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In both compromising and collaborating styles, both parties get their needs met. The difference is the degree to which those needs are met. With the compromising style, all parties give up something they want in order to move forward to a mutually agreed upon solution. For example, an electrical crew may give up an afternoon of work in order to let a plumbing crew get into the site to finish their job. The electricians may have to scramble to meet their tight deadline, but the plumbing crew will appreciate the gesture, and a conflict will have been resolved. When collaborating, all parties get what they want because they found a solution that serves everyone, ideally long-term. For example, both the electrical crew and plumbing crew could work alongside each other, despite their initial plans. They may have to pare down their crew, in order to make room for each other, but they'd both be able to meet their deadlines. The collaborating conflict management style is an excellent tool for helping resolve conflicts in the workplace amicably while ensuring your project gets done. It takes time while you listen to all parties involved, but the payback is huge since every party emerges from the conflict satisfied. The four other conflict management styles are: Accommodating style Competing style Compromising style Avoiding style The collaborating conflict style focuses on coming up with the most cooperative solution to conflicts. That means having an honest discussion about important issues with all parties involved and making sure that they've all had their say. It also means listening carefully, exploring alternative solutions, and maintaining a nonthreatening environment so everyone feels comfortable laying out their concerns in the open. From there, you work to find a solution that factors in everyone's feedback and will generally make everyone feel satisfied with the outcome. Imagine you're a contractor with two crews, and one always gets to use the better tools. The crew using the mediocre tools is resentful because they don't feel their manager respects them or what they do. When you hear both sides of the issue, you grasp what's happening and which team members are using which tools, and why. Armed with this information, you can now reallocate the tools according to usage rather than crew, so both parties now feel they have what they need to work more productively. In both compromising and collaborating styles, both parties get their needs met. The difference is the degree to which those needs are met. With the compromising style, all parties give up something they want in order to move forward to a mutually agreed upon solution. For example, an electrical crew may give up an afternoon of work in order to let a plumbing crew get into the site to finish their job. The electricians may have to scramble to meet their tight deadline, but the plumbing crew will appreciate the gesture, and a conflict will have been resolved. When collaborating, all parties get what they want because they found a solution that serves everyone, ideally long-term. For example, both the electrical crew and plumbing crew could work alongside each other, despite their initial plans. They may have to pare down their crew, in order to make room for each other, but they'd both be able to meet their deadlines. Collaborating style is best used in the following scenarios: When you're looking to build relationships. When you are less concerned with getting your way and more focused on fostering an atmosphere of cooperation. When you're new to a job and want to build trust. In some situations, collaboration just isn't possible—or advisable. For example: When safety is involved: Ensuring workers' safety is critical and there's no room for disagreement on the issue—it's the law. If crew members are complaining about wearing protective goggles, for instance, it's best to enforce the rules so no one gets hurt. Tight deadlines: If you simply don't have the time to speak to everyone, get their feedback, and make a decision, you may need to be assertive instead of collaborative. The clear advantage of collaborating conflict style is that all parties feel heard and respected. When there is room to vent, it creates a feeling of respect, which translates to higher morale and productivity on the job. This style can also set the tone for future disputes, encourage accountability, and promote a sense of shared responsibility. Still, there are disadvantages to the collaborating style: Listening to everyone air their grievances can be time-consuming, and sometimes, despite making your best effort to hear everyone out, you may not always find a solution everybody can live with. MT Copeland offers video-based online classes that give you a foundation in construction fundamentals with real-world applications, like managing conflict on the jobsite. Classes include professionally produced videos taught by practicing craftspeople, and supplementary downloads like quizzes, blueprints, and other materials to help you master the skills.