

ADC – Aligned, Different, Conflict



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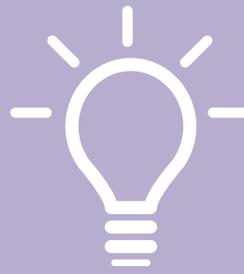


Introduction

The complexity of the matrix inevitably causes competing priorities between different functions, business lines and/or team members. Whilst we may have alignment on the **Why**, team members will often have different perspectives on the **How?**

This is a tool designed to help you identify where you are in real **conflict, and where you are just different.**

In a matrix competing priorities are a natural outcome of a complex environment – not all of this is conflict, sometimes differences can be accommodated.



The Tool

Our default assumption about our colleagues should be that they have good intent. Most people are reasonable and trying to do their best if we start with this mindset, we are much more likely to resolve problems

However, when people are busy, managing multiple priorities and interacting largely through technology, we can lose sight of this reality. If we see others as simply being obstructive, it impacts the way we approach them and then every detail becomes a battle. This tool helps us manage differences in a positive way.

When we are in conflict, we tend to focus on where we disagree we often attempt to continually narrow down and work on the differences so that we can then reconcile them. This often leads to frustrating and low value conflict over minor points of detail – and at this point, the area of conflict can widen so everything becomes a battle.

Here is an alternative approach

Identify a situation where you are in conflict with another individual/team or function.

Be clear before you start about what is genuinely up for discussion and what isn't, so that you begin the conversation from the right place. If the decision to implement an integrated Finance System, for example, has already been made, there is no point in re-discussing whether people like the idea.



The Tool *continued*

	Specific items, issues, goals or activities	Action:
Aligned: Where are we aligned – Focus on the big picture, high level goals or overall company perspective. Focus on the “we”, not “us and them”.		How can we use this to create momentum?
Different: Where are our goals, needs and agendas simply different but not necessarily affecting others in a critical way? (“I may not agree or like it, but I can live with it... at least in the short term”).		What needs to happen to prevent this from becoming a problem in the future?
Conflicting: Where are the true areas of conflict – where we have a serious disagreement that stops either of us from making progress in our cooperation?		What steps do we need to take urgently to resolve this conflict ourselves... or with the support of others?



The Tool *continued*

Use the table to record and discuss the following

1. Start by identifying where you are **Aligned** and where you agree with each other.

This focuses you on the big picture, high level goals or overall company perspective. Focus on the “we”, not “us and them”

It focuses you on the similarities and points of agreement rather than the differences

It creates forward momentum. Once you start agreeing, you begin to build a shared perspective. A classic negotiation strategy is to build a pattern of agreements before moving on to more difficult areas.

2. Next identify where we are simply **Different** but not necessarily in conflict or an either/or situation.

It is very common for different individuals or functions to want different outputs from an IT system or have different goals, priorities and perspectives. Usually this is just different people doing different jobs.

The differences are much easier to identify once you have first agreed on areas where you are aligned.

A powerful question to ask yourself here is ‘Can we live with it?’ If you ask people “do you agree” this is a fairly high barrier. If you ask people “can you live with it” you are much more likely to get acceptance.

3. Thirdly, where are the true areas of **Conflict** – where we have a serious disagreement that stops either of us from making progress in our cooperation?

Areas of true conflict are relatively few. Please see our e-learning module on managing conflict for a process and some tips on how to deal with true conflicts.



Conclusion

The ADC tool helps to create two-way communication and common understanding. By following this process you can uncover common goals, clarify assumptions and focus on managing true points of conflict, where they exist.

People don't always need to agree but they do need to be heard; this framework enables colleagues to exchange views in a neutral framework.