



EXCEED THE BAR

CAREER NAVIGATOR SERIES

A close-up photograph of a person's hand, palm facing up, with a black wristband. The hand is overlaid with a white, glowing circuitry pattern that resembles a network or data flow. Various icons are integrated into the circuitry, including a laptop, a thumbs-up, a magnifying glass, a clock, and a circular arrow.

COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

MANAGING AND RESOLVING CONFLICT

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This competency development guide is designed to take a closer look at yourself, **help you explore strengths and development opportunities** for a particular competency that is important for successful performance in a work environment, and provide practical guidance and tasks to help you develop a particular competency.

Whether you are at the start of your career, exploring opportunities for promotion within your current organisation, or in a period of career transition, this guide will to **help focus and guide your efforts**. It provides you with a **structured approach to increase your self-awareness** and to craft a personalised action plan.

Competency

Managing and Resolving Conflict

Managing and resolving conflict means anticipating, diffusing and resolving disagreements, confrontations, tensions and complaints in a practical and constructive manner

Behaviours

- ✓ Comfortable calming upset people
- ✓ Handles angry individuals well
- ✓ Maintains composure when confronted
- ✓ Manages the emotional climate
- ✓ Focused on resolving conflict and arguments
- ✓ Proactively managing possible disagreements or conflict
- ✓ Resolves conflict in a mature, yet assertive manner
- ✓ Treats relationship issues with sensitivity
- ✓ Negotiates or mediates sound agreements in situations where disagreements or differences in interest arise
- ✓ Listens and fairly considers both sides of a story
- ✓ Finds mutually acceptable solutions
- ✓ Reaches agreement or finds resolutions

Self-Assessment

Self-awareness is the first step in proactive career management. This process starts with a **sound assessment of your development needs**. You will benefit from acknowledging your own weaknesses so that you can actively plan for how you intend to overcome them. Use the questions below to guide your thinking and reflection.

How relevant is this competency and how does it apply to your job/role/career?

How does this competency contribute to success in your job/role/career?

| Based on the above behaviours, what rating would you give yourself for this competency, and why? Try to identify specific practical examples for each behavioural indicator in your work environment, or even in your private life. | Rating Scale | | | | |
|---|--|---------------------------------|---------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| | 1 – Limited (needs significant development) | 2 – Basic (development area) | 3 - Competent | 4 - Potential Strength | 5 - Clear Strength |
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| Reflecting on the above examples in demonstrating this competency, what behaviours are supporting you in achieving success and which behaviours might be sabotaging your success with this competency? | |
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| Based on a recent performance review, assessment results or other feedback you received, what observations and/or recommendations were made in relation to this competency? | |
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If you have not received feedback recently, it may be helpful to ask a trusted advisor for constructive feedback and ask them to clarify and elaborate on their observations. It is **important to understand and learn from their feedback to help guide your future development**, rather than to challenge it. The aim here is to learn how your behaviour is perceived by others. Remember that input from others which challenges your own self-perceptions can be extremely valuable in opening you up to new developmental opportunities that you have not previously recognized. During this discussion, consider asking the following kinds of questions:

- ✓ Can you tell me exactly what your impression is of my ability in relation to this competency?
- ✓ What is this observation based on?
- ✓ What do I do that you feel is less effective?
- ✓ Why do you feel that it was less effective?
- ✓ What do you feel I could have done instead?
- ✓ How do you feel that I could best develop my competence in this area?

Self-Reflection

Following on your self-assessment you will now conduct further reflection to enhance your self-awareness and to establish a clear mental image of your accomplishments in relation to this competency. It serves to **identify your strengths**, to celebrate your achievements **and to give you clarity and direction about what you need to develop**.

| | |
|--|--|
| 1 Describe a time when you took personal accountability for a workplace conflict and initiated contact with the individual(s) involved to explain your actions. - What did you do? - What was the outcome? | |
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2

Recall a time when your position on an issue was opposed by others whose cooperation you needed.

- How did you handle it?
- What was the outcome?
- What could you have done differently?

3

Think about a relationship with a co-worker where there was underlying tension.

- What caused it?
- What did you do about it?
- What was the outcome?
- Was there anything you could have done differently?

4

Remember when you were instrumental in resolving an issue or disagreement with a customer or important stakeholder.

- Why were you involved?
- What did you do?
- What was the result?

5

When groups work together, conflict often erupts. Describe a time that conflict occurred in one of your work groups.

- What did you do?
- What was the outcome?
- How could this be avoided in future?

6

Refer to the recommended Video resources below and watch *Managing conflict in the workplace*.

- List out the 5 steps involved in managing workplace conflict.
- Write about when you experienced conflict that threatened to get out of hand in your current role. Referring to the 5 steps, what should you have done to manage it?

Practical Development Tips and Actions

Now that you have a better idea of the specific aspects relating to this competency that may be an area of development you can **start exploring some practical tips and actions**. The majority of the recommendations in this guide are self-directed. However, if you have any questions about how any of these activities may be undertaken within the context of your work environment, **we encourage you to consult your manager, mentor or coach**.

Tip number ①

Read the article *Getting under the skin of workplace conflict* before answering the questions in this section.

Knowing when to manage and when to resolve a conflict is not always that easy. Conflicts in the day-to-day interactions of humans can be resolved instead of managed. In fact, some conflicts or disputes ending up being managed could have just as effectively been resolved, thus avoiding the formal strategies.

- ✓ What did you do to ensure that you took enough time to acquaint yourself with what was happening?
- ✓ How did you question them about the situation?
- ✓ Were the employees given enough time to express their emotions and were these acknowledged?
- ✓ How did you determine what the root cause of the conflict was?
- ✓ How did you establish common areas of agreement on how to proceed with the issue?
- ✓ How did you determine which actions to take?
- ✓ How did you involve the parties to ensure that they buy into the proposed actions?
- ✓ What follow-up actions did you take to monitor these actions?
- ✓ What could you do better to resolve conflict at work?
- ✓ What course of action would you take if the conflict goes unresolved?

Tip number ②

When conflict is mismanaged, it can cause great harm to a relationship, but when handled in a respectful, positive way, conflict provides an opportunity to strengthen the bond between two people. Think of a recent situation where you experienced conflict and reflect on the following:

- ✓ Your ability to recognize and respond to the things that matter to the other person
- ✓ Your capacity to empathize with the other person's viewpoint
- ✓ Your readiness to forgive and forget, and to move past the conflict without holding resentments or anger
- ✓ Your ability to compromise or see the other person's side
- ✓ Your ability to seek a compromise and avoid punishing the other person
- ✓ Your ability to reach an agreement regarding a solution to the issue at hand
- ✓ What do you need to improve?

Tip number ③

Workplace conflict is inevitable when employees of various backgrounds and different work styles are brought together for a shared business purpose. Sometimes, the situation can develop to the point where it's appropriate to use formal procedures to address unresolved conflict. If a complaint is serious or the individual wants it investigated formally, they should have the right to pursue a grievance. Familiarise yourself with the policies and procedures relating to grievances.

Discuss the following:

- ✓ Describe the grievance procedure in your organisation.
- ✓ How are the policies and procedures relating to grievances communicated?
- ✓ Given the above, would it make the rationale for decisions transparent?
- ✓ Are the roles and responsibilities for resolving conflict clearly defined to understand who are accountable?
- ✓ How are grievances between management and employees resolved?
- ✓ What tactics are used to force a contract settlement if that would be necessary?
- ✓ What could be done to ensure that formal processes are avoided or treated as a last resort?

Development Activity number ①

Find something you can do in your current role to **manage and resolve conflict** that will make a positive impact at your organisation.

- Describe what you did.
- What impact did it have?
- How did it make you feel?

Development Activity number ②

List 5 things your team or department can do to **manage and resolve conflict** to improve things at your organisation.

- Now write down what you think can be done to put these ideas into action.
- Discuss your ideas with your team or department.
- Write down what feedback you received.
- How did it make you feel?

Development Activity number ③

Refer to the recommended Video resources below and watch *Managing conflict in the workplace*.

- List out the 5 steps involved in managing workplace conflict.
- Write about when you experienced conflict that threatened to get out of hand in your current role.
- Referring to the 5 steps, what should you have done to manage it?

Preparation for Interviews

It can be difficult to answer a question like “what is your greatest weakness?”—especially when you expected to be discussing your strengths and what makes you better qualified or suitable for a particular role than others.

Although re-framing your weaknesses into a positive light can be challenging, in regularly conducting self-reflection and combining self-awareness with a clear plan of action, you will be able to deal with these difficult questions with ease.

The key to preparing for this question is to identify aspects that could be perceived as a weakness but could also still communicate strength. This will show the interviewer you are self-aware enough to acknowledge your weakness, know your areas of development, and appreciate the opportunities it presents too.

The following are examples of typical interview questions for this competency. Spend some time reflecting on each and make notes of specific examples to prepare for these curveball questions and ensure you can frame your weaknesses in a positive light and showcase how you are improving in each area.

Give a specific example of a time when you were involved in a conflict at work.

- Describe your approach to conflict resolution.
- How effective was your approach?
- How were you able to maintain a working relationship with that individual?

① **Situation:**

② **Task:**

③ **Action:**

④ **Result:**

Tell me about a time when you anticipated conflict was going to occur.

- How did you know conflict was likely to occur?
- What did you do to minimize impact of the conflict?
- What was the outcome?

① **Situation:**

② **Task:**

③ **Action:**

④ **Result:**

Recommended Resources

Learning by Reading

- ✓ Getting under the skin of workplace conflict
http://www.cipd.co.uk/binaries/getting-under-skin-workplace-conflict_2015-tracing-experiences-employees.pdf

Learning by Watching or Listening

- ✓ Managing conflict in the workplace
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aSq5IMpQReM>
- ✓ Conflict Resolution Techniques
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJH0XV9jGIE>

Personal Reflections

Reflection helps create and clarify the meaning and value of your learning experiences. You have an opportunity now to review your learning and progress. This section is about turning the learning and insight into actionable steps to support your personal development goals. Answer these questions before you create your individual development action plan.

Which of the above activities or resources did you find the most useful and why?

Briefly describe what you learned that was new, insightful, and gave you new thoughts and ideas.

Make a list of things you can do based on your newly acquired knowledge, insights, thoughts and ideas.

Make a list of things you still need to focus on.

Development Action Planning

Without a clear plan, it is difficult to track progress and measure your successes and accomplishments in relation to your career aspirations. Focus initially on your short and medium-term plan.

Consider specific work experiences, activities, actions that can be taken within the context of the current role that will enhance this competency. , relationships to leverage, other self-development strategies, including formal development solutions. Note 1) specific actions (2-3), timeline and milestones to maintain momentum and 2) concrete expected outcomes.

Identify the opportunity

List the development opportunity that will enhance performance in your current role in relation to this competency

Identify why it is important

State the reason why this particular development opportunity will make a difference in your career

Identify what good looks like

State what you would like to accomplish and achieve with this competency. This should be aspirational and what you would like to achieve over the medium-term

Identify learning experiences

List activities, assignments, and meaningful experiences that you pursue that will offer an opportunity to develop you develop, enhance, and apply this competency

Identify your stakeholders

Identify those people in your life and relationships you can leverage to provide you with honest feedback, support, information on what is required, and help you along the way in developing this competency

Identify training courses

Identify any other training courses, further relevant reading, podcasts or blogs that can provide the knowledge base that one can then apply to strengthen this competency

Identify support required

State what support you need and who you need it from in order to successfully develop and apply this competency

Identify support required

State what support you need and who you need it from in order to keep you on track, successfully develop and apply this competency

Identify tracking methods

Define your goal clearly, especially how you will know when you have achieved it and then indicate specific measures you will use to monitor and track your progress

Identify accountability

State who you can / share your goals with. Sharing your goals with someone will help you stay on track and help you stay accountable

Identify possible derailers

Consider what challenges you may face in trying to achieve your goal and define how you will manage possible setbacks to ensure sustained effort and perseverance