

*Making Everything Easier!™*

# Workplace Conflict Resolution Essentials

FOR  
**DUMMIES**<sup>®</sup>  
A Wiley Brand

## *Learn to:*

- Manage conflicts and restore peace in the workplace
- Create and maintain a positive working environment
- Maximise the potential of your team and improve productivity

**Vivian Scott**

*Certified Professional Mediator*



# ***Workplace Conflict Resolution Essentials***

FOR  
**DUMMIES**<sup>®</sup>  
A Wiley Brand

**by Vivian Scott**

FOR  
**DUMMIES**<sup>®</sup>  
A Wiley Brand

# **Workplace Conflict Resolution Essentials For Dummies®**

Published by

**Wiley Publishing Australia Pty Ltd**

42 McDougall Street

Milton, Qld 4064

[www.dummies.com](http://www.dummies.com)

Copyright © 2015 Wiley Publishing Australia Pty Ltd

Authorised adaptation of *Conflict Resolution at Work For Dummies* © 2010 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. (9780470536438).

The moral rights of the author have been asserted.

National Library of Australia

Cataloguing-in-Publication data:

---

Author:	Scott, Vivian, author.
Title:	Workplace Conflict Resolution Essentials For Dummies / Vivian Scott.
ISBN:	9780730319450 (pbk.) 9780730319504 (ebook)
Series:	For Dummies.

Notes: Includes index.  
Subjects: Conflict management.  
Mediation and conciliation — industrial.  
Personnel management.  
Communication in personnel management.  
Work environment.

Dewey Number: 658.4053

All rights reserved. No part of this book, including interior design, cover design and icons, may be reproduced or transmitted in any form, by any means (electronic, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the prior written permission of the Publisher. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Legal Services section of John Wiley & Sons Australia, Ltd, Level 2, 155 Cremorne Street, Richmond, Vic 3151, or email [auspermissions@wiley.com](mailto:auspermissions@wiley.com).

Cover image: © iStock.com/timsa

Typeset by diacriTech, Chennai, India

Printed in Singapore by  
C.O.S. Printers Pte Ltd

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

**Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty:**  
**THE PUBLISHER AND THE AUTHOR MAKE NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS WORK AND SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIM ALL WARRANTIES, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION, WARRANTIES OF FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. NO WARRANTY MAY BE CREATED OR EXTENDED BY SALES OR PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS. THE ADVICE AND STRATEGIES CONTAINED HEREIN MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR EVERY SITUATION. THIS WORK IS SOLD WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PUBLISHER IS NOT ENGAGED IN RENDERING LEGAL, ACCOUNTING, OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES. IF PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE IS REQUIRED, THE SERVICES OF A COMPETENT PROFESSIONAL PERSON SHOULD BE SOUGHT. NEITHER THE PUBLISHER NOR THE AUTHOR SHALL BE LIABLE FOR DAMAGES ARISING HEREFROM. THE FACT THAT AN ORGANISATION OR WEBSITE IS REFERRED TO IN THIS WORK AS A CITATION AND/OR A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF FURTHER INFORMATION DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE AUTHOR OR THE PUBLISHER ENDORSES THE INFORMATION THE ORGANISATION OR WEBSITE MAY PROVIDE OR RECOMMENDATIONS IT MAY MAKE.**

**FURTHER, READERS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT INTERNET WEBSITES LISTED IN THIS WORK MAY HAVE CHANGED OR DISAPPEARED BETWEEN WHEN THIS WORK WAS WRITTEN AND WHEN IT IS READ.**

**Trademarks:** Wiley, the Wiley logo, For Dummies, the Dummies Man logo, A Reference for the Rest of Us!, The Dummies Way, Making Everything Easier, dummies.com and related trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the United States and other countries, and may not be used without written permission. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Wiley Publishing Australia Pty Ltd is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

# Contents at a Glance

---

## **Introduction**

Chapter 1: Conflict Resolution at Work

Chapter 2: Understanding What People Bring to Conflict

Chapter 3: Determining How Groups Contribute to Conflict

Chapter 4: Practising Self-Awareness: Understanding How You Foster Conflict

Chapter 5: Knowing When to Address Conflict

Chapter 6: Developing a Plan and Preparing for a Meeting

Chapter 7: Starting a Mediation Meeting and Creating a Working Agenda

Chapter 8: Negotiating Possible Solutions to a Conflict

Chapter 9: Offering Proposals and Crafting Agreements

Chapter 10: Adapting a Conflict Meeting for the Entire Team

Chapter 11: Determining How Your Company Can Help

Chapter 12: Ten Pearls of Wisdom from Professional Mediators

## **Index**

# Workplace Conflict Resolution Essentials For Dummies

## Table of Contents

### Introduction

[About This Book](#)

[Foolish Assumptions](#)

[Icons Used in This Book](#)

[Where to Go from Here](#)

### **Chapter 1: Conflict Resolution at Work**

#### Considering Common Contributors to Conflict

[Acknowledging differing perspectives](#)

[Recognising emotions in others](#)

[Handling communication mishaps](#)

[Deciphering group dynamics](#)

[Assessing your own role](#)

#### Mediating like a Pro

[Following eight steps to a resolution](#)

[Facilitating a conversation between two people](#)

[Managing conflict with a team](#)

#### Tapping into Conflict Resolution Expertise

### **Chapter 2: Understanding What People Bring to Conflict**

#### Rediscovering Communication

[Changing the goal of communication](#)

[Choosing words carefully: The importance of language](#)

[Body language: Others' and your own](#)

[Discerning tone of voice](#)

#### Figuring Out Why People Think the Way They Do

[Values: Understanding what's important to people](#)

[Filters: Sifting through information](#)

[History: Operating from the past](#)

## Considering the Importance of Emotions

Listening to what emotions tell you

Dealing with emotional intensity and impact

Acknowledging and processing difficult emotions in your team

## Responding to Conflict

Giving in

Avoiding the fight

Fighting it out

Compromising

Working together

## **Chapter 3: Determining How Groups Contribute to Conflict**

### Observing Your Organisation's Culture

Identifying the organisational focus

Considering hiring or promoting practices

Considering how your company adapts to change

### Recognising Team Dynamics

Dealing with mismatched expectations

Acknowledging assigned and assumed roles

Redefining power

### Groups Behaving Badly

Joining cliques

Finding allies

Creating inaccurate assumptions

Perpetuating gossip

## **Chapter 4: Practising Self-Awareness: Understanding How You Foster Conflict**

### Micromanaging

#### Stirring the Pot

Dividing rather than uniting

Appearing to take sides

#### Not Taking the Time to Gain Understanding

Overreacting

Misunderstanding the real issues

Looking the other way

Being dismissive

#### Talking about the Work Ineffectively

Not sharing your contributions

Underrepresenting your team

## Creating Ill-Defined Expectations and Responsibilities

### Hiring the Right Person for the Wrong Job

#### Living in Fix-It Mode

- Talking instead of listening
- Being judge and jury
- Rescuing instead of coaching

#### Denying Shortfalls

- Letting egos get in the way
- Lacking training or skills
- Being uncomfortable with change

## **Chapter 5: Knowing When to Address Conflict**

### Assessing the Cost and Severity of the Conflict

- Hard costs associated with unresolved conflict
- Soft costs associated with unresolved conflict
- Determining severity

### Approaching Employees and Gathering Information

- Knowing your intent
- Sorting out the players
- Considering the meeting place
- Being consistent in your inquiries
- Asking questions

### Evaluating the Details of the Conflict

- What you know
- Follow-up conversations

### Empowering Employees to Handle the Issue Themselves

- Providing tips for success
- Motivating your employees to succeed
- Wrapping it up

### Watching Their Progress

- Complimenting their progress
- Knowing what to watch for
- Responding to progress

## **Chapter 6: Developing a Plan and Preparing for a Meeting**

### Preparing the Parties for a Conversation

- Inviting your employees to the meeting
- Explaining your role
- Helping employees get into the right frame of mind
- Assuring confidentiality

Defining meeting parameters

Giving pre-work/homework instructions

### Setting Up the Meeting

Choosing a neutral location

Allowing enough time

Facilitating a comfortable environment

### Preparing Yourself

## **Chapter 7: Starting a Mediation Meeting and Creating a Working Agenda**

### Facilitating Effectively

Establishing rapport and making employees comfortable

Showing your neutrality

Actively listening

Saving your questions for later

### Reviewing the Ground Rules for the Discussion

Explaining roles and responsibilities

Directing the flow of information

Stressing uninterrupted time

### Giving the Participants a Chance to Present Their Perspectives

Deciding who speaks first

Listening to the second participant

### Summarising and Reflecting Back What You Hear

Reflecting emotions

Reframing statements

Neutralising the perspectives

### Creating an Agenda

Transitioning from the past to the future

Demonstrating accessibility and ownership

Separating their topics

Labelling and defining issues

Considering common agenda topics

Using the agenda for negotiations

## **Chapter 8: Negotiating Possible Solutions to a Conflict**

### Encouraging Communication

Transitioning from past to future

Motivating and encouraging your employees

Listening and interjecting

### Focusing on Values Rather Than Issues

Discovering what's really important

[Reading between the lines to find values](#)

## [Fostering Brainstorming](#)

[Defining brainstorming ground rules](#)

[Narrowing the possible solutions](#)

## [Asking Great Questions](#)

[Knowing which questions to use when](#)

[Sequencing your questions](#)

[Avoiding unproductive questions](#)

## [Working through Resistance](#)

[Identifying common causes of resistance](#)

[Exploring the impasse](#)

[Creating options](#)

[Testing the margins](#)

[Refocusing on values](#)

[Interrupting negative behaviours](#)

[Trying one last time to overcome resistance](#)

## [Meeting Privately with Each Individual](#)

[Choosing who goes first](#)

[Allowing parties to open up with added confidentiality](#)

[Venting and exploring](#)

[Preparing an employee to return to the open session](#)

## **[Chapter 9: Offering Proposals and Crafting Agreements](#)**

### [Continuing Negotiations](#)

[Proceeding with the meeting](#)

[Listening for the good stuff](#)

### [Developing Solutions during the Open Session](#)

[Recognising the non-negotiable elements of a good settlement](#)

[Troubleshooting problem areas](#)

[Writing it down](#)

### [Concluding the Meeting Optimistically](#)

[Settlement](#)

[Interim agreements](#)

[No settlement](#)

## **[Chapter 10: Adapting a Conflict Meeting for the Entire Team](#)**

### [Acting as Facilitator](#)

### [Gathering Information from the Group](#)

[Recognising what you know](#)

[Crafting questions to find out more](#)

[Using interviews and surveys](#)

[Creating a timeline](#)

## [Assessing the Intensity of a Conflict](#)

### [Formulating a Meeting Plan](#)

[Determining the goal of your meeting](#)

[Creating an agenda](#)

[Proposing ground rules](#)

[Considering breakout groups](#)

### [Kicking Off the Group Meeting](#)

[Setting the tone](#)

[Presenting the agenda and finalising the ground rules](#)

[Hearing from the participants](#)

[Using intervention strategies](#)

[Breaking into small groups](#)

[Coming back to the larger group](#)

### [Devising a Plan for Follow-Up](#)

[Assigning next steps](#)

[Creating benchmarks](#)

## **[Chapter 11: Determining How Your Company Can Help](#)**

### [Working with Human Resources](#)

[Partnering with you to tailor your approach](#)

[Letting you know when action is required](#)

[Providing training resources](#)

[Accessing employees' work histories](#)

[Identifying employee support programs](#)

[Investigating mediation programs](#)

### [Proactively Designing a Conflict Resolution Plan](#)

[What you can do](#)

[What your company can do](#)

[Choosing a starting point](#)

## **[Chapter 12: Ten Pearls of Wisdom from Professional Mediators](#)**

[Value the Process as Much as the Outcome](#)

[Accept That Her Truth Is Her Reality](#)

[Rapport Matters](#)

[Be Present and Available](#)

[Find Common Ground for More Success](#)

[Be Aware That This Isn't the Participant's Best Moment](#)

[Silence Is Golden](#)

[Be Curious](#)

[Fear Rules the World](#)

[Look to the Future](#)

[\*\*Index\*\*](#)

[\*\*About the Author\*\*](#)

[\*\*Business & Investing\*\*](#)

[\*\*More Dummies Products\*\*](#)

# Introduction

---

*E*very day in offices, retail stores, factories and any number of other workplaces, people are having conflicts with co-workers. It's normal, natural and nothing to fear. When handled properly, conflict can actually create positive changes and new opportunities in your organisation. Successfully making the shift in your perspective from seeing only the negative in disagreements to seeing the prospect for positive change is the first step to resolving difficulties.

To find positive outcomes in what on the surface looks like a negative situation, you have to become skilled at calming the infernos by helping employees through discussions that prove to them that they can solve their own issues. Become a coach for your team and colleagues — someone they can trust to bring the real and right issues to the table for effective problem solving.

If you can broaden your perspective to include the other person's point of view, you're sure to come out of the dispute with a better working relationship. Being at the centre of controversy is never a good idea for anyone, so decide to use the uneasy situation as an opportunity to improve systems, relationships, and your credibility.

In this book, I tell you what the most common causes of workplace conflict are and how to address them by using a proven mediation method

and philosophy. And remember: Every story always has more than one side.

## ***About This Book***

This book is a tool intended to help managers (or anyone who has a job) work through conflict with peers, subordinates and even bosses. It's primarily aimed at those employees in organisations who find themselves negotiating difficulties without the benefit of having professional conflict resolution or mediation experience.

Although my focus is on how to facilitate conflict resolution, if you're the person experiencing conflict, this book outlines the kinds of structures that may be in place to support you, and what will be expected of you during each step of the process. Throughout the book, I also highlight the kinds of attitudes (such as good communication, getting to the underlying issues of the conflict and taking personal responsibility in finding a solution) that can help everyone avoid workplace conflict, no matter what level.

The chapters are chock-full of facilitation techniques and tools that come from successful conflict resolution experts, delivered in a way that's easy to understand and ready for you to apply right away.

To help make this book easier to navigate, I include the following conventions:

- ✓ I introduce new terms in italics and then define them.
- ✓ I use bold text to highlight key words in bulleted lists.

## ***Foolish Assumptions***

I'm assuming you have a job, paid or volunteer, and that you interact with people. I'm also assuming you have some sort of responsibility — be it keeping the line moving at the manufacturing plant or trying to keep your reputation intact as the star manager in the strongest department of an international corporation. And I'm thinking you're currently experiencing some trouble. You may be sick and tired of a conflict between two of your employees, you may be bickering with a colleague, or perhaps you're at a loss as to what to do about the problems between you and your boss. My final assumption? I'm guessing you want to do something about it.

## ***Icons Used in This Book***

Throughout the book you'll notice icons in the page margins to signal something I want you to pay particular attention to. Here are the icons I've used and what each represents.



If I know an easier way to do something or have an idea for creating a better working environment now and in the future, this icon tells you that.



I use this icon to flag some important information that you don't want to forget.



This icon alerts you to common blunders that you want to avoid.

## ***Where to Go from Here***

*Workplace Conflict Resolution Essentials For Dummies* is a book I hope you refer to again and again. You don't have to read it cover to cover to gain the insight you need to deal with conflict at work. You can flip to the chapter that best meets your needs today and come back to other sections as needed.

You may have a bookshelf full of management how-to tomes, but it's still a good idea to start with understanding what makes an employee tick and why she sees the world the way she does, so start with [Chapter 2](#) to get right to the heart of the matter.

If you feel you have a pretty good handle on how emotions, values and group dynamics contribute

to conflict, and you're ready to mediate a problem between two or more people, head straight to [Chapter 6](#) and follow through to [Chapter 10](#).

Finally, if you feel you may be in over your head and you'd like to find out more about how to enlist the help of an expert, check out [Chapter 11](#) to see what your company may be able to do.

Although this book is designed so that you can start anywhere, don't feel obligated to jump around. If you're a traditionalist who likes to read every book from cover to cover, just turn the page!



## ***Five Things You Can Control When in an Unresolved Conflict***

- ✓ **Your plan for the future:** Consider what's important to you and follow a strategy for a period of time that feels comfortable. Knowing what you want your future to look like helps you look past the current situation and focus beyond temporary problems.
- ✓ **Your perspective:** Instead of staying wrapped up in a conflict, ask yourself whether you can find a learning opportunity somewhere in the situation. Or maybe if you purposefully and mindfully examine what's going on, you can honestly say, in the scope of things, the disagreements aren't really that important to you.
- ✓ **Your responses:** You can't control someone else's actions, thoughts or feelings. But you can control how you react to what's happening, and look for ways to respond to hot button topics that won't escalate your anxiety or your anger.
- ✓ **Your investment:** In trying to control everything, you lose your ability to control anything! Instead, try to reduce your investment in the drama. Spend less time thinking about it, talking about it and engaging in it.
- ✓ **Your role in the conflict:** Step outside of your thoughts and feelings and consider how your actions and reactions look to others. Consider the impact of your actions, and honestly identify your role in the conflict. When you have your answer, see what you're willing to change.



Visit [dummies.com](http://dummies.com) for free access to great *For Dummies* content online.

# Chapter 1

## Conflict Resolution at Work

---

### ***In This Chapter***

- ▶ Looking at causes of workplace conflict
  - ▶ Using a mediation process to help employees through problems
  - ▶ Finding and using conflict expertise
- 

**Y**ou may love your family and friends but, truth be told, you spend much of your time with the people at work. Not getting along with co-workers or having members of your team at odds with one another can be stressful and distracting. In addition, problems in the workplace rarely stay at work; they can permeate every aspect of your life. So you need to take the time to understand what's behind a conflict, get beyond the surface issues and work to help find satisfying resolutions for everyone involved.

Settling differences effectively requires you to step back and look at the broader picture, be mindful of another person's point of view, and take into account peripheral factors that may be creating or provoking problems, like group dynamics or workplace norms.

In this chapter, I give you an overview of conflict resolution so you can successfully mediate problems in your workplace, whether those problems are between two individuals or within a larger group. I also tell you about additional conflict resolution resources you may have at your disposal.

## ***Considering Common Contributors to Conflict***

For the most part, workplace difficulties fall into common categories, such as

- ✓ Communication (and miscommunication)
- ✓ Employee attitudes
- ✓ Honesty
- ✓ Insubordination
- ✓ Treatment of others
- ✓ Work habits

Effectively addressing conflict takes into account the obvious surface issue, the emotional climate surrounding the topic, and your knowledge of the viewpoints of the people involved in the dispute. In this section, I provide insight into how differing perspectives can cause employees to feel like ships passing in the night. I also discuss emotions, touch on the importance of communication in your

organisation, and look at group dynamics, including your role in the group.

## ***Acknowledging differing perspectives***

You and each of the employees on your team have a lens through which you see the world and one another. Everything you see, hear and say goes through your filter on the way in *and* on the way out. These filters determine how you present and receive information.

Your individual kaleidoscope is shaped by things like your personal history, education, values, culture and the roles you play in your life, both at work and at home. Everything you consider important works together to create your worldview. The same is true for your co-workers.



*Values* in this context are things like safety, respect, autonomy and recognition.

Being familiar with your employees' and colleagues' values helps you resolve conflicts. For example, say that two employees are having an argument over where to stack some binders. If you can appreciate that one employee sees respect as paramount in his environment, and that his workspace is being encroached by his colleague with a lackadaisical attitude toward boundaries, you have a better chance of helping the two resolve the issue. Rather than swooping in to tell

the pair that the binders they're arguing about should go on a shelf, you can facilitate a conversation about the real issue — respect. After you address the issue of respect, where the binders should go will be relatively easy to decide.

In [Chapter 2](#), I go into more detail about filters, values and the emotions individuals bring to conflict.

## ***Recognising emotions in others***

Most organisations embrace positive emotions. Where managers often falter is in failing to recognise that every emotion — from upbeat to angry — is a clue to discovering people's personal values. Positive emotions are a sign that values are being met, while negative ones suggest that some work still needs to be done!

It's obvious that a situation has turned emotional when tears flow or an employee ratchets up the volume when he speaks, to the point that the entire office slips into an uncomfortable silence. What's a little more difficult is knowing what to do with such passionate responses. Emotional reactions are often seen as negative behaviour in just about any workplace, but if you spend some time investigating and interpreting them, you can get a leg up on how to resolve the trouble. Check out [Chapter 2](#) for a complete discussion of emotions at work.

## ***Handling communication mishaps***

Communication makes the world go round, and the same is true for you and your employees. Word choice, tone of voice and body language all contribute to whether or not you understand each other.

Using vague or confusing language causes communication misfires. Phrases such as ‘when you get a chance’, ‘several’, or ‘sometimes’ don’t accurately state what you really mean. Similarly, words like ‘always’ and ‘never’ can get you in trouble. Choosing your words wisely, and in a way that invites dialogue, makes for a less stressful work environment and models good communication. See [Chapter 2](#) for more tips on communicating effectively.

## ***Deciphering group dynamics***

Two employees can completely understand each other and work like a well-oiled machine. Then a third co-worker joins the team, and now you have group dynamics in play. Wow, that changes everything! A team that’s cohesive and meeting its goals can be exhilarating from management’s perspective. But if cliques form and co-workers start looking for allies to enlist in power plays behind closed doors, communication breaks down.

Teams have a propensity to label members — the caretaker, the go-to guy, the historian and so on. Employees start to make assumptions based on

the labelled roles, such as assuming that the go-to guy will happily accept any assignment you give him. Conjecture based on limited or selective information causes miscommunication, misunderstandings and, ultimately, conflict.

To address what happens when members of a group are undergoing difficulties, investigate how and when the problem started and determine if the problem stems from just a few staff members or if the impact is so great that you need to tackle the problem with the entire team. And flip to [Chapter 3](#) for more information on the way group dynamics can contribute to conflict.

## ***Assessing your own role***

Something you're either doing or *not* doing may be causing friction on your team, and you may not even know what it is. Most people in conflict tend to spend more time thinking about what the other person is doing than looking at their own behaviour and attitudes toward the difficulty.

[Chapter 4](#) outlines some of the common missteps that colleagues, and especially managers, make in their attempts to handle problems at work. I discuss ways you may be unwittingly pitting team members against each other, address the dreaded micromanaging accusation, and explain how underrepresenting your team to the higher-ups may unite them in a way that puts you at the centre of a storm.

# *Mediating like a Pro*

When I meet with clients in conflict, I prefer to use a tried-and-true mediation process that looks at both the surface issues and the underlying causes for the difficulty. In this section, I show you why mediation is your best bet for a long-term solution and improved working relationship.

## *Following eight steps to a resolution*

Using a solid process to mediate a meeting between co-workers in conflict gives you a foundation on which to manage and monitor the difficulty. Follow these steps from a professional mediation process:

- 1. Do preliminary planning and setup:** Carefully investigate who's involved and what you believe the issues are, and invite the parties to discuss the matter with you. Provide a private, comfortable and confidential environment for the meeting.
- 2. Greet and discuss the process:** Explain your role as a neutral facilitator and go over the ground rules, including your expectation for open minds and common courtesy.
- 3. Share perspectives:** Give each person an opportunity to share her point of view and discuss the impact the conflict has had on her. Reflect, reframe and neutralise

emotional content while honouring the spirit of what she's sharing.

4. **Build an agenda:** Allow both parties to create a list of topics (not solutions) they want to discuss. The list acts as a road map that keeps the discussion on track.
5. **Negotiate in good faith:** As co-workers discuss initial ideas for solutions, set the tone by listening to any and all ideas. Brainstorm and play out how suggestions might work and whether they satisfy what's most important to the employees.
6. **Hold private meetings as necessary:** Confidentially explore what's keeping each from moving forward, and discuss what each is willing to do (or ask for) in the spirit of progress and real resolution.
7. **Craft agreements:** Bring employees back together and let them share, if they so choose, any discoveries they made during the private meeting sessions. Begin to narrow down solutions and come to an agreement (with details!) on who will do what and when.
8. **Monitor follow-through:** Keep track of progress, address hiccups and refine as appropriate.

## ***Facilitating a conversation between two people***

Before you begin the mediation process, you need to consider the following:

- ✓ **A suitable meeting space:** You want the employees to feel comfortable enough in the meeting location to open up about the real issues. Meet in a place that has lots of privacy and is seen as neutral territory.
- ✓ **Confidentiality:** You need to build trust for a mediation conversation (see [Chapter 6](#) for details on setting up a meeting), so agreeing to keep the conversation between the colleagues is a must, whether you act as mediator or bring in an outside expert.
- ✓ **Time and interruptions:** You probably want to set aside up to four hours to work through the issues, and you want to clear your schedule of other responsibilities so that the meeting isn't interrupted.



When you make the decision to mediate a conversation between feuding parties, a few things change for you. It's imperative that you walk a fine line between manager or colleague and mediator. As a manager, you have the power to make decisions; as a mediator, you have the power to put the onus on the employees and act as a neutral third party.

Practising the arts of reflecting and reframing an employee's point of view may be an initial