

Giving leaders the confidence to handle conflict

If conflict resolution takes 25% of a manager's time, wouldn't it make sense to include it on a leadership development program? **creative careers** thought so—which is why they introduced the TKI® instrument to their leadership mentoring course.

It's perhaps inevitable that most young executives aren't fully prepared when they jump into a new role. When they first face difficult situations, they realize they might lack the experience, knowledge, and necessary tools to handle complex situations effectively.

Conflict situations are challenging for any leader, whether they're experienced or not.

Finding clarity and trying to take a clear, fair position can be stressful. It gnaws at self-confidence and causes sleepless nights, yet difficult situations are part of every manager's professional life—conflict resolution takes 25% of a manager's time.

This is why a multifaceted approach to conflict is essential from the outset.

Business Challenges

- Giving leaders the tools to handle conflict management successfully
- Helping young, inexperienced leaders be confident with conflict resolution

Company Profile

creative careers is an international network of consultants that supports organizations, teams, and managers of all levels in transformation processes. Its clients include DAX companies and Fortune 500 organizations from a wide range of industries, as well as SMEs, start-ups, and educational organizations. With the development of the YourWay consulting approach, **creative careers** is also working to support young people achieve their future career goals.

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creative careers is a consultancy that specializes in organizational development, leadership, and coaching. Recognizing that conflict management is a crucial part of every manager's professional life, **creative careers** wanted its development programs to give leaders a practical tool they could use to improve any conflict situation.

This is where the TKI® (Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument) tool comes in. It supports leaders in dealing with conflicts, but also encourages them to use conflicts positively for better performance.

Solution

To help future executives address, resolve, or decide critical issues constructively, **creative careers** developed a mentorship program called *Next Stop: Leadership*. The program is based on the LPM (Leadership Pocket Mentor), a communication compass that describes eight central leadership positions for a complex working environment.

Course participants get theory, tools, and practical exercises for each of the eight positions so they can act confidently in different leadership situations. One of the positions is called "*clarification*". This is where participants learn that conflicts are part of life and it's where they learn how to handle conflicts constructively. 'Clarification' is where the TKI instrument gets used.

With the TKI instrument, leaders get a management tool that makes it easier for them to deal with multiple conflict styles. This is because the TKI model explores five approaches to conflict and highlights different optimum outcomes, depending on the conflict styles of the people involved.

By learning the five approaches to conflict, and learning more about their own preferred approach, leaders can learn to deal with conflict in different ways. They have a much better chance of moving any conflict to a more successful place.

Results

Solution

- Use the TKI tool to help people learn about different conflict styles and various approaches that are needed
- Give guidance and tools for empowerment: people in leadership roles learn which conflict styles exist, and how they can be used to face conflicts
- Create time to reflect: develop greater mindfulness and sensitivity to conflict behaviors

“ The TKI is a very helpful self-knowledge tool that supports people to gain a better understanding of their own response patterns and actions in conflict situations.

Ingo Hock,
founder and
managing partner of
creative careers

creative careers

The search for a well-founded and helpful tool, which increases self-knowledge, clarifies misunderstandings, and provides decision-making suggestions, came to an end when **creative careers** discovered the TKI® instrument.

Executives who have taken part in **creative careers** leadership programs report that they feel empowered to master difficult and conflict-ridden leadership situations safely. They feel more comfortable in their role and say they become better at:

- Understanding themselves and others.
- Distinguishing between constructive conflicts and destructive ones.
- Learning how to utilize the learning potential of conflicts.
- Addressing critical issues clearly.
- Taking an active role in difficult situations— knowing when to stay in the driver's seat.
- Communicating clearly even in difficult situations.
- Leaving their comfort zone and expanding their skills and options.
- Being more confident in difficult situations.
- Facing up to problems and challenges—and developing solutions.

creative careers founder and managing partner, Ingo Hock, summarized it like this: "Our workshops, programs and tools stimulate self-reflection—no 'right-wrong' instructions for action, no corsets. Instead, they give orientation and inspire participants to act and learn in the process. This is exactly where the TKI® instrument fits in."

Regarding conflict specifically, he added, "For understanding conflicts and personal inclinations in the event of conflict, 'the true sight is insight'. The TKI is a very helpful self-knowledge tool that helps people gain a better understanding of their own response patterns and actions in conflict situations."

Results

- Alternative ways of dealing with different situations expands leaders' range of actions in conflicts
- Awareness of possible blind spots and conflict behavior in self and others means leaders can face conflicts in a multifaceted way
- Identifying other people's conflict styles at an early stage helps develop coping strategies more quickly



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