

The practicality of using conflict as a positive technique for dealing with diverse and complex goals in Project Management

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Abstract

Conflict theory existed for nearly thirty years but it is only this last seven or eight years that it has been considered as a technique for creating change and resolving complex issues. In Project Management, in particular, only recently it has been considered as a useful technique for dealing with the complex and diverse issues that surround the process.

The author will provide the basis, from theory and practice by presenting real life examples, for the practicality of using conflict (and conflict management) as a positive technique and another tool in the Project Manager's 'kit'.

Introduction

Considering any Project as a System we will have to accept the fundamental premise of the systems theory which stresses the importance of interrelationships and the links between the parts of the system as well as the ones between the sub-systems. Making these links work effectively is the problem of project management.

In the first chapter the author will set out to show briefly 'why conflict is generated in projects'. Having established the reason(s), the work of various authors will be reviewed, and an attempt will be made to establish the need for using conflict as a technique for dealing with diverse and complex goals. This area will cover also the findings and/or proposals from the work of practitioners in project management.

Following on from that in the next section real-life examples from the author's experience will be presented, which due to his background will be mainly from the 'inter-company' environment. At the same time an analysis of the findings will be attempted, based on the issues raised by the literature search, and trying to establish how theory applies into reality and how could it be used better.

Finally, before the conclusion, the author will carry out an overall analysis/overview between the real-life examples and the issues raised when using conflict as a technique.