



# Maximising team performance:

Managing confrontational  
behaviour



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# Understanding confrontational behaviours

It can be easy to assume that colleagues who have a confrontational behaviour aren't fun to work with. The term "confrontational" often has negative connotations like aggression or hostility. And it can be hard to work with an aggressive, hostile coworker.

But, people with confrontational behaviours that are exhibited in a healthy way can bring their own strengths to the work environment. These behaviours are often encountered in individuals who are passionate about their roles. They're assertive in their commitment to a cause they believe in, which can sometimes help them achieve more than those who have a more passive personality. When obstacles arise, some personalities display confrontational behaviour and won't back down from the challenge.

The trick for managers is to harness the power of these moments of confrontational behaviours and direct it towards positive productivity. With the right approach to this powerful behaviour, you'll gain a passionate team player who works tirelessly to achieve goals and hit targets. In this eBook, we'll share insights on how to communicate effectively with what can, at times, be deemed as contentious behaviours, and how to engage in conflict management when a workplace conflict arises.

Maybe most importantly, we'll help you see that when confrontational behaviours are displayed, this can be a huge bonus and can be interpreted as excitement in team members who are enthusiastic about their goals.

# Effective communication with confrontational behaviours

A person who shows confrontational behaviour traits often asserts their opinion or ideas over those of others. However, asserting one's thoughts isn't a bad thing, as long as other opinions are valued and respected as well.

In fact, assertiveness can be useful, effective, and necessary in certain situations. But when assertion backslides into aggression, our decision-making skills plummet, and our evolutionary response to attack or defend replaces our ability to have meaningful, productive communication.



Anyone can be confrontational. Even those who typically tend to be more passive and gentle can have a bad day, feel grumpy, and take it out on their colleagues. That sort of behaviour shouldn't be tolerated in the workplace, but it's important to remember that confrontational behaviours can have a root cause.

It's also important to remember that colleagues with confrontational behaviour traits can contribute positively to the team. They value honest communication, so they'll state their feelings or opinions clearly and look for a solution to the problem. That can be a valuable trait in a coworker. In a team setting, those with confrontational behaviours might speak over others or ignore their coworkers' opinions or suggestions. Disagreements may arise, causing hostility and hurt feelings. But if someone displays confrontational behaviour through a kind manner with respectful language, a conflict becomes an opportunity to work through misunderstandings with responsiveness and honesty.





## Setting clear expectations and valuing honest conversation

When it comes to communication, those that display confrontational behaviour traits can be very clear in expressing themselves and respond well to assertive communication from those around them. These are positive traits, and you can use them to build a strong working relationship.

Candid discussion is a gift to your team. It should be encouraged, and it should feel safe for all involved. To create a dynamic of direct, respectful feedback in your team, try leading by example – model the behaviour you want them to embrace.

Solicit feedback from your team and respond to their thoughts with humility and empathy. In team meetings, ensure everyone has the chance to share, discuss, and even disagree with you. Encourage those disagreements and use them to stoke exciting conversations about new (potentially better!) ideas. The example you set will help team members feel comfortable expressing their opinions. What's more, you'll show your team that influential leaders listen actively to others.

# Transparent goals and conflict resolution

Unclear responsibilities and resource competition are two common reasons for workplace conflict. But if everyone on the team has a crystal-clear understanding of their responsibilities and the resources they'll have to achieve them, you're less likely to breed opportunities for conflict.

Effective conflict resolution includes setting clear expectations, which can help team members who often show confrontational behaviour to thrive. Remember, individuals with these behavioural traits tend to respond well to clear communication. They value a clear understanding of their role and a straightforward path to achieving their goals. So, if you start every project with explicit expectations and role-clarifying conversations, those who can be confrontational will have the opportunity to shine.

Every employee benefits from role clarification techniques, not just the confrontational ones! For each team member, provide transparent language around these topics:

- ✓ Performance
- ✓ Time management
- ✓ Personal development
- ✓ Teamwork & collaboration
- ✓ Innovation & creativity

A clearly-marked goal gives your team something tangible to work toward. It reduces frustration and confusion, creates a framework for resolving conflicts, and lets the team work more productively together.





## Utilising the strengths of the entire team

Confrontational behaviour can benefit your team, especially when it comes to negotiations, innovation, and problem-solving.

People with confrontational tendencies are tenacious. They don't back down from a difficult discussion and can keep their sights set on the team's ultimate goal, no matter what distractions may arise.

When you're looking for solutions to tricky

technical problems, sometimes the unstoppable force of this bold employee is exactly what you need. Assertive people tackle problem-solving head-on, and are willing to set aside unnecessary conventions to arrive at a solution that works.

There's a valuable place on the team for that kind of determination. Look for projects and tasks that will allow confrontational behaviours to excel.



# Give and receive constructive feedback

Along with setting clear goals, those who feel comfortable with confrontation can respond well to regular, respectful feedback. When giving feedback to a strong-willed team member, make sure you hit these points:

- ✓ List their strengths and remind them of the positive things they contribute to the team.
- ✓ Explore areas of improvement, and brainstorm ways you can support them as they grow.
- ✓ Discuss how their objectives impact the team and show them that they can make a positive difference in the team's performance.

As a manager, you should be open to receiving honest feedback as well as giving it. Allow all of your employees to express how they feel and suggest how you might manage them better. This kind of humility lays a fantastic groundwork for your employees to receive their own feedback with equal empathy and cooperation.

Encourage every team member to share. Expect every team member to listen. Inspire open communication in a safe, empowering environment.







# Promote team-building activities

Team-building exercises let everyone have a little fun and see one another in a different light. They're an effective way to change the dynamics of a team and let employees discover untapped strengths in themselves and one another. Team-building exercises like these are quick and inclusive:

- ✓ Solve a puzzle
- ✓ Play a board game
- ✓ Host a "show and tell"
- ✓ Hold a brainstorming session
- ✓ Engage a compliment circle

If you want to try something outside the office, these innovative outings should interest your team:

- ✓ Escape room
- ✓ Cooking class
- ✓ Art class
- ✓ Trivia
- ✓ Volunteerism
- ✓ Book club

When organising a team event, remember to choose one that includes the whole team and has a clear team goal (like better cooperation or communication). Model vulnerability to the team and encourage them to be open and vulnerable too. Choose a well-organised event and make sure everyone participates fully – especially the manager.

Team building gives your team members with confrontational behaviours a chance to relax and shift to a lighter, less intense mindset. Plus, if a conflict arises during a team-building activity, you can take the opportunity to practise active listening and encourage better interpersonal skills.

# Manage confrontational behaviours with C-me

We hope this eBook has helped you understand the strengths of your confrontational coworkers and identified ways to work more effectively with them.

Confrontational behaviour brings strong emotions and honesty to teams, and people with these personality traits are not afraid to speak up for their ideas or a cause they care about. Their head-on approach can often be more effective than someone with a more passive

personality when it comes to meeting goals and solving problems.

At C-me, we can help you identify and support team members with confrontational behaviours, managing them in a way that lets you avoid conflict and find common ground. Our cutting-edge personal development platform helps you understand employees' unique behavioural patterns and gives powerful insights on how to help them thrive.

## Want to see C-me in action?

Book a free demo today, or take it for a spin yourself in our free trial. You'll love how C-me supports every personality type, letting each one grow according to their needs. Start building a healthier, more harmonious workplace with C-me!

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