

## Communication is Key in Overcoming Conflict

Is there that co-worker that you struggle to get along with due to their lack of teamwork or poor attitude? Do you butt heads because you each have a different idea on how a task should be done?

### Strength in numbers.

Success Coaches of Employer Resource Networks (ERNs) from across Michigan recently gathered for peer discussion on ways they resolve employee conflict at member companies.

### Communication for a better workplace.

*Success Coach Nicole Schwarz (Lakeshore ERN of Mason County)* enjoys the process of bringing employees together to resolve conflict through effective communication.

“Conflict resolution can be rewarding if each person is willing to have open guided discussion with a goal of long term cooperation,” said Nicole. “Every workplace will have conflict, it’s how you deal with it that matters.”



### Challenge yourself in a safe environment.

“Most people don’t like to address conflict at work or home,” said Nicole.

“Conflict makes people feel uncomfortable, but by addressing it, you can become a better leader in the workplace. You can learn from the situation and put into practice ideas to avoid future conflict.”

### Ignoring conflict.

“Employees have frequently told me that the reason they don’t say anything to anyone about the conflict is because they don’t want to cause problems,” said Nicole. “If you don’t address the small stuff it turns into a much larger problem.”

### Companies striving to address conflict.

Your company achieves its best success when employees work together as a team. Conflict can cause stress

and be a distraction resulting in lower productivity or even job loss.

**The referral.** HR and a supervisor recently sent two employees to Nicole. The employees had to work closely together and couldn’t get along. The conflict was affecting the entire department.

**The process.** “We sat down separately and then together,” said Nicole. “We discussed the issues that were causing problems. The main issue was communication. Neither was very good at communicating their needs to the other person.”

### Conflict resolution success.

The discussion led each employee to realize that it is ok to talk to the other person about

### West Michigan Employer Resource Network

#### Our goal...

Creating access and resources for employee success at work and in life. We partner with employees who work for:

#### Member Companies

- ◆ Aspen Surgical
- ◆ Corium International
- ◆ Holland Home
- ◆ Ranir, LLC
- ◆ Sunset Retirement Community & Services

#### Strategic Partners

- ◆ AAC Credit Union
- ◆ Kent County DHHS
- ◆ Michigan ERN

how to make their work life and performance better. The employees kept their jobs and now have the skills and confidence to work better together.

#### Have a co-worker conflict?

Don’t hesitate to contact your Success Coach to discuss a conflict and create a strategy to address it - for both personal and company success.

Source: Michigan ERN

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### Aspen Surgical

6945 Southbelt Dr SE, Caledonia

- ◆ Friday: 8:30AM-5:00PM  
(1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> week)
- ◆ Friday: 7:00AM-3:30PM  
(3<sup>rd</sup> week)

### Corium International, Inc.

4558 50th St SE, Grand Rapids

- ◆ Thursday: 8:30AM-5:00PM  
(1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> week)
- ◆ Thursday: 7:00AM-3:30PM  
(3<sup>rd</sup> week)

### Holland Home

2100 Raybrook SE, Grand Rapids

- ◆ Wednesday: 8:30AM-5:00PM

### Ranir, LLC

4701 East Paris Ave SE, Grand Rapids

- ◆ Tuesday: 8:30AM-5:00PM  
(1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> week)
- ◆ Tuesday: 7:00AM-3:30PM  
(3<sup>rd</sup> week)

### Sunset Retirement Community & Services: Brookcrest

3400 Wilson Ave, Grandville

- ◆ Monday: 8:30AM-5:00PM  
(1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> week)
- ◆ Monday: 7:00AM-3:00PM  
(3<sup>rd</sup> week)

### Walk-in Welcome

Call, email or text for appointments.  
Off-site meeting locations available.  
Request additional times if needed.

[www.ern-mi.com](http://www.ern-mi.com)

## Philosopher's Square

"Peace is not the absence of conflict, it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means."

~ Ronald Regan

## Moving Tips: Save Time, Money & Stress

Have you considered moving closer to work for an easier and less costly commute, or thought about buying a home? Do you feel stressed when thinking about moving combined with your busy work and home life?



**Moving Savings.** Moving can be expensive, so strategize your move:

- ◆ Simply your life with less clutter. You may find that you won't need all of your furniture in your new place. Sell items you don't need in a yard sale, on online garage sales, or at stores that pay cash for clothes/toys. These funds can help fund your move.
- ◆ Get free boxes from grocery and other large stores.
- ◆ Enlist friends and family in packing, moving and cleaning.
- ◆ If movers are needed for large items, compare company prices. Consider renting a U-Haul van and inexpensive movers to handle the lifting.

### Tackle a moving task list.

Ask your Success Coach for the Moving Tips sheet highlighted in this newsletter. It includes a checklist for packing, address changing and achieving a safe move. Reach out to your Success Coach if you need help with planning. Your move will be less stressful if you strategize and start well over a month in advance. *Source: Michigan ERN*

## Mental Toughness in the Face of Conflict

Sometimes workplace conflict can mushroom into an employee intimidating another employee.

**Workplace intimidation.** *Success Coach Karen Sheerin (Southwest Michigan ERN)* recently had an employee come to her in tears due to feeling verbally mistreated by a co-worker.

**The process.** After gathering details, Karen advised the employee to not react negatively to the problem coworker, document the conflict (what happened, when, who was there), and speak to her supervisor. The supervisor fully supported her and encouraged the problem coworker to stop the behavior. Karen contacted the employee weekly to see how she was coping. The conflict has been resolved.

**Staying mentally tough.** Conflict, especially intimidation, can be stressful. What are ways you can address and cope with workplace conflict?

**Confidence.** People who are self-confident believe that they can achieve success, despite any obstacles they encounter. They work hard to develop themselves in competitive environments. They are proactive, decisive and courageous in spite of fear.

**Challenges.** Difficulties and uncertainty are all concepts that point to change and are natural parts of life that should be embraced.

**Control.** People with a strong sense of control over their lives are more connected to their emotions, self-regulating with behavior/language and motivated to achieve results. They believe that they've got the power to influence their outcomes. *Sources: Michigan ERN; www.success.com*