

Connecting to Opportunity Through Conflict



A Workshop for the
National Head Start Association's
32nd Annual Training Conference
in Orlando, Florida

Presented by
The National Transportation Center for School Children

A Division Of:



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HOW DOES CONFLICT ARISE?

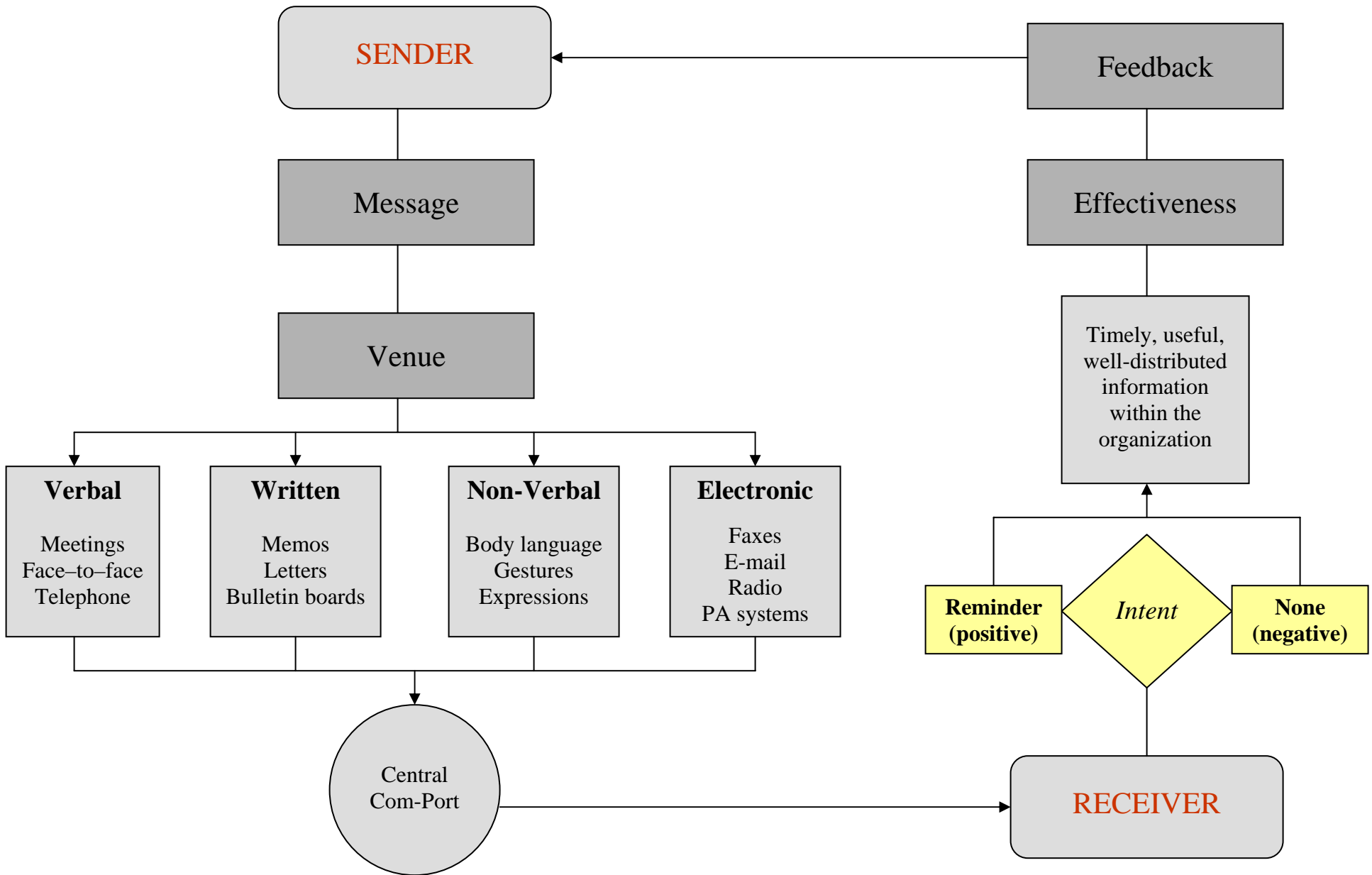
Causes of Conflict

- 1. Perceptions**
- 2. Attitudes**
- 3. Beliefs**
- 4. Values**
- 5. Needs**
- 6. Poor Communication**

Examples of Characteristics for Conflict Management and Solutions

- 1. Timely**
- 2. Focused (Problem vs. Individual)**
- 3. Non-confrontational**
- 4. Compromising**
- 5. Non-emotional**
- 6. Long Term**
- 7. Simplistic**
- 8. Observable**

Integrated Communication Flow Matrix*



*By Steven Marsinko, M.B.A., Source: The Quality Management Forum, Spring 2002, Volume 28, Number 2

LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION

LEVEL I - INTRA PERSONALLY

- With yourself (we all communicate with ourselves) this assists us communicate, interact, interpret and influence interpersonally

LEVEL II - INTERPERSONALLY

- Communicating with others one-on-one (a dyad) usually face to face or via media-enables people to communicate on the next level

LEVEL III - SMALL GROUP

- Comprised of three (3) or more people attempting to adapt to their environment and achieve commonly recognized goals (can cross disciplines or functions within divisions and organizations)

LEVEL IV - LARGE GROUP OR MULTI-GROUP

- Four (4) or more members or several small clusters or small groups that share completion of tasks that lead to the accomplishment of a common goal
- Occurs within a system or organization
- Also referred to as Self Directed Work Teams (SDWT)



WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? WHAT DO THESE NON-VERBAL INDICATORS CONVEY?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finger tapping | <input type="checkbox"/> Slumped rounded shoulders |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Roving eyes | <input type="checkbox"/> Hand(s) on hip |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arms folded | <input type="checkbox"/> Pointing or wagging finger back and forth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tense military stance | <input type="checkbox"/> Raised eyebrows |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Squinted or rolling eyes | <input type="checkbox"/> Palms open-toward listener |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sincere relaxed smile | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Broad eyes | |

THE PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS

Identify Reason for Improvement

Identify the problem and the reason for working on the problem

Define Problem

Select a scientific problem and set a target date for improvement

Analyze Problem

Identify the root cause problem

Measure Results

Implement the selected solution on a trial basis
Measure the results

Improve the Process

Implement the selected solution to the entire process and monitor

Heads Up/Heads Down...Your Choice

All of us strive to do the right thing for our employers, our friends, our families and ourselves. After all, our great moral teachers, leaders, parents and others who have cared about us have drilled in our heads that it is good to do the right thing and be ethical and it is bad to do the wrong thing and be unethical. Today, it is rare that we can take an action that doesn't test our ethical and moral aptitudes.

Doing the right thing may cause us to gain friends or foes. Doing the right thing in some instances also may mean we are maintaining the status quo. This is easy and low-risk generally, in contrast to striving for excellence, which can be much harder and can require higher risks. Excelling at what we stand for or at what others wish for us to stand oftentimes adds pressure, tempting the best of us to take short cuts to reach goals, which increases the likelihood of not doing the right thing.

So what are some of the measures we can take to help assure that we can hold our "heads up" as opposed to holding our "heads down" as we navigate the opportunities and threats that living life brings?

1. Model your life on principles such as honesty and trustworthiness.
2. Maintain fairness and equity in all that you do.
3. Don't bend the rules and cut corners for personal gain.
4. Hold yourself accountable for all of your actions.
5. Learn from your mistakes.
6. Don't blame or accuse others falsely when you know the information you have about them is inaccurate or outdated.
7. Avoid spreading or initiating rumors.
8. Stay clear of those that you know are not doing the right thing.
9. Don't tolerate practices you know are illegal or inappropriate.
10. Don't knowingly offend others by withholding information that would make them appear in a more favorable light.
11. Don't accept or give something that makes you feel uncomfortable.
12. Don't misuse or abuse confidential information.
13. Ask for permission to use the ideas and property of others as opposed to taking them without their knowledge or consent.
14. Avoid situations that may be interpreted as wrongdoing. Perceptions are real.

Are You Raking Leaves or Digging at the Roots to Solve Problems?

There are days, sometimes months and years where we lose time trying to solve or fix problems. These could be work-related, personal or someone else's problems. Many times problems become more complex than they need to be. This usually results because we delay in finding a solution or we deny that a problem exists. On occasion, we believe that we have solved a problem only to have it resurface or to come back in a different form. **Get at the root of your problem by trying the following tips.** -- Marilyn

1. Carefully define the problem to make sure that there is one.
2. Determine the ownership of the problem. Is it your problem or someone else's? If it is not your problem, do you really want to get involved?
3. Write down how the problem affects you (Be honest in your assessment).
4. Reflect on how the problem may have occurred.
5. Establish a time frame for solving the problem.
6. Determine if you have all of the skills needed to solve the problem or if you need assistance.
7. Break the problem down into small pieces and determine how the parts interrelate.
8. Have confidence that you can solve the problem.
9. Test your solutions to a problem with someone that you trust. Feedback is always good and it helps to remain objective.
10. Take notes on how you solved the problem as these may be beneficial in the future.
11. Celebrate when you have solved a problem.

BONUS:

“A problem well stated is a problem half solved.” – Charles Kettering

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About The National Transportation Center for School Children

The **National Transportation Center for School Children (NTCSC)** is a division of M. H. West & Co., Inc. and located in Richmond, Virginia. Marilyn H. West following three years of SBIR grant support to evaluate transportation systems of Head Start Programs nationwide created the NTCSC. The Center serves as a resource, consults with and offers technical assistance services to Head Start and other education and health and human services programs on a wide range of transportation issues. The Center publishes ***The Transporter***, a FREE publication that contains guidance and tips on how to build and maintain transportation systems that promote the safe transport of children, youth and other passengers.

The Mission of the NTCSC

To promote high standards and best practices on the transport of children and youth by serving as a nationwide resource and clearinghouse that creates strategies, models, plans, publications and other tools and makes these available to providers of transportation in the private and public sectors.

How the NTCSC Can Help

The NTCSC can help promote excellence in the performance of transportation programs and solve issues and challenges such as laws, regulations, high driver turnover, vehicle age and high maintenance costs, long bus routes, negative passenger behavior, limited parental involvement, scarce financial resources, and operational efficiencies.

About the Presenter

Marilyn H. West has over 35 years working with health, human service and education programs and agencies throughout the United States. She holds a graduate degree in health administration from the University of Pittsburgh (PA) and undergraduate degree in mathematics from Waynesburg College (PA). She is the founder and owner of her 14-year-old management consulting company of which the NTCSC is now a division. She serves on numerous boards in the public and private sectors in a leadership position. She is involved with the business community working on statewide and national issues involving healthcare, education and economic issues. Has participated in business process optimization and strategic and financial planning initiatives and has led the business process reengineering, organizational development and strategic planning initiatives for the firm. Has also substantial expertise in regulatory impact work, business counseling and development, community planning, workforce development, human resources, survey research, government relations and lobbying. Other areas of specialization are team building, continuous quality improvement, survey research, focus group and survey work, motivational speaking, customer service improvement, human relations, conflict management and retreat facilitation. Has assisted many organizations reverse poor financial performance, dysfunctional workforces and poor relationships between organizations and people. Serves as executive coach and mentor.

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