

# PENNSYLVANIA

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<http://dat.das.psu.edu>

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# DAIRY ADVISORY TEAMS

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## A TEAM SUCCESS: FROSTY HOLLOW FARM

To be successful, I know that I have to surround myself with successful people.” This is what Doug Smith, partner in a 600-cow dairy operation, made a reality. The successful people that Doug talks about are his Dairy Advisory team members. The Frosty Hollow Advisory Team was formed a year ago through Penn State’s Dairy Advisory Team project. Doug Smith first called on his agribusiness advisors to assist him with his expansion, and since the expansion, the team is working on new goals that will keep his business viable for the future. “I have high expectations of my team members and I hold them accountable.” Doug values the support of the team, the new ideas and advice that they bring, and especially the open communication around the table.



The team members that meet on a monthly basis are: Tamera Smith (Wife and partner), Daniel Smith (Father & partner), Beverly Smith (Mother & partner), Gary Dean (Purina Mills), Beth Moore (Coordinator), Shawn Orczeck, DVM (Widmann & Itle Veterinary Associates), John Replogle (PFB Members’ Service Corporation), Jolene Rush (Recorder), and Enos Tice (Milkin’ Menus).

## INNOVATE WITH C.A.R.E. PROFILE

On November 17, 2000, fifteen Dairy Advisory Team coordinators participated in a C.A.R.E. Profile session facilitated by Mr. Jeff Mamett of Upjohn Pharmacia. The session helped answer common questions such as “Why do I act the way I do?” “Why can’t this team get anything done?” and “Why can’t we communicate?” The purpose of this session was to help team coordinators understand what approach they most naturally use when working with others in the team, and to identify what role they and other team members play. The coordinators learned various approaches used by individual contributors in the team process and

discovered that when team roles are revealed; the team process is enhanced, resulting in higher team performance.

Mr. Mamett ended the session with this point, "Just as a baseball team must have all nine positions or "roles" filled to successfully play the game, there are specific roles on an innovation team that must be filled to successfully achieve team objectives. A team with five MVP shortstops and no outfielders pitcher or catcher is not set up for success."

## **Advisory Team Resources**

### Books:

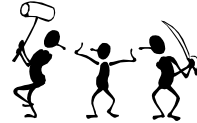
- ◆ *The Wisdom of Teams: Creating the High-Performance Organization*  
by Jon R. Katzenbach and Douglas K. Smith  
1994 HarperBusiness Paperback
- ◆ *Rewarding Teams: Lessons from the Trenches*  
by Glenn Parker, Jerry McAdams, and David Zielinski  
2000 Jossey-Bass Publishers
- ◆ *The New Self-Directed Work Teams: Mastering the Challenge*  
by Jack D. Osburn and Linda Moran  
2000 McGraw-Hill (2nd Edition)
- ◆ *The Work of Teams*  
Edited by Jon R. Katzenbach  
1998 A Harvard Business Review Book
- ◆ *The 1998 Team and Organization Development Sourcebook*  
Edited by Mel Silberman and Patricia Phillips  
1998 McGraw-Hill

### Websites:

- ◆ *Penn State Dairy Advisory Teams*  
<http://dat.das.psu.edu>
- ◆ *University Of Minnesota- Dairy Farm Advisory Team Project*  
<http://www.ansci.umn.edu/dairy/advteam.htm>
- ◆ *Center for the Study of Work Teams*  
<http://www.workteams.unt.edu/>

# CONFLICT IN WORK TEAMS

BY JILL RHEA (DEPT. OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS)



Conflict is one of the most feared and misunderstood aspects of interpersonal and group communication. Group members typically avoid conflict if at all possible, sometimes to the detriment of the team's effectiveness. In order to decrease our fears about conflict and tap into the potential power of the concept, we must accept the inevitability of conflict and change our negative perceptions.

According to Hocker and Wilmot (1995), the Chinese character that represents "conflict" is a combination of the characters for "danger" and for "opportunity." What a wonderful way to communicate the potentially positive and negative aspects of the term. Conflict can encourage growth, enable us to avoid groupthink, overcome challenges, and sometimes even energize a work team. The major variable that will determine whether a conflict will be dangerous or will create opportunity and growth is valence--the positive or negative level of the interaction.

In order for all of the beneficial things above to occur and for conflict to be perceived as positive, work team members must engage in constructive, not destructive, conflict. The difference between constructive and destructive conflict is that after a destructive conflict, team members are dissatisfied and feel manipulated, bullied, or hurt. A constructive conflict creates feelings of balance, equity, and self-respect. How does a group avoid destructive conflict and move toward constructive conflict?

First, we must understand that conflict is inevitable. Since we all will eventually experience conflict, we would do well to deal with it constructively. When people attempt to avoid conflict as if they could run or hide from it successfully, they create very destructive conflict situations for the future. Addressing the conflict as it arises is much more constructive than putting it off until later. Why? When we avoid an important conflict, it does not just disappear. Normally, the conflict issue becomes larger, more emotional, and we are less able to deal with it effectively after the negative feelings build to a destructive level. What happens? We explode. Exploding is definitely a destructive tactic. If a conflict becomes destructive, attempt to take a 20 minute break and continue the discussion in a more constructive way when the emotional level has decreased.

Constructive conflict is accomplished by separating the people from the problem (Fisher & Ury, 1991), realizing we can only control ourselves not other team members, and speaking to team members in a descriptive, nonevaluative manner. Hocker and Wilmot (1995) offer the following guidelines for moving toward constructive conflict: listen well, speak your mind and heart, express strong feelings appropriately, summarize and ask questions, and avoid all harmful statements (personal attacks).

As soon as you feel the tensions of conflict, start checking yourself and your perceptions. Be curious instead of accusatory, especially in the initial stages of conflict. Many times a potential conflict can be resolved by asking questions in a nondefensive manner. Attempt to empathize with your team members instead of placing blame or attributing negative characteristics to others. Once team members begin using constructive conflict techniques, the culture of the team gradually will change to one in which positive conflict is the norm, not the exception. Teams that engage in constructive conflict are much more productive than teams that encourage destructive conflict or even those that avoid conflict entirely.

## References

Fisher, R., Ury, W., & Patton, B. (1991). *Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Boston:HoughtonMifflin.

Hocker, J.L., & Wilmot, W.W. (1995). *Interpersonal conflict* (4th ed.). Dubuque, IA: William C. Brown

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## Quotable Quotes:

One of the best ways to persuade others is with your ears - by listening to them.

- Dean Rusk

The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.

- Albert Einstein

Some people dream of success ... while others wake up and work hard at it.

- Unknown

When one door closes, another opens: but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us.

- Alexander Graham Bell

Understanding the diversity of our gifts enables us to begin taking the crucial step of trusting each other.

-Max Depree

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