conflicting Needs 34](#_Toc79243723)

[Conflicting Styles 34](#_Toc79243724)

[Conflicting Perceptions 34](#_Toc79243725)

[Conflicting Goals 34](#_Toc79243726)

[Conflicting Pressures 35](#_Toc79243727)

[Conflicting Roles 35](#_Toc79243728)

[Different Personal Values 35](#_Toc79243729)

[Unpredictable Policies 35](#_Toc79243730)

[Seeking Assistance 36](#_Toc79243731)

[Strategies for Resolving Conflict 36](#_Toc79243732)

[Avoiding 36](#_Toc79243733)

[Competing 36](#_Toc79243734)

[Accommodating 36](#_Toc79243735)

[Compromising 37](#_Toc79243736)

[Collaborating 37](#_Toc79243737)

[Confronting conflict 37](#_Toc79243738)

[Choose the Right Conflict Management Strategy 38](#_Toc79243739)

[Identify the issue 39](file:///D:\Dropbox\Courses-Masters\BSB20120\Course\docs\Task6\Working%20Effectivelt%20With%20Others.docx#_Toc79243740)

[Listen actively 39](file:///D:\Dropbox\Courses-Masters\BSB20120\Course\docs\Task6\Working%20Effectivelt%20With%20Others.docx#_Toc79243741)

[Explore the solutions 39](file:///D:\Dropbox\Courses-Masters\BSB20120\Course\docs\Task6\Working%20Effectivelt%20With%20Others.docx#_Toc79243742)

[Respond 39](file:///D:\Dropbox\Courses-Masters\BSB20120\Course\docs\Task6\Working%20Effectivelt%20With%20Others.docx#_Toc79243743)

[Minimising Conflict 40](#_Toc79243744)

[Legislation 40](#_Toc79243745)

[Anti-Discrimination Legislation 40](#_Toc79243746)

[Ethics 41](#_Toc79243747)

[Codes of Practice 41](#_Toc79243748)

[Privacy Laws 41](#_Toc79243749)

[Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) 42](#_Toc79243750)

[Environmentally Sustainable Work Practices 42](#_Toc79243751)

[Summary 43](#_Toc79243752)

# Work Teams

A team is a small number of people with complementary skills committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and mutual accountability. Anjark Services relies on the teams that make up its workforce.

Throughout a person’s working career they will have to work in many teams. Working in teams is. Anyone who has had a part time job, played sport or belonged to a club will have been a member of a team. Teams are a very common operational arrangement in all industries.

Businesses spend significant amounts of money building and developing teamwork skills of their employees. In a workplace, teams are created to perform either specific or ongoing tasks. Effective teams operate when members are empowered to take control of their task and accept responsibility for outcomes.

## Principles of good teamwork

Effective teamwork is what makes businesses succeed. Much of modern business thinking is centred on understanding what makes effective teams work.

It is essential that any person entering Anjark Services’ workplace has the capacity and willingness to work as a member of a team.

To do this effectively, all employees need to know what makes a great team and what each person needs to do to be a valuable team member.

Consider these nine elements of good teams.

### Clear direction

For a team of people working together to be successful, they need to know where they are going and what their goal is.

Without a clear sense of what the team needs to accomplish and how a successful outcome will be defined, it’s impossible to assemble the right group of people to get there or for a group of people to work successfully together.

The starting point is always, what is the outcome the organisation wants and why.

### Open and honest communication

In any team, communication is essential to building a sense of belonging and responsibility between members. The manner of communication — how freely and frequently team members communicate — determines the effectiveness of the team. Put simply, the more freely a person talks to their fellow team members, the more comfortable they become in sharing insights and ideas. This is just one major reason why modern industries and enterprises emphasize communication and collaboration tools.

The most important part of communication is listening. Listening is not just a way to find things out. It’s also a sign of respect. So, being an active listener sends the message that teammates are respected and valuable. Our employees should be listening like they mean it and demonstrating that they are listening.

The best advice that can be given for effective team communication: Paraphrase, re-state, and react to what is being heard. Ask for clarification. Get involved.

### Risk taking and change

Teams that are working well support appropriate risk taking and change. These teams look on first time mistakes as opportunities for learning.

### Defined roles

Roles of people with the team might change once the team is assembled, but understanding different skill sets and thinking styles of the people making the team are needed if it is to be successful.

There are many roles in a team; accepting and negotiating a role is the first step then that is followed by getting to work.

### Accountable

Teams accept responsibility both as individuals and as a team.

Members do not blame one another for team mistakes and failures. No one should spend any time, useless time, in personal justifications of why they did things that did not work.

A team should celebrate their successes together and recognize special performances and contributions that each team member makes to the total work of the team.

### Common goals

A chief characteristic of any successful team is that members place the common goal above individual interests.

While meeting individual targets is great for personal morale of a team member, teams succeed when they understand, appreciate and work with a common purpose.

### Values difference

Agreeing on a common goal is essential.

But it should not come at the cost of suppressing alternative ideas and opinions within the team. Members having different opinions within the team enhances the team’s performance.

Diversity of views, opinions and ideas is a competitive advantage.

### Collaboration

Collaboration is a trait shared by every successful team, whether it be the Apple leadership team or Lennon-McCartney of the Beatles fame.

The idea is simple enough: the more people collaborate and the more they communicate, the more they create and achieve.

Icon

Description automatically generated

# Time Management

Time management is, in simple terms, the ability of a person to use his or her time effectively or productively, at work.

All our employees need to understand have some knowledge of the process of planning and exercising conscious control of the time they spend on specific work activities. By doing so our employees increase their effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity while also lowering their own stress and increasing their feelings of security and competency.

The time management process is the application of a set of work skills that all employees, with thought and some simple effort, can master. This set of work skills may differ slightly from job to job within our organisation, but there are some common, important skills found in all jobs and workplaces. These important skills include:

* Goal setting
* Scheduling
* Prioritizing
* Decision-making
* Multitasking.
* Problem solving
* Strategic thinking
* Delegation.

It is through the application of each of these skills that our teams can be more effective.

It is essential that when working with other people within our organisation that workers support one another in the progressive development of these eight essential skills.

# Logo, company name Description automatically generated

**Effective Workplace Relationships**

Working for our company requires you to spend a lot of your working time interacting with other people.

You may at times work independently on a specific task and at other times be part of formal or informal teams focused on achieving some of our organisation’s goals.

Anjark Services believes that an essential skill for each of our employees, regardless of their position within the business, is to have the ability to work harmoniously and effectively with other members of our workforce. As a company we believe that excessive internal competitiveness and personal animosities have no place in our daily operations and workplaces.

It is the expectation that all staff will work towards creating positive relationships with others in our workplaces.

Excellent interpersonal skills are a prerequisite for building and maintaining positive working relationships. This set of skills are also a prerequisite for successfully performing management roles, achieving our business goals and having an engaging personal life.

## Interpersonal Skills

Strong interpersonal skills support a person’s success in both social and working environments. They do this in many ways but, as an example, if a person can cooperate with other people to solve difficult problems, as well as having a personality that gets on well with others, then interpersonal skills contribute to their success.

Employers are often seeking out those persons who have strong interpersonal skills. They actively look for applicants who could work collaboratively, communicate effectively and display the commitment and work ethic that they require in their business or enterprise.

However if a person has low levels of interpersonal skills, it is common to see them involved in conflict with other people, even their friends. Other people may even see them as a hindrance to getting a job done or having a good time socially.

It is interesting to note that bullying and harassment of others, both physical and emotional, is generally the result of the ‘bully’ having poor interpersonal skills!

## Positivity on the workplace

Being positive in the workplace helps build good working relationships.

It is acknowledged that many of our staff have the skills and knowledge to resolve problems and complete their work responsibilities independent of other people. However being part of a team provides our company with a wide range of advantages.

The more people that work together, the greater opportunities for more creative and wider variety of ideas. Taking ideas and opinions from all levels of a business allows for greater creativity in problem solving in addition to having workplace approaches that, in general terms, are more effective at resolving workplace issues.

Supervisors and managers value people who can work together in their routine tasks and, through effective communication and respect towards one another, apply our organisational policies when faced with difficulties or a crisis.

It is an expectation within our company that all employees who have supervisory roles can perform the key management functions of planning, organising, staffing, leading, and controlling through a process of leadership and support of staff rather than simply being authoritarian.

The development of productive relationships with colleagues is what is required of all staff members. Working well with others involves understanding and appreciating individual differences. It also means using those differences to the best advantage in achieving our organisational goals.

### Accepting Responsibilities

A key aspect of becoming a more effective worker in a working environment is the ability to accept and carry out differing levels of responsibility. This acceptance must be tempered with a self-understanding of how this responsibility impacts on the person and their roles within our work teams.

There are a range of different types of responsibility that an employee may be asked to take on:

* The responsibilities that are a part of the job description in which the person is employed.
* The responsibilities that an employee is willing to undertake, e.g. for the experience, building their own competence, support for the business, etc.
* The responsibilities that arise due to a specific circumstance, e.g. a crisis within the company or with the clients we serve.

### Usual Work Responsibilities

Every employee is our workplace has a job description which outlines the work that they are expected to undertake. This information is made available to each employee when you are going through our induction program at the start of your employment if a person is redeployed to another position and in our annual performance reviews.

The type of work responsibilities varies depending on the actual work or position each person has been assigned. When starting in a new position or job, our new employee may find that at times they are asked to work outside your area of responsibility. If any employee does not feel confident about this work outside of their position and they have not received appropriate training, it is generally better to politely decline the work, explaining why this is occurring rather than do the task badly or even dangerously.

### Additional Responsibilities

At times there may be additional responsibilities that are asked of an employee. Generally these will be of a voluntary nature, but which they do not have to accept. In unusual cases, a supervisor may insist an employee do some tasks, making these involuntary.

The advantages of taking on additional levels of responsibility include:

* The employee learns to do new things.
* Employees work in new teams assisting others in our workforce.
* The employee builds their competence and knowledge of the workplace that may assist in promotion or have other benefits.

Whenever a worker participates in different and additional work tasks, learns new skills or assists in the development of our business, then they should include these experiences in their resume or curriculum vitae (CV) to show the depth of their work and the skills/knowledge and experiences they have.

### Building Positive Working Relationships

Employees need to be aware that the building of positive relationships with other workers through honesty, openness, and effective communication is essential. By engaging in positive interactions it is possible to build trust and respect between people. It is essential that all our employees value and contribute to a positive working environment that supports each person.

Positive and productive working relationships rely on good communication and the ability to work with, and get along with, other people. It is also important to acknowledge that at times, even with good relationships between team members, working relationships can become strained and even difficult.

The factors that may lead to strained working relationships may include:

* Personal situations impacting on people’s professional world – and vice versa.
* Difficulties in separating the ‘personal’ from the ‘professional’ worlds
* The spreading of gossip and rumours about work mates.
* A person or persons having a lack of trust or respect in work mates.

It is important within our worksites that staff members have access to processes that enable both work and personal matters to be discussed.

## Being Realistic

All organisations and businesses operate under sets of restrictions and limitations, commonly referred to as ‘constraints’. No workplace is free of constraints as no workplace has unlimited resources or opportunities to do what they fantasise about.

As a worker in our organisation it is essential you understand the constraints that apply to both yourself and the workplace you are based in.

Some of these constraints will be associated with physical or financial resources and others may be more abstract (i.e. time). Constraints may include:

Time

Money

Staff

Tools

Technology.

### Resourcing

It is important that you are familiar with the constraints that exist in your role and workplace. It is also important that you learn to work within these resource limitations to the best of your ability.

Unfortunately, modern businesses operate under resource limitations or restrictions. Few organisations have unlimited resources. For this reason, it is important that you understand the constraints under which you must function and look for ways to ensure that you work within any resource constraints that exist.

Remember whether a person is part of a team or working as an individual, there needs to an awareness and understanding of the resources assigned to the task and work only within those resources.

Example: A task is assigned to a worker with an expected time of 4 hours allotted to the task and consumables of $100. It would be expected that the job would be completed I that time and expenditure for items limited to $100. If more time was needed due to a problem or the cost of materials was greater than expected, then the worker should convey this to their supervisor as early as possible in the job.

## Using Feedback

Feedback is evaluative or corrective information about an action, event, or process that is given to someone or received from someone. It is generally focussed on supporting improvement.

In a workplace, feedback about a person’s work or performance is generally focused for one of the following two purposes:

1. To draw attention of a person to ways of improving their workplace performance by hearing what others think of the way that they are working.
2. To positively reinforce the efforts and work of a person when their work is of a high standard.

Feedback received by a worker allows, and supports, them to:

* Focus on the areas that may benefit from effort to develop their own skills over time; and,
* Initiate supportive conversations about perceived problems that they may be having in the workplace.

### Getting feedback

Feedback may be seen and received negatively. Some workers may have these feelings or opinions of feedback about their work efforts:

* Interpret everything as negative and fail to hear the other messages.
* Do not wish to hear any critique about their work effort or work performance.
* Refuse to believe that feedback is necessary for a person to have continued improved levels of performance.
* Only hear any feedback as a negative emotion.

In the end, the way an employee feels about the feedback from their supervisor or work colleagues is really influenced by the way they think about feedback. Feedback is a factor of the workforce for all employees, and if a person views it negatively rather than to improve in their work roles, then they have created that burden for themselves.

This negative way of viewing and receiving feedback is generally identifiable by the following actions of the person:

|  |
| --- |
| * Saying that the feedback is not accurate, false, biased or the process was flawed. |
| * Attacking the person giving the feedback. |
| * Being defensive about what is being said. |
| * Not respecting the person that is taking the time to provide them with feedback on their performance. |
| * Ignoring the feedback given and making no effort to improving their work performance. |
| * Not listening carefully to what is being said or even deliberately mis-interpreting the comments. |
| * Not showing any interest in receiving feedback from someone. |
| * Not using the feedback to improve performance. |

However, if an employee views feedback on their work as an opportunity to learn and develop (i.e. positively), then they are likely to value the process. Feedback becomes seen as a useful and constructive action that helps the person in their vocational and personal growth.

This positive way of viewing and receiving feedback is generally identifiable by the following actions of the person:

|  |
| --- |
| * Actively listening to what is being said. |
| * Seeking clarification about any points raised, especially when they are unsure about what has been said. |
| * Being able to listen to what is being said to them without wanting to respond and challenge the person providing the feedback. |
| * Accepting what is being said as being a starting point for thought, reflection and possible action. |
| * Acknowledging the role of feedback within a workplace. |
| * Shows an interest in getting feedback. |
| * Planning a positive action in response to the feedback. |

### Giving Feedback

Our employees are to be involved in not only receiving feedback on their performance, but also in the process of giving feedback to others.

This process of giving feedback to others can be both rewarding and challenging.

It is generally easier however, to give feedback than receive it.

Giving feedback is important in that it provides those around each worker with a means of making improvements to their work processes and in turn this leads to improved performance for the whole workplace.

Giving feedback means each of our workers must:

* Understanding their work mates.
* Endeavour to be positive about what they are to share of their observations, i.e. their feedback.
* Be honest,
* Be sensitive to the feelings, values and needs of those workers around them.

Here are some hints on providing positive feedback and avoiding negative feedback to others.

|  |
| --- |
| **Ineffective Negative Feedback** |
| * Don’t attack the performance of work colleagues, this automatically makes people defensive and hostile. |
| * Vague and non-specific feedback just leads to people being confused. |
| * Demonstrating a lack of consideration for the people receiving the feedback. |
| * Denigrating the performance levels of the staff involved. |
| * Making comments on a person’s personality and personal attributes and focusing on their performance. |
| * Making the feedback so broad as to be useless in planning action. |
| * Providing feedback at inappropriate times. |
| * Providing feedback without sufficient planning, structure or gathering information. |
| * Providing feedback based on personal views and opinions rather than what occurs in the workplace/work performance. |

|  |
| --- |
| Effective Positive Feedback |
| * Being supportive of the needs of the individual. |
| * Focusing on the most important areas with respect to the job and the individual. |
| * Being sensitive to the feelings of the individual. |
| * Focusing on areas of work that can be improved rather than focussing on the personality of the individual. |
| * Being as specific as possible but dealing with a manageable level of possible action. |
| * Providing feedback as close as possible to the event which initiated the need for feedback. |
| * Thinking of and planning the feedback prior to providing it to the individual. |
| * Ensuring any feedback provided will be of assistance to the person receiving it. |

### When to give Feedback

While giving feedback can occur at a range of times – knowing when to give it is part of the key to giving good feedback.

If the feedback is a result of some action or event, then always try to time as close as possible to the event.

Meetings are useful – especially when:

* Meetings are well planned with a structured agenda.
* Meetings are held regularly and feedback is a routine element of the agenda.
* All team members attend the meetings.
* The decisions of the meeting are recorded and distributed to attendees.
* Meetings have set starting and finishing times and set periods of time.

When providing feedback to individuals employees should consider the following factors:

1. Identify what needs to be discussed early in the process
2. Ensure the focus remains clear and other topics do not overpower the agenda.
3. Ensure that there is agreement on what needs to be done.
4. Ensure that the matters discussed are confidential.

Feedback focuses on issues and events that have already occurred, so it is often too late to try and make changes to the way that the specific event was dealt with.

An alternative approach is the ‘feed forward’. This approach attempts to get people to think about areas of their performance that they know are weak and allow them to look for ways of making any such improvements to their performance before it is needed.

Feedback is something that is undertaken on an everyday basis. Our employees may be asked to give or receive feedback regularly. This means that they need to:

* Understand why someone may want to give or receive feedback.
* Build their competency in the skills of listening and speaking.
* Think about what they say carefully considering the impact of their comments on both other people and the work performance of their team.
* Ensure that a commitment to improvement in our workplace is at the forefront of the discussion.

## Activity 1

Jim, one of your team members, asks you to provide some feedback on a presentation he made to the team yesterday on a new technical tool that was to be introduced to the workplace.

What general factors could raise with Jim in your feedback?

Record your thoughts in your notebook.

## Summary

1. An essential skill for every employee is the ability to work well with others.
2. Excellent interpersonal skills are a prerequisite for building and maintaining positive working relationships.
3. Accepting responsibilities that may be outside those set in the job description may assist in advancing or building positions of trust within the workplace.
4. Building relationships through honesty, openness, and effective communications are essential in helping to build trust and overcome personal barriers.
5. Feedback is a way to let people know how effective they are in what they are trying to accomplish, or how they affect other people.

# Contributing to Work Teams

It is important to Anjark Services that the processes of working effectively with other team members is evident in all that we do. Work groups and teams are common in our workplaces and our management acknowledge that our employees require a specific set of skills to ensure that they know how to work to the best of their abilities. We believe that the people who work well with others are the valued and successful people in our business – the synergy of working as a team is more powerful that many individual efforts.

For a person to become a successful and effective team member, there are several factors that need to be accepted and developed:

1. **Show others what needs to be done**

When you are under pressure and needing to get things done, it can be very tempting to find those who are weak and then simply take over their position to the point where you are doing everything. This sort of working environment can be quite difficult to work in, as instead of being able to develop your skills, you are simply overtaken and eliminated. If you think about this, it means that you will never get to learn anything new or take on new responsibilities. Therefore, a strong team player shows people how to do things, rather than taking over everything. If you take over doing everything for the team members, then they may also begin to rely on you to do everything rather than being willing to take over some of the tasks.

1. **Give great feedback**

The importance of effective and strong feedback has already been covered. It is critical to give good feedback if a person is going to be an effective team player. Those within a team are more likely to be willing to listen to a colleague if they can suggest ways that the team and its members can be more effective. Helping a team to succeed is an excellent way of building respect and connection to other team members within a team environment.

1. **Let them get on with their job**

Unless there are visible problems or someone comes specifically seeking advice and guidance, it is sometimes better to let them find things out for themselves.

1. **Be Positive!**

Someone with positive energy is likely to be a team player others want to associate themselves with. If a person is excited about a given task, then others around them are likely to feel this and will also feel like they should be excited about it too.

Great team players are enthusiastic about everything they do, they motivate the team and provide the group with a reason for moving forward.

1. **When making decisions, listen!**

Group decision making and problem-solving can be difficult especially when ideas are put forward that may seem completely crazy! However, it is very important to remember that all team members should be able to contribute and sitting and listening to alternate ideas cannot only be a sign of respect but provide some ‘out of box’ thinking and solutions. The more that people are likely to discount ideas, the less strong the group is likely to become. Team members want to hear that their ideas are appreciated, not that they are stupid!

1. **Be sensitive**

Everyone has a right to be listened to, whether they are different to the rest of the group in any way, or not.

## Contribute Constructively to Goals and Tasks

The major outcome of teamwork involves both problem solving and implementation. In a team situation, these can often prove to be difficult situations, but applying the principles of being supportive can make this an easier situation.

When considering a team’s recommendations, there are two aspects to consider:

1. The facts about the choice.
2. How do team members feel about the future implied by the choice?

There are always logical, rational arguments for and against all recommendations. It is this process of seeking out facts from many sources that is essential to achieving our organisation’s goals.

In a team situation this sounds simple. A team is likely to be comprised of persons who are familiar with the processes currently in place at our organisation and so should be able to provide insights and comments on any proposed solution.

However, any decision needs to consider the available assets and resources (or in other words the limitations and disadvantages) that may constrain the type and scope of the decision.

Example: The football team may decide that to get the skills and experience they need to succeed in the fixtures they need to be involved in inter-club games in another district and decide to compete in a carnival being held in another city. The decision is to go – but no one thought about how much it would cost to travel and be accommodated there, what the financial situation of the club was (could they afford it) or even if all players would be available! The decision was made without thinking about the available assets and resources.

Finally, is the team’s decision on a course of action in keeping with, or in conflict with, the organisation’s values.

It is also essential that employees consider their decisions, recommendations and actions against the following criteria:

1. **Time:** Can the decision or solution be implemented in the organisation’s required time frame? As Anjark Services’ business dealings, like the majority of businesses, is time sensitive it is important that any work can be completed in the planned and allotted time. If a specific time frame is provided, then it is important that this is met.
2. **Budget:** Is the budget assigned to the task sufficient to carry out the solution? If not, what do you do – ask for further resources or change the solution to fit the provided budget? The answer may need to come from your supervisor.
3. **Resources:** Is there sufficient resources (human, consumable, facilities, etc.) available to ensure the task can be worked on and completed to a high standard?
4. **Legislative requirements:** Does the solution meet the legislative requirements that Anjark Services must meet? Does the decision place the company at any legal or ethical risk? Remember that legislation is not just about common law but covers such work elements as environmental regulations, industrial relations, health and safety, etc. If the proposed course of action does then it must be altered or another course decided upon.

These elements must always be considered by individual workers and work teams when considering their tasks.

Always avoid any personal reasons for dismissing an idea from a work colleague. To bring personal preferences or views to a work task or decision always eventually leads to negative and counter-productive feelings and attitudes within a team or between work colleagues.

Asking questions, commenting on the bad aspects of an idea, and finding fault are all useful discussion tools, however this must be carried out in a positive way. The focus is the idea or suggestion, not the person placing that idea or suggestion forward. It is difficult to always be in that frame of mind, but the more you work at it the easier it becomes and along the way the respect and trust of the team grows.

## Making a positive contribution

How does each employee in this organisation make a positive contribution?

Here are four elements that help our employee make positive contributions to their work culture and the success of our organisation:

**Contributing and sharing work and personal information**

All team members should be encouraged (and become willing) to contribute to their team and the broader organisation. By sharing their information (this may be job or, within broad social parameters, personally related) the build the capacity of other people to build relationships with each other and to extend the capacity in their work tasks.

By contributing and sharing resources, people ensure that the full resources of the team can be utilised. Every member of a team should be included in discussions – it is not in our organisation’s interest to simply allow a few employees to give their opinions without allowing other team members to give theirs. Without the input of all team members, the advantages of operating as a team are diminished.

**Enhancing understanding about individual jobs and responsibilities**

All employees should share the details of their jobs, as well as expressing where they hope to work. It is considered important that there is an understanding across our workforce, but especially in our teams, that work colleagues are aware of what the other members of their team are responsible for, their duties and even what they may be capable of achieving. Within a team situation this enables the assigning of roles to those most capable to achieve the desired outcome, but also enables each team member to better communicate and engage with each other.

**Reviewing and refining team objectives**

Our teams’ objectives are not set in stone. As the world changes around us, it is vital that Anjark Services is responsive and agile in meeting the new challenges and opportunities in our area of work. As a company we constantly must review and redefine the goals and operatives to ensure we meet the emerging and constantly varying business environment. So, the same expectations are placed on our work teams and employees.

At regular stages in the process of working towards the set goals and targets of a team or employee, there needs to be opportunities to review and re-evaluate what the objectives are.

In all tasks, employees and work teams can sometimes slip into unrealistic objectives or fail to consider the changing environment – both of which can set a person or team up for failure. Always take time to reflect and monitor the work objectives and outcomes. If through changing circumstances some of the original objectives now seem unrealistic, it may be time to refine them, or even alter them so they are achievable. This action requires each person to have the maturity and communication skill to be involved in difficult conversations.

**Considering problems and formulating joint decisions**

Group problem-solving and decision making can be a challenge yet when conducted well, it is a one of the major factors in groups of people working together effectively. It is one of the key processes used by individuals and team members to achieve goals and successfully complete assigned work tasks.

When facing this area, the following nine step process may assist workers or teams in solving problems:

1. Make a general description of the problem or task.
2. Describe what the desired and realistic outcome (i.e. the end condition) would be.
3. Identify the areas that need to be worked on (i.e. the discrepancies) that exist between what there is at present and what is desired.
4. Analyse the areas requiring work more thoroughly.
5. Redefine the problem as clearly and succinctly as possible.
6. Generate as many alternative ways of achieving the desired outcome as possible.
7. Screen the various alternative ways by compiling specific objectives that by include direction, action and resources, and where and when they will occur.
8. Consider the consequences (i.e. the price to be paid) or impact on individuals, groups or the whole organisation if each of the identified ways of achieving the outcomes were to be implemented. Identify the most efficient and effective way to achieve the outcome.
9. Establish ways of monitoring the implementation.

If this is a group or team endeavour, ensure that the team considers the problem and comes to a decision together.

## Share Information to Meet Goals

For the most part, team meetings are held to solve problems. Effective team meeting preparation is critical to successful problem-solving. All participants need to know and understand their roles if the problem-solving process is to be effective.

Some important points to consider when preparing for a team meeting, and being ready to make a positive contribution are:

**Be informed**

Before attending and participating in the meeting, be sure that to understand the tasks to be addressed during the meeting and the goals that are the focus of the activity or task.

**Start preparing as soon as possible**

Participants should always give themselves time to prepare for the meeting. It is much easier and less stressful to gather materials and thoughts in advance rather than at the last minute.

**Verify the accessibility of the meeting**

Always verify the date, time and location of the meeting. In today’s world this may include the online details of the meeting. All participants need to be aware of this information.

**Be organised**

All staff should have access to the most recent information (e.g. files, reports, correspondence, etc.) related to the task they are working on. One way is to have a folder which is dedicated to the task and holds prior reports and paperwork. Always ensure relevant documents are filed for easy access later.

**Review relevant documents**

Review the documents that are relevant either to the meeting’s agenda or the task. Highlight the information that will be most helpful. Be prepared for information that may come from ‘left field’ that might challenge your progress on an issue.

**Create a list of important points**

Creating a list of issues that need to be addressed in a meeting or discussion is valuable. Check the list before a meeting ends or at regular points in a task to make sure everything was covered.

**Mentally prepare**

Persons should prepare for stressful situations or where resistance to a new idea may occur. Mental preparation helps to reduce anxiety; a positive attitude and open mind helps reduce stress.

A picture containing text, vector graphics

Description automatically generatedLike all organisations, Anjark Services has productivity requirements. These productivity requirements should be used as a means of judging whether the individual worker or the team has been successful or not. Attempts to achieve our stated productivity requirements is really the actual performance level of the individual or team.

Performance is measured in different ways, depending on the individual, the team and the circumstances. Measurement of performance will also depend on what is being used and how the performance requirements of our business are administered. Some groups, especially those that are more informal, may try to measure their own performance, using their own standards. Occasionally, these informal standards of a group may even be different from the standards of our organisation as a whole; this can lead to conflict.

To both avoid such conflict and to ensure consistency in the measuring of performance it is expected that our set of objective measures are used throughout the organisation. Success is determined by the objective that underpins that task. While there may be broader ‘hidden objectives in a task assigned to a person (e.g. that the completion of the task will ensure staff cohesiveness) the simple fact in terms of performance is, has the task been completed to the standard required.

As inferred in the above paragraph, there are often hidden or subjective measures of performance also involved. These subjective measures are often about how the task was completed rather that the objective itself. The characteristics judged by subjective standards are not always easily quantifiable. For example, some subjective objectives of a task may see a person judged on the extent to which they consulted others, the level of respect accorded to other workers, the types of communication they employed and the positive relationships they developed with other staff members.

Outside pressures such as the organisational requirements, have little to do with the achievement of these subjective successes. A worker may be judged successful by some objective criteria (e.g. they finished a report on time) but as an individual worker they may be judged as less than successful (e.g. the report was written but nearly the whole office now dislikes the person because they were rude, demanding and hostile to the other staff members).

## Planning for Improvements

It is important that all our employees take the time to identify and contribute to the planning of strategies that focus on the improvement of our work teams.

Listed below are six key areas which should be addressed when evaluating teams in our organisation:

### Interpersonal attraction

Team members who report that they like each other are showing a level of interpersonal attraction. It is natural to prefer to work with people whom we like. Group members are more likely to be satisfied with a team of people they enjoy working with than a team they do not. This all comes about during the ‘forming’ stage of team formation, and if it is found that most of the team members do not like each other, more emphasis may need to be placed on forming, and perhaps better procedures for selecting team members recommended so that the team members are more likely to work well together.

### Reward system

This deals with the ways in which behaviour was rewarded and chastised by the team. (Reward may be as simple as positive and ‘thankful’ comments while chastisements may be as simple as being overlooked for thanks or even acknowledgment of effort – it does not need to be money and gifts!). Does the team reward its members fairly? Are chastisements handed out equitably? Do all members participate equally in establishing and implementing such systems? If the answer is ‘yes’ to each of these questions, then the team has dealt with this effectively. If there are any ‘no’ answers, then perhaps the team structure of rewards needs to be reviewed as this is an important aspect of ensuring that all team members are valued by the team.

### Decision making systems

How does the team make its decisions? Most people prefer to belong to a team that encourages them to participate in the decision-making process. If all team decisions are made without consulting the members, team members will become disenchanted with the whole team process. If decisions were not being made by the team, then as a company we expect our employees to start to change the process so that it eventually reflects more democratic decision-making procedures.

### Communication systems

People prefer to belong to a team that encourages communication to, and by, all team members, not just by a few members of the team who may be ‘friends’. Consider what communication patterns exist in your workspace or team. Do these arrangements encourage all team members to express opinions or speak openly? Are there any threats that stops open and honest communication from taking place? If any problems do exist these need to be analysed and addressed so that communication within our organisation becomes open, honest and inclusive.

### Task

The appropriateness of a particular task depends on the preferences of the individuals in the team. Most people feel comfortable when they believe they can accomplish an assigned task. If the membership of a team does not allow an assigned task to be completed, either because of the team’s members being dysfunctional or not having the required skills, then this needs to be identified, raised with supervisors and a new team established.

### Review

Our teams need to be reviewed as a matter of routine. This reviewing needs to be formal and informal and conducted by both supervisors and the team members themselves.

It is important to analyse the effectiveness of the team and its individual members. Some of the important questions to be asked are:

* Were individuals comfortable the tasks assigned to them?
* Did they achieve their aims on time?
* Did delays caused by an individual members cause problems for the team’s performance?
* Is the best person for each job selected?
* Are people comfortable working alone?
* Do supervisors provide enough guidance and support?
* Are the individuals who are delegated tasks given enough information to achieve their aim?

## Summary

To contribute effectively to a workgroup a worker should:

* Coach and support their colleagues
* Share their understandings
* Provide constructive criticism in a tactful and respectful manner
* Be available if asked for assistance and guidance
* Try to be positive
* Value the group’s ideas and efforts at solving and completing the assigned tasks
* Show cultural and gender sensitivity.

Effective meetings that are to solve problems are dependent upon preparation by the team members. Participants need to know what is expected of them, what they will be doing, and have time to prepare for the meeting.

When evaluating how well a team worked together, the areas to consider are:

* The level of attraction between team members.
* Rewards and punishments within the team.
* The decision-making systems that were in place.
* The communication systems used and the tasks that were given.
* The review processes, both internal and external, used by the team.

# Deal with Issues, Problems and Conflict

Every business or organisation has their own ‘culture’, i.e. their own way of doing things, viewing things, their own shared values, assumptions, beliefs, and norms.

Some organisations have organisational cultures that may view an employee or supervisor seeking advice as a sign of their incompetence or inadequacy. This is often a view stranded in historical perspectives and even an authoritarian stance.

Alternatively with a broad perspective of modern business practices, other businesses and organisations view the seeking of advice as a positive sign of an employee’s commitment to best practice and the employing organisation. This view seeks employees who have confidence in their own abilities and knowledge; have sufficient emotional maturity to seek advice to get tasks right; and a sign of their commitment to their own professional development.

It is not unknown for both views to exist simultaneously within larger organisations.

Ideally, employees must be able to seek and exchange information and advice on the areas within their responsibility. This requires them to:

* Be clear about their role and responsibilities.
* Be aware of the knowledge and skill limitations, i.e. what they do and do not know, etc.
* Understand what their supervisor needs and wants from them and their team.
* Be able to communicate clearly, consistently and effectively with a range of people.

## Diversity in the Workplace

Diversity can cause difficulties in the workplace. Often the result of miscommunication, significant issues can arise when attempting to deal with people who may have different cultural, language or value experiences. The attitudes of people in our workplace to play a significant part in managing diversity.

Anjark Services expects that, like all successful organisations, our employees will demonstrate the following values to all their work colleagues:

* Respect
* Trust
* Honesty
* Active and positive forms of communication

Knowing how to positively treat those people in our organisation is a critical part of being a strong team player. Our employees need to know how to communicate well, understand individual differences, and be able to build their knowledge and skills in both vocational areas and in their interpersonal relationships.

Diversity affects our workforce through three major forms of diversity. These need to be considered in all interactions within our workplace. These forms of diversity are:

### Biological diversity

The way people perceive things using their eyes, mouth, ears, hands, etc. These types of diverse attributes generally cannot be changed in any way. A person’s skin colour, their physical appearances, etc cannot be changed to suit the expectations of others.

**Environmental diversity**

Significant parts of a person (i.e. their personality, their beliefs, vales, etc) come from the environment in which they grew up or have been exposed to. Educational levels, attention from parents, the cultural or religious influences and our experiences all affect the type of person an individual becomes.

### Psychological diversity

A person’s individual differences (i.e. the way they see themselves, the way they think, their self-concept, etc) also critically impact in the way they are perceived or the way that they portray themselves.

### Workplace Issues

Anjark Services values diversity within its workplaces. Diversity is a strength as it offers a greater client base, a varied and strengthened workforce and is consistent with the values and beliefs of our organisation.

However we also recognised that people can be very sensitive to the way that this type of thing is discussed, so what can our employees do to ease problems when discussing personal matters within a diverse workforce? There are six general strategies that can be employed by all staff:

1. Try to build rapport with others in your work team.
2. Always be open and honest.
3. Identify the major issues that you are facing at the very start and ask how to solve the problems or address the issue.
4. Take the time to appreciate individual differences. Even if you disagree with someone, if it is in their nature, you should not be overly critical, as their opinions deserve as much respect as your opinion does.
5. There are no right answers. If you unintentional offend someone, apologise and move on.
6. Avoid using words that could offend.

People from different cultures send and receive messages differently. This difference can often be the cause of misunderstanding and even conflict. To avoid such misunderstandings, it is important that all staff recognise that such cultural differences exist. When dealing with people from other cultures, the basic principle of communicating is to assume that everyone’s thoughts and actions are not just like ours. While neither culture is doing things ‘the right way’, staff members should assume that differences do exist, so that they are ready to deal with any that arise. Note, as trust and respect builds, so do the chances of misunderstanding or miscommunication occurring diminish.

The major types of misunderstanding that may occur within a diverse workplace are:

### Language Barriers

Second-language speakers have great difficulty unlearning these aspects of language and may even be unaware of such differences. This may result in communication problems even if they use the correct English grammar and vocabulary. Language also consists of paralanguage, idioms and slang and it is these elements that often lead to miscommunication. This becomes even more evident when people in this group come under stress, e.g. in the business, health care or retail environments.

This mal also occur when people use forms of English spoken by, for example, indigenous communities, which are likely to employ different cultural and language features than those used in Standard Australian English. The language barrier may be more significant because the assumption by others is that the standard forms exist within the person when in fact they may not.

**Paralinguistic Features**

The tone of a conversation in Standard Australian English is often supported by a set of common paralinguistic features. Examples include:

Conversation structure: This tends to follow the convention of stating the main point first. Speakers of other languages may build up to what is important using general social conventions (i.e. asking about family, weather, business, etc), and may lose the interest of Australian English speakers who are unaware of this difference.

Word emphasis: The emphasis which is placed on a word to give it more importance within a sentence is common in Australian speech, e.g. ‘I told her that the report was important’ has subtly different inferences depending upon where the emphasis is applied. If ‘*told*’ is emphasised, the speaker may be conveying their own feelings of frustration at their ignored advice, but emphasis placed on ‘*I*’ points to ownership of the action.

Other languages may employ the use of repetition, extra words, or a change in the pace or pitch of their speaking, to convey their feelings or the relevance of something.

Intonation: Intonation can turn a phrase into a question without the need to restructure the sentence. This can be very confusing to someone who has been taught English as a second language in a more formal manner. A second-language speaker may also have a much greater range of tones with which they convey friendliness, respect or interest, and may be confused or offended by our limited tonal range, which they feel conveys lack of respect or boredom. Some languages, (e.g. Mandarin) place great importance on intonation, which is used to give a single word numerous different meanings. Speakers of such tonal languages may be perceived as angry or arrogant by Australian English speakers.

Listening: Listening, (i.e. eye-contact, nodding, encouraging noises) can very easily be misunderstood by second-language speakers, who may employ silence, stillness and even looking away to demonstrate their attentiveness and respect, e.g. in some indigenous communities eye contact during a conversation is regarded as disrespectful.

Silence, which usually conveys unease, but may equally indicate that a second- language speaker is taking the topic of conversation very seriously.

Priority of speaking: Turn-taking, where only one person at a time speaks, and interruptions are viewed as rude is seen as the expected norm in Australian culture. A speaker may indicate that it is someone else’s turn to speak by lowering their voice, slowing down, becoming repetitive, or pausing. Even the length of pauses varies, with Australian English speakers employing relatively long pauses. In other languages, people may speak over each other to show that they are actively involved in the conversation. If someone is unaware of the turn-taking conventions, they may feel frustrated or offended that it never seems to be their turn to speak.

Volume of speech: Volume, normally low, with a noticeable increase used to gain attention and emphasise what is being said is the Australian norm. It can also convey strong feelings, and so speakers of languages that are generally louder can come across as upset, threatening or rude when in fact it is simply the normal volume of public speech.

### Non-verbal signals

Non-verbal behaviour becomes part of our understanding and way of communicating from birth onwards and so is often difficult for an individual to control. Often referred to as **body language** it is the use of physical behaviour, expressions, and mannerisms to communicate nonverbally, often done instinctively rather than consciously. Often entirely unconscious, when a person interacts with others, they continuously give and receive wordless signals.

Cultural differences between the use of non-verbal signals easily lead to confusion over intentions, emptions and reactions. If someone displays what is felt in Australian society to be inappropriate non-verbal behaviour, they are quickly labelled as rude when that may not be the case.

Non-verbal signals include the following:

Eye contact: Australian English speakers tend to use eye contact to indicate attentiveness or honesty, but when used too much, can make the recipient feel quite uncomfortable. In South Asia however, eyes are lowered as a sign of respect, and too much eye-contact indicates insolence or aggression. An Australian English speaker talking to someone from South Asia may feel that they do not know the answer to their question, do not understand or are being dishonest when they are simply being respectful towards them.

Facial expressions: Facial expressions can also be misleading. For example, the Japanese tend to be straight-faced when happy, and smile to mask unpleasant feelings such as anger or sadness.

Gestures: There are many significant difference between how Australians make gestures and what is used in other parts of the world. In Islamic cultures, the left hand is considered unclean, and it is offensive to use it to offer something to someone. A left-handed non-Islamic person may quite unwittingly cause offence by simply passing someone a pen or offering them a biscuit.

Personal Space: Personal space, which is an important aspect of feeling comfortable in the presence of others, differs between cultures and within cultures according to relationships. If someone stands too close to another, that person may then step back to a distance with which they are comfortable, and this may well happen repeatedly.

Posture: Posture, is also an area where there can be significant differences between cultures. Sitting stretching your feet towards someone is offensive in many parts of Asia, whereas in Australia this has no meaning. Folded arms are a sign of relaxation in Asian countries and a sign of defensiveness in Western countries.

Touch: Touch is used relatively rarely in the Australian culture except in intimate or personal relationships. The level of use varies between the sexes, and even within families. Persons from other cultures may employ more physical contact naturally but may be viewed in a different light elsewhere.

For further information investigate these websites:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [Icon  Description automatically generated](https://www.helpguide.org/articles/relationships-communication/nonverbal-communication.htm) | [Non-verbal Communication and Body Language](https://www.helpguide.org/articles/relationships-communication/nonverbal-communication.htm) |
| [Icon  Description automatically generated](https://www.verywellmind.com/understand-body-language-and-facial-expressions-4147228) | [Understanding Body Language and Facial Expressions](https://www.verywellmind.com/understand-body-language-and-facial-expressions-4147228) |

### Shape Description automatically generated with low confidence

### Politeness

Politeness is a very important part of all communication (both oral and written). The following features should be considered in terms of their use within our diverse workforce and client group:

Greetings: These are used at varying levels in different cultures. Within the Australian context and our use of Standard Australian English (ASE), the use of greetings is quite limited. This is in contract to some cultures where greetings are dominate at both the beginning and end of every encounter with someone. This difference can lead to offense for those who have not yet absorbed the language nuances of Australian culture. Forms of greeting include a range of speech statements and actions such as shaking hands, joining the palms of hands, smiling and bowing.

Please and thank you: These signs of courtesy are widely used in Australian Standard English (ASE), and their absence can be taken as a sign of rudeness or ignorance. In other cultures, the lack of use of similar statements is not as important because they are implied by the tone of voice or specific choice of verb or pronoun. Also, in the workforce these statements may regarded as not necessary in the context of someone’s job perhaps due to hierarchical position of simple expectation that service is provided. In other cultures, gratitude may be shown by a kind look or gesture, or the giving of gifts, possibly money. If someone is unable to accept a gift of thanks, the giver is likely to be offended.

No: Saying no, can in some cultures be considered rude, particularly to someone of a higher status. Alternative ways of refusing a request or showing disagreement include changing the subject, procrastinating, being non-committal, or using language that may cause great confusion. Australian English speakers tend to avoid conflict and may try to make a joke or apologise rather than say ‘no’ directly. This behaviour could be interpreted as somewhat dishonest to those from cultures that use a more-direct approach.

Anger: Anger is generally avoided by Australian speakers; its effect, therefore, has a greater impact when it is expressed. In other cultures, anger is less of an issue, and is often expressed, received and forgotten as a matter of course.

When trying to communicate with people from culturally diverse backgrounds, it may be useful to:

* Be aware of the reasons (many listed above) why communication may fail, or not entirely succeed.
* Try to become more aware of your own automatic responses so that you can learn to keep them in check
* Give the other person the benefit of the doubt and assume that their intentions are not unkind nor deliberately rude.
* Try to gauge other people’s reactions to you and be prepared to adapt your approach.

If in doubt share your concerns with your supervisor.

# Conflict in the Workplace

Conflict occurs when the needs of one person interfere with the needs of another, and the parties disagree on how to meet their needs. With different people working in one organization, it can be difficult to avoid conflict.

Conflict can have positive or negative consequences both on individual and team performance. The difference depends on your ability to identify, confront, and resolve these conflicts appropriately. By learning to handle conflict well, you'll increase your success and the success of where you work.

Although conflict is often viewed negatively, it can lead to better understanding if solutions are reached. The first logical steps in resolving conflict are to identify the problem and then identify what caused the conflict. There are eight major reasons for conflict in the workplace.

### Conflicting Needs

This is a common form of workplace conflict. Example: A worker is asked to complete two different tasks by two other people - both expecting that their task will be done immediately with priority given to their directive. Knowing how to deal with this type of conflicts is important, both to get the tasks completed and to ensure that the workplace remains positive and harmonious.

### Conflicting Styles

Different people have different ways of carrying out their work. Generally this difference is acceptable to our workplace; there are just differences between people and the way they approach work. However, conflict may arise when one person is unable to change and stubbornly refuses to alter their way of work and follow company directives and expectations.

### Conflicting Perceptions

It is not uncommon for people to have different views and understandings of an issue even if both have received the same information, instructions and explanations. They may perceive a problem differently, allocate priorities differently and even value the outcomes in differing degrees. While this may lead to very different ways of resolving the issue or completing a task, it cannot get in the way of the organisational requirements of our business.

### Conflicting Goals

Individual workers within a workplace may be working towards very different goals and may not take the time to consider the impact of their work has on the broader aims and goals of the organisation or even their work colleagues.

### Conflicting Pressures

The interrelationship between each section of our organisation means we are all inter-dependent upon each other to achieve our goals. If one employee fails to meet their deadline that will, in turn, affect the way that another section of our business is able to work. Disruptions caused by other employees does lead to internal conflict.

### Conflicting Roles

In any organisation it is possible for employees to believe their role is dominant and more important that the work or role of others. This may or may not be true, but this application of role priority or authority can be the cause of conflict between workers and teams.

### Different Personal Values

Individual employees all have a set of personal values and beliefs. If there is little respect for each other, then it is possible for conflict to be generated because personal perspectives, coloured by the individual’s values, are used to make judgment of another’s efforts or outcomes.

### Unpredictable Policies

Changing policies and procedures can lead to conflict, especially if workers are not familiar with the changes being made through either their own ignorance or the failure to communicate the changes to the workforce.

Diagram

Description automatically generated with low confidence

*Source: 538068021 / iStock.com*

## Seeking Assistance

Whenever problems or issues arise always seek advice from the members of your work team first. These close work colleagues may be able to suggest possible ways of dealing with the challenges or at least provide advice as to who you may go to for advice.

## Strategies for Resolving Conflict

Once a conflict starts, it needs to be resolved as quickly as possible. The five most used ways of resolving conflict are listed below. It should be remembered that the style chosen will depend both on the conflict involved and the people trying to resolve it.

### Avoiding

The avoiding strategy’s animal logo would be the Turtle.

This technique is for the person to withdraw into their shell to avoid conflict. They surrender their personal goals to avoid people and places of conflict.

Conflict is never solved in this approach – persons simply give up and do not become involved.

This is a negative coping method.

### Competing

The avoiding strategy’s animal logo would be the Shark.

This technique is to attempt to overpower opponents by forcing them to accept the solutions of a single person. Goals are very important; people are of minimum importance. This approach is one where the need is to achieve at all costs regardless of whether others have valid points of view.

This is a negative coping method.

### Accommodating

The accommodating strategy’s animal logo would be the Kola Bear.

This technique reflects a belief or state of being that relationships are of more importance than personal goals or of finding a real solution to the conflict.

Persons do not enjoy conflict, so they give up positions of righteousness and their goals to achieve harmony.

Priority is given to satisfying the needs of other persons and disregard their own needs.

This is a negative coping method.

### Compromising

The accommodating strategy’s animal logo would be the Fox.

This technique reflects a moderate concern by a person with their own goals and about their relationships with other people.

They like a solution where both parties gain (Win – Win). They seek to meet some of their needs and some of the other party’s needs - splitting the difference in some way.

### Collaborating

The collaborating strategy’s animal logo would be the Owl.

This technique reflects the value of both person’s goals and relationships.

When a conflict arises, they seek solutions that can achieve the goals of all people within the conflict.

By seeking solutions that satisfy all parties, they endeavour to maintain relationships.

Which strategy is adopted depends on several factors - these include who is involved in the conflict, i.e. is it a co-worker, your boss or customer?

However remember that avoiding, accepting and accommodating approaches are inherently **negative** coping methods.

Using negative coping methods impacts eventually on work performance, distracts from job duties, and saps enthusiasm for work. Therefore, staff are encouraged to do everything they can to learn how to confront and resolve workplace conflict.

## A picture containing toy Description automatically generated

## Confronting conflict

Before resolving conflict, it first must be confronted. All staff are encouraged to use this simple process to clarify what conflict and their feelings about it are.

1. **Listen to your thoughts and feelings.** Write down your feelings if necessary.
2. **Assess the situation.** Take some time to think about the situation. If you have let your frustration level increase, you may have a distorted interpretation of the situation.
3. **Acknowledge what is going on.** Remember, your perception of the problem may differ from someone else's perception. If you have negatively contributed to the situation, acknowledge your behaviour.
4. **Set aside time to talk.** It's often best to resolve conflict the day it happens. Set aside time to talk in person. Words and feelings are often misinterpreted on the phone and in email.

## Choose the Right Conflict Management Strategy

Before endeavouring to discuss workplace conflict, make sure all parties are in control of their emotions. If the talk becomes combative or overly stressful, take a break or reschedule it for a time when emotions aren't in control of the situation.

Sometimes conflict isn't easily resolved between two parties. To resolve such conflict, a third unbiased party is often needed to intervene, clarify the situation, and suggest possible solutions. Always bring in a supervisor before the conflict reaches a dangerous level. He or she may suggest taking the issue to a human resources mediator or attend a conflict-resolution workshop.

Below is a process each employee should try to apply when taking part in discussions to resolve workplace conflict:

### Identify the issue

State your needs in a respectful and honest manner but be aware of the needs of the other person involved. Communicate the problem without placing blame on the other person—you'll avoid angering your co-worker.

### Listen actively

Give someone else a chance to voice his or her own thoughts and feelings. Use your active listening skills, don't interrupt, and make sure your body language is relaxed, not threatening.

### Explore the solutions

As a gesture of goodwill, be the first to initiate some sort of resolution. Try to generate some sort of compromise. Brainstorm possible options. Try listing the pros and cons. Know when to agree to disagree.

### Respond

After you've discussed the issue, do not let your frustration increase; act on the solution you and your co-worker have agreed upon.

Focus on preserving a positive working relationship.

Before attending a meeting to try and resolve any conflict, all parties need to consider their positions on the following:

* Think about how assertive or aggressive is prudent.
* How important is the subject of the conflict in terms of work duties, tasks and workplace effectiveness?
* What can be given up or compromised on?
* What can be the areas of potential cooperation?
* What can be lost or given up – what is not important?

## Minimising Conflict

There are ways in which workplace conflict can be minimised. These include:

* Each employee knows and understands their job description and who their immediate supervisor is. Trying to do too many jobs for too many people only means frustration and errors occurs, as well as increasing the chance of offending both your colleagues and our clients!
* Avoid office politics or the taking of sides in already existing conflicts, particularly in issues that do not concern the work of the employee.
* Ensure behaviour is correct and courteous.
* Be explicit in what is communicated. People do not read minds readers. Be clear in what you say and ensure that misinterpretation is minimal.
* Have a positive approach to both work and colleagues.
* Don’t believe all that is going around the gossip circles of an office or workshop. Avoid acting on hearsay, news and rumour.

## Legislation

There are several pieces of legislation that impact on our workplaces. A summary of these pieces of legislation are outlined below:

### Anti-Discrimination Legislation

The Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 addresses discrimination issues related to:

* gender and sex
* race, colour, nationality, ethnic or religious background
* physical or intellectual or psychiatric disability, or any organism capable of causing disease
* sexuality

Discrimination, harassment and defamation are all unlawful. People cannot be treated unfairly because of their nationality, race, ethnicity, religion or skin colour. This includes any behaviour that is unwelcome and aims to diminish their standing or embarrasses them.

Anyone who believes they have been subjected to discrimination, harassment, or vilification have the option to seek assistance from the relevant Anti-Discrimination Board and/or the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commissioner who will advise them of their rights under the legislation.

Federal, State, and Territory laws: The laws protecting individuals from discrimination include the Commonwealth’s Racial Discrimination Act (1975), and the Racial Hatred Act (1995). Each State and Territory also has legislation in this area.

### Ethics

There is no current Commonwealth legislation specifically targeting ethical behaviour. Queensland does have the Public Sector Ethics Act 1994.

To behave ethically means to be moral and right in your conduct. That includes adhering with the rules or standards for right conduct or practice.

Ethical principles are guidelines based on morality that determines the lengths or boundaries a person or business sets for itself.

Ethical principles are the positions from which guidance can be obtained when making a decision.

Codes of Practice <http://codes.bli.net.au/Codes.asp>

Codes of Practice are sets of guidelines and regulations to be followed by members of some professions, trades, occupations, organisations etc. They are not usually covered by law, but rather by agreement of participants or members. Data in the Codes of Practice database consists of several different types - Codes of Practice (Australian & International), Standards (Australian & International), Australian Design Rules, and ‘Other’.

Privacy Laws [www.privacy.gov.au/law/act](file:///D:\Dropbox\Courses-Masters\BSB20120\Course\docs\Task6\www.privacy.gov.au\law\act)

Privacy laws regulate the type of information which may be collected and how this information may be used and stored. This ensures information is not misused or abused.

Organisations must not unnecessarily intrude on an individual’s privacy. Reasonable steps must be carried out to maintain data quality and consider how the information will be used and stored.

There are three actions that an organisation can do to make it easier to comply with this privacy legislation:

1. Try to transact anonymously with individuals where it is lawful and practicable to do so; this reduces the amount of personal information that is collected and held.
2. Limit the collection of personal information to the minimum necessary to complete a transaction.
3. Make it as easy as possible for individuals to access and correct their own information.

Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) [www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au](file:///D:\Dropbox\Courses-Masters\BSB20120\Course\docs\Task6\www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au)

The primary legislation is the Work Health and Safety Act 2011. The objectives of the legislation are to protect the health and safety of workers, improve safety outcomes in workplaces, reduce compliance costs for business, and improve efficiency for health and safety regulators.

All employees need to be aware of their rights and responsibilities under this legislation. In simple terms this includes:

* Being aware of workplace health and safety policies and ensure procedures are followed.
* Notify the Workplace Health and Safety Officer (WHSO) of specific risks or hazards by completing an Employee Feedback Form.
* A safety risk assessment must be undertaken by the WHSO Officer at least once a year using the Workplace Safety Checklist.

### Environmentally Sustainable Work Practices

Environmentally sustainable work practices are those which reduce harm on the environment and reduce wastage of resources. All employees can help protect the environment by following the guidelines below:

**Reduce**

* Use goods which stop waste being generated
* Reduce waste by choosing products that have minimal packaging and can be used productively and then recycled.

**Re-Use**

* Re-use containers, packaging, or waste products wherever possible.

**Recycle**

* Recycle waste material into useable products wherever possible.

**For Waste that Can’t Be Avoided, Reused or Recycled**

* Treat the waste to make it less harmful or reduce the volume of the harmful component
* Dispose of the waste safely.

In general business terms, our employees should follow these pointers in their daily work routines:

* Consider sustainability issues when planning and carrying out tasks.
* Promote and encourage environmental awareness to ensure all employees are aware of their environmental responsibilities.
* Aim to continually improve environmental performance by identifying and addressing environmental risk.
* Make resources available to implement environmental risk management procedures.
* Identify and manage environmental risks associated with work activities to minimise their impact on the environment.
* Follow Environmental Purchasing Guidelines:
* Become informed about the environmental impacts of products purchased.
* Search for environmentally friendly products.
* Choose products with less packaging.
* Choose products with recyclable or reusable packaging.
* Re-use plastic bags and all types of containers if possible.
* Buy quality goods that will last.
* Buy recycled goods which have already saved resources and raw materials and help reduce the overall quantity of waste.

Logo

Description automatically generated with low confidence

## Summary

* People from different cultures send and receive messages differently.
* These differences may increase the chances that one or the other party may misunderstand the message being sent.
* Differences may arise in:
  + Language
  + Paralinguistic techniques
  + Politeness.
* Conflict can arise due to:
  + Conflicting needs
  + Conflicting styles
  + Conflicting perceptions
  + Conflicting goals
  + Conflicting pressures
  + Conflicting roles
  + Different personal values
  + Unpredictable policies.
* Conflict can be resolved by:
  + Avoidance
  + Accommodation
  + Compromise
  + Competition
  + Collaboration.