

# *Consensus Building to Resolve Conflicts*



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July, 2011

# *What Is Consensus Building?*

- Facilitation of a conflict involving many diverse parties in which the input and ideas of all the participants are gathered and synthesized to arrive at a final position acceptable to all
- Also called collaborative problem-solving or collaboration

# *What Is Collaboration?*

- Collaboration is an open and inclusive process, a tool to engage a broad array of diverse entities to come together to find solutions for issues/problems

# *What Is Conflict Resolution?*

- A wide range of methods used to address sources of conflict and of finding the means to resolve the conflicts to produce agreements and resolutions efficiently, cost-effectively, and cooperatively
- Processes involved in conflict resolution generally include facilitation, negotiation, mediation, conciliation, and joint-fact finding

## *What Is Facilitation?*

- A process in which a third-party neutral assists a group in decision-making or problem solving by helping increase the group's effectiveness
- The goal is not necessarily to resolve conflict, but rather to guide the group in its thinking process, keep the group focused, and help participants communicate effectively with one another and as a group



“The cornerstone to building consensus is listening with respect to others and allowing the speaker to express themselves in a forthright manner.”

- Bob Chadwick  
Consensus Associates

# *What Is the Facilitators' Role?*

The facilitator of a consensus building effort moves through a series of steps:

- Participant identification and recruitment
- Design of the process to be used
- Problem definition and analysis
- Identification and evaluation of alternative solutions
- Decision-making
- Finalization and approval of the decision
- Implementation

## *The Facilitator Should:*

- Develop a safe environment for all participants
- Develop a respectful listening environment
- Support all participants
- Be acceptable to all participants
- Not be vested in an outcome
- Remain neutral throughout the process

## Three Consensus Building Tools

1. The Grounding
2. Best / Worst Outcomes
3. Closure

# *The Grounding Exercise*

- Introduce yourself and your relationship to a conflict in your professional or personal life
- Share your expectations of this discussion on conflict
- Tell us how you feel about being here

## *Coping with Conflict Exercise*

- Define conflict. How do you feel about it?
- What are the unresolved conflicts that confront you in your life?
- What are your worst/best outcomes of confronting or not confronting unresolved conflict?

## *Worst Possible Outcome Exercise*

Choose one of the areas of conflict from the previous list and answer these two questions:

- What are the worst possible outcomes of confronting this unresolved conflict?
- What are the worst possible outcomes of not confronting this unresolved conflict?



## *Best Possible Outcome Exercise*

- Use the same conflict situation you selected to list the best possible outcomes
- Make a list of the best possible outcomes of confronting and resolving these conflicts



## *Closure Exercise*

- How did you feel about these activities?
- What did you learn from these exercises that will help you confront and resolve your conflicts?