



Dealing With Employee Conflict

1. Decide if the employee or employees involved in the conflict are worth keeping.
 - a. *It would be prudent to discuss firing with a lawyer.*
2. Decide if the type of conflict is best addressed by edict (an order issued by a person in authority) or through diplomacy.
 - a. An example of an edict might be: Sexual harassment is prohibited in all forms.
 - i. Defined at [eeoc.gov/laws/types/sexual_harassment.cfm](https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/sexual_harassment.cfm).
3. Decide if you are willing to address the conflict as a neutral mediator and try the following:
 - a. Meet with those involved individually to determine the cause of the conflict. Examples could be:
 - i. Communication issues;
 - ii. Employee differences such as values, interests, priorities, abilities, production;
 - iii. Scarce resources such as not enough materials, labor, space, or money for everyone to meet their needs;
 - iv. Lack of empathy or understanding; or
 - v. Historical conflict.
 - b. Ask questions about the conflict.

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- i. Who or what is the cause?
 - ii. What does the conflict do to productivity, the work environment, focus, stress levels, profitability, etc.
 - c. Ask questions about possible solutions, potentially including:
 - i. What they could and are willing to do?
 - ii. What you could do?
 - iii. What other parties could do?
 - d. Before and during any questioning: be professional and require that all parties act civil and courteous. During any questioning: listen, take notes, remain calm, remain neutral, and clarify your understanding of the problem.
 - e. Find out if there is room for compromise or if those involved are willing to meet and collaborate on finding a solution.
 - f. If appropriate, discuss sympathy/empathy.
4. Working *together* toward a solution could improve teamwork and employer/employee relations (as opposed to assigning blame).
5. Watch our on-demand webinar, *Human Resources*.
business.idahosbdc.org/Events.aspx?mode=3&area=&days=90&layout=4
6. After researching the problem, determine your course of action, and move forward. Discussing what you have discovered with professionals, such as a lawyer or Idaho SBDC Business Consultant, could be helpful.

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