



OBTC 2016 at Walsh University June 8th – 11th, 2016

Submission Template

SUBMISSION GUIDANCE

- * Remove all identifying properties from this document **
- * All files must be saved in PDF format **
- *Please include ALL supplementary text at the end of this document**
- *Only one document should be submitted**

Submission Template for the 2016 OBTC Teaching Conference for Management Educators

1) Title, Abstract & Keywords

In your abstract, please include a brief session description (not to exceed 100 words), and three to four keywords. If your proposal is accepted, this description will be printed in the conference program.

A Conflict View of Coaching

This session shows the potential and advantages of using the perspective of conflict resolution to understand and teach employee coaching. This approach provides a deeper understanding of why certain approaches to coaching are more effective than others and also provides recommendations on how to improve the coaching relationship. This session will cover two short exercises that will introduce and reinforce the conceptual points. Because this represents a specific application of conflict resolution, these exercises and applications can also be used to enrich our understanding of how conflicts can be effectively resolved.

2) Format

- ☒ Activity or exercise
- ☐ Roundtable discussion (60 minute only)
- ☐ General discussion session

2a) For activities and exercises only, is yours best suited for

- ☐ A traditional classroom
- ☐ An online class
- ☒ Either

2b) For activities and exercises only, is yours best suited for

- ☐ Undergraduate students
- ☐ Graduate students
- ☒ Either

3) Time Requested:

- ☒ 30 Minutes
- ☐ 60 Minutes (*Roundtables must select 60 minutes*)
- ☐ 90 Minutes

4) Planning Details:

Each room contains a white board with markers, computer (PC) with DVD capability and computer projector. Does your session require any other equipment?

No

5) Teaching Implications:

What is the contribution of your session to management pedagogy/andragogy? Specifically, please include your learning objectives, and describe what management and/or teaching topics are relevant to your session, and why. Also, include theoretical, disciplinary, or theoretical foundations that will help reviewers understand how your ideas fit within the broader field of management.

When thinking about coaching employees to improve performance, utilizing a conflict resolution perspective may at first seem counter-intuitive. When discussing coaching we often focus on positive reinforcement and by contrast think of conflict in negative terms. However, viewing conflict solely as a negative overlooks the potential that this perspective has to offer. As for coaching, while we may want to emphasize the positive aspects of improving performance, at times the reason for coaching is negative (i.e., poor performance). Coaching can benefit by integrating what we know about conflict resolution. Conversely, coaching provides an excellent opportunity to demonstrate conflict resolution concepts in action. Two specific areas of scholarship to consider includes Thomas-Kilmann's conflict styles and negotiating.

The organizing framework for much of conflict resolution is the Thomas-Kilmann model (see figure in the appendix). Accordingly, conflicts and our responses to them can be plotted along two axes. One axis is the importance of the relationship, often referred to as cooperativeness, and the other is the importance of the outcome, often referred to as assertiveness. Responses to conflict fall into five general categories: Avoidance (ignore/hope for the best), Accommodation (let it slide, focus on the relationship), Competing (my way or else, focus on the outcome), Compromise (meeting halfway), and Collaboration (problem solve to maximize outcomes for both). When teaching conflict resolution there is generally a bias that we should strive for Collaboration, but arguably there are times when each approach is appropriate.

So where does coaching fall within framework? The answer depends on the individuals and situation, but again there is the general bias towards Collaboration. Coaching to improve employee performance involves both a focus on the relationship and on outcomes. As such, Accommodation, Power, and Avoidance are seldom appropriate

ways to coach someone. That leaves Comprise and Collaboration as both recognize the importance of the relationship and the outcome. More successful coaches and interventions would be expected to engage in Collaboration because of the additional focus on the relationship encompasses more of an individualized focus.

Having said that, the conflict resolution approach is only one way of improving our understanding of coaching. An important part of conflict resolution is negotiation and what we know about improving negotiation outcomes can also be applied to coaching. Two key concepts to keep in mind when coaching are interests versus issues and commitment.

When teaching negotiation, one of the most important things to do is to get students to appreciate the difference between issues and interests. One way to think about it is that issues represent symptoms and interests represents the underlying source or cause. Too often negotiations are distributive in nature, focusing on issues. This can lead to solutions that don't change things in the desired manner or impasses that fail to reach agreement. These suboptimal outcomes are less likely to occur with integrative bargaining, but this involves a shift to focusing on interests.

Applying an interest versus issue perspective to coaching has a similar potential for improving outcomes. We engage in coaching because of symptoms, a behavior that occurs that we want to change/stop, or an absence of a symptom, a behavior that is desired to be adopted. But focusing on just behaviors is akin to focusing on just issues.

Coaching can be improved by considering the why. Why isn't someone engaging in the desired behavior or why should someone adopt a new behavior? These motivational issues are more interest based. Alternatively, maybe there is another path to the desired outcome. This may be necessary to consider if for some reason someone is unable or unwilling to change. But resolving this coaching impasse involves looking beyond just prescribed behaviors. This involves greater problem solving/collaboration which is facilitated by a focus on interests.

Another key element of any negotiation is commitment. Commitment represents the follow-through. Just because you reach an agreement doesn't mean that the changes will be implemented once the coaching session is completed. For coaching to be effective, it is necessary to gain commitment.

Bibliography

DeMarr, B.J., & DeJanasz, S.C. (2013). Negotiation and Dispute Resolution.
Indianapolis, IN: Pearson.

DeJanasz, S.C., Dowd, K.O., & Schneider, B.Z. (2015). *Interpersonal Skills in Organizations 5th ed.*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Fisher, W.T., & Ury, M.C.; with Patton, W., Editor. (2011). *Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in*, 3rd ed. New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books.

Lewis-Duarte, M., & Bligh, M. C. (2012). Agents of "influence": Exploring the usage, timing, and outcomes of executive coaching tactics. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 33(3), 255-281.

Moss, S.E., & Sanchez, J.I. (2004). Are your employees avoiding you? Managerial strategies for closing the feedback gap, *Academy of Management Executive*, 18(1), 32-46.

Noe, R. A. (2013). *Employee Training and Development*. New York: McGraw-Hill Irwin.

Thomas, K.W. and Kilmann, R.H. (1974). Thomas-Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument, Xicom, Tuxedo, NY.

6) Session Description and Plan:

What will you actually do in this session? If appropriate, please include a timeline estimating the activities will you facilitate: how long will they take, and how will participants be involved? Please remember that reviewers will be evaluating how well the time request matches the activities you'd like to do, and the extent you can reasonably accomplish the session's goals. Reviewers will also be looking for how you are engaging the participants in the session.

15 minutes Vignette with debrief

15 minutes Discussion of additional ways to connect conflict resolution and coaching

After welcoming everyone and quickly giving an overview of the session, I will ask everyone to complete the Financials Help vignette (see appendix).

Once completed, I will poll the participants on which response they selected as what they would do and then which would be the worst response. I will then ask people to explain their choices. Next, I will place the responses on a conflict resolution chart. Finally, we will discuss any responses that were not previously discussed as the worst or what they would personally do.

After debriefing the vignette, I will lead a general discussion on the other ways that what we know about conflict resolution and negotiation can inform our teaching and understanding of coaching. This part of the session is meant to show the potential of this approach. Specific topics will include Issues versus Interests, Framing, and Commitment.

7) Application to Conference theme:

How does your session fit with the overall OBTC theme of *United in Service*?

In honesty, this session does not tie well into the conference, but it is consistent with the educational insights that are the foundation of OBTC.

8) Unique Contribution to OBTC:

Have you presented the work in this proposal before? If so, how will it be different? Is this proposal under current review somewhere else? If so, please explain. How will your proposal be different for the OBTC conference?

This work has not been previously submitted to OBTC and is not currently under review elsewhere.

Appendix

You have been a supervisor with Creative Marketing for five years and you feel that the group you direct works well together. Eight months ago you hired Alex, overall you have been impressed with how quickly Alex has learned the job and is currently performing. However, you have noticed that other people in the group are still submitting Alex's financials. While this is typical for the first month or two, by now Alex should have started submitting those personally. When you solicited feedback for Alex's six month review, everyone just had positive things to say and no one mentioned an issue with submitting the financials for Alex.

Based on this information, do the following:

- 1- Identify which of the following you would do as Alex's supervisor.
- 2- Identify which of the following is the worst response.

A____ Confront Alex and explain that submitting the financials is his responsibility and if he hasn't figured out how to do them, he better learn quickly.

B____ Assign Christine, the senior person in the group, to work with Alex so that he learns how to submit the financials on his own.

C____ Nothing needs to be done, no one is complaining so they must have worked something out.

D____ Thank the other employees in your group and reassure them that you are sure Alex will pick up how to do the financials soon.

E____ Have a conversation with Alex to find out why he isn't submitting the financials himself and then work on a plan so that he will be able to start submitting them on his own.

Categorizing responses by conflict resolution style:

A = Competing

B = Comprise

C = Avoidance

D = Accommodation

E = Collaborating

