



rank, persuasion, expertise, economics, or coercion. Competition (or any other style) is neither good nor bad, but only one of the many styles that may be appropriate and effective, depending on the situation.

### **Accommodation**

Accommodation means placing the other party's needs and concerns above one's own (lose/win). It is characterized by cooperative and unassertive behavior (see figure). Accommodation is appropriate and effective if one party is not as concerned as the others. It is effective when preserving harmony and avoiding disruption are important. It builds good will and leads to cooperative relationships.

### **Avoidance**

People using this style simply do not address the conflict and are indifferent to each other's needs and concerns (lose/lose). It is characterized by uncooperative and unassertive behavior by both parties (see figure). Avoidance can be employed effectively as a short-term or interim strategy until more information is available or emotions cool down. It can be used as a permanent strategy if the probability of satisfying one's needs and concerns is exceedingly low.

### **Collaboration**

People using a collaborative style aim to satisfy the needs and concerns of both parties (win/win). It involves the maximum use of both cooperation and assertion (see figure). Collaboration requires more commitment than the other styles and takes more time and energy. With this style, the parties often are more committed to the resolution because an outcome that meets the needs of both parties is more likely to be supported.

### **Compromise**

Compromise is midway between the previous four styles (see figure). It will lead to a partial fulfillment of the needs, concerns, and goals of both parties. Compared to collaboration, few issues are confronted. Compromise is appropriate when the goals of the parties are moderately important and not worth the effort and time required for collaboration.

*Source: Based on Managing Conflict on the Farm by Guy Hutt and Robert Milligan.*

## **Managing conflicts**

The family may need assistance in resolving conflicts. So you may need to assume a leadership role in managing and resolving these conflicts. Below are six steps or techniques you can use for managing a family/business dispute.

- **Initiate dialogue** - Call the family together and establish the fact that you will be open, honest, and attentive to everyone's needs in what is likely to be a sensitive situation. Discuss only present problems and discuss them one at a time. Remember, everyone has a right to talk. It is important to understand every person's position.
- **Involve all parties** - Next, involve all parties in the communication process. Involvement begins by asking questions and encouraging others to answer. Listen as people respond to your questions.
- **Assimilate information** - The third phase is to assimilate all this information. Everyone must consider all of the facts and feelings. Clarify every position expressed and its cause.
- **Reinforce agreements** - The next step is to reinforce agreements. Reinforcing agreements is a powerful psychological tool. This process builds trust and understanding and makes negotiating easier. Always reinforce agreements before you negotiate disagreements.
- **Negotiate disagreements** - This begins by reviewing and ranking the disagreements. When issues are ranked, seek adjustments from each adversary, with the most insignificant or easiest problem first. Remind them that you cannot negotiate disagreements until the facts and feelings are understood by everyone.
- **Solidify agreements** - The last step is to solidify agreements and confirm solutions to the problem. Begin by reviewing the changes agreed to, and ask if compromises are still acceptable. Review proposed actions carefully. Commitment to the adjustment can be confirmed through formal or informal contracts, a checklist, a handshake, or even a hug.

### **... and justice for all**

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