T-E ARTHUR

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

AND

SYSTEMS FOR RESOLVING CONFLICT

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A former colleague of mind, frequently invited to address groups such as this, is fond of beginning by informing his audience that he has had trouble finding a suitable talk, or that he has had great difficulty in preparing his talk. Well, like my friend, I have experienced great difficulty in preparing this talk.

It has been said that, when film makers purchase the rights to a book, they buy two items separately - the title and the plot - and either or both can be used independently or together in making the film. The appropriateness of this analogy in the present instance is that I have chosen to use the title which was originally suggested to me, but it may not bear a direct relationship to the content I will present to you. My main argument for doing this is that to talk in abstract theoretical terms, or even in reasonably practical terms, about structures and systems would be somewhat dull and boring for you, and I wouldn't much have enjoyed preparing or delivering such a talk.

In any case, structures and systems are only as good as the people who inhabit them or implement them and give them life and soul, whether these be described in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, quality of work life, or whatever. It may indeed have been more appropriate to re-title my talk as "Management styles and strategies for resolving conflict", for that is more closely aligned with what I want to talk about.

MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Some quarter of a century ago, Douglas McGregor developed a system for describing managerial behaviour based on two sets of assumptions about the nature of people and related to the basic question of how managers see themselves in relation to others. These concepts of the Theory X and Theory Y manager have enjoyed varying degrees of popularity over the years.

Essentially, Theory X asserts that, since most human beings have an inherent dislike of work, they must be coerced, controlled, directed, and threatened with punishment to get them to put effort into the achievement of organizational objectives. In contrast, Theory Y holds that physical and mental effort applied to work is as natural as play or rest and that people will exercise self-direction and self-control in the service of objectives to which they are committed.

The fundamental difference between the two sets of assumptions is this. Theory X is pessimistic, static and rigid; and control is primarily external - imposed on the subordinate by the superior. Theory Y is optimistic, dynamic and flexible, with an emphasis on self-direction and the integration of individual needs with organizational demands.

While there is little doubt that each set of assumptions will affect the way managers carry out their managerial functions and tasks, the model tends to be rather simplistic when we attempt to apply it to the richness and variety of managerial behaviour.

Early studies of leadership found that managers tended to apply one of three basic styles, classified on the basis of how they used their authority, or according to the nature and extent of control they exercised.

The autocratic, authoritarian, or dictatorial manager was seen as one who commands and expects compliance, who is dogmatic and positive, and who leads by the ability to withhold or give rewards and punishments.

The democratic, participative, or involving manager leads by example and through consultation with subordinates on proposed actions and decisions, and encourages participation from them. This type of manager was perceived to be within a spectrum ranging from the person who does not take action without subordinates' concurrence to the one who makes the decisions, but consults with subordinates before doing so.

The laissez-faire, "hands-off", or free-rein manager uses his or her power very little, if at all, giving subordinates a high degree of independence, and depending largely on subordinates setting their own goals and the means of achieving them.

There are, of course, variations from this simple classification, and it is still a useful model for examining styles of leadership. In the main, it has been shown that a primarily democratic style is most likely to produce a harmonious working environment, with a high level of staff morale and job satisfaction, together with

greater productivity, efficiency and quality.

At the same time, this model is still insufficient to depict the variety of management styles employed by successful managers.

Other studies of management and leadership have identified two main independent dimensions on which managers' behaviours vary, and according to which they can then be placed in a position on a grid which reflects their predominant style. Perhaps the best-known of these approaches are Blake and Mouton's work on the Managerial Grid, and Herschey and Blanchard's studies of leadership. While each of these research thrusts had a slightly different focus, the key dimensions identified by both of them are remarkably similar.

Blake and Mouton called their dimensions Concern for people and Concern for production, while Herschey and Blanchard used the terms Consideration and Structure. Whichever titles are used, the first dimension reflects an orientation toward the people in the organization. When present to a high degree, it reflects the extent to which a manager is likely to develop relationships with subordinates characterised by mutual trust, respect for their ideas, consideration of their feelings and a climate of good interpersonal rapport, with effective two-way communication.

The second dimension reflects an orientation toward the task to be undertaken. At a high level, it indicates the extent to which a manager is likely to define and structure his or her own

role and those of subordinates toward goal attainment. Such managers are likely to be active in directing the activities of subordinates through planning, providing incentives, setting objectives,measuring results, appraising performance, criticising and setting clear lines of reporting.

Obviously, any given manager can be either high or low on both of these dimensions, or high on one and low on the other. Most studies have found that, to be even moderately effective in a management role, the person should have at least an average amount of concern for, and an understanding of both components, while the most effective managers have been rated highly on both. These people are those who display in their actions a high level of dedication both to people and the task; they are real team managers who are able to mesh the needs of the organization with the needs of the individuals in it, thereby developing a climate of commitment, trust and respect.

Management Styles

A more recent development of this type of model has extended it in a way that enables us to see that very different management styles can be equally effective.

Based on the work of David Merrill and Roger Reid, its underlying assumption is that success in management at any level depends largely on the ability to deal with other human beings. The manager's prime job is seen as getting results with and through other people.

Consequently, the ability to understand and relate to different working styles (including one's own) is one of the most useful ways of forging effective work relationships.

The term style here refers to a pervasive and enduring pattern of interpersonal behaviours. Evidence from research indicates that -

* There are four major styles, none of which is any better or worse than the others;

* The population is close to evenly divided among the four styles;

* Each person has a dominant style, and that style influences the way he or she works;

* A person's style can be understood by observing behaviours, - not by making assumptions about attitudes, values, or other personality characteristics.

* The best way of discovering one's own style is to receive feedback from other people.

Understanding the basic concepts of this management style model can help to create more productive work relationships by:

1. Increasing your ability to capitalise on your own strengths and protect yourself against the weaknesses that are part of your basic style - for effective self-management is essential to the management of others.

2. Increasing your understanding and acceptance of others; providing insight into the differences among people; and suggesting more effective ways of interacting with those whose styles are different from your own.

Basically, the model involves a type of interpersonal flexibility, which research has shown to be associated with management success. Like the earlier models, it relates to two crucial dimensions of behaviour, which together determine an individual's style. In this instance they are labelled Assertiveness and Responsiveness.

Assertiveness is the degree to which a person's behaviours are seen by others as being forceful or directive. It can be visualised on a scale divided into four equal segments, indicating high, moderately high, moderately low, and low levels of the characteristic.

Each person typically exhibits a cluster of behaviours that falls within one of the segments of the scale. While some behaviours on some occasions or in some situations may occur in other segments, most behaviours will tend to cluster in one segment.

In helping to determine basic style, the question to ask is whether the person is on the higher or lower side of the middle point of the scale.

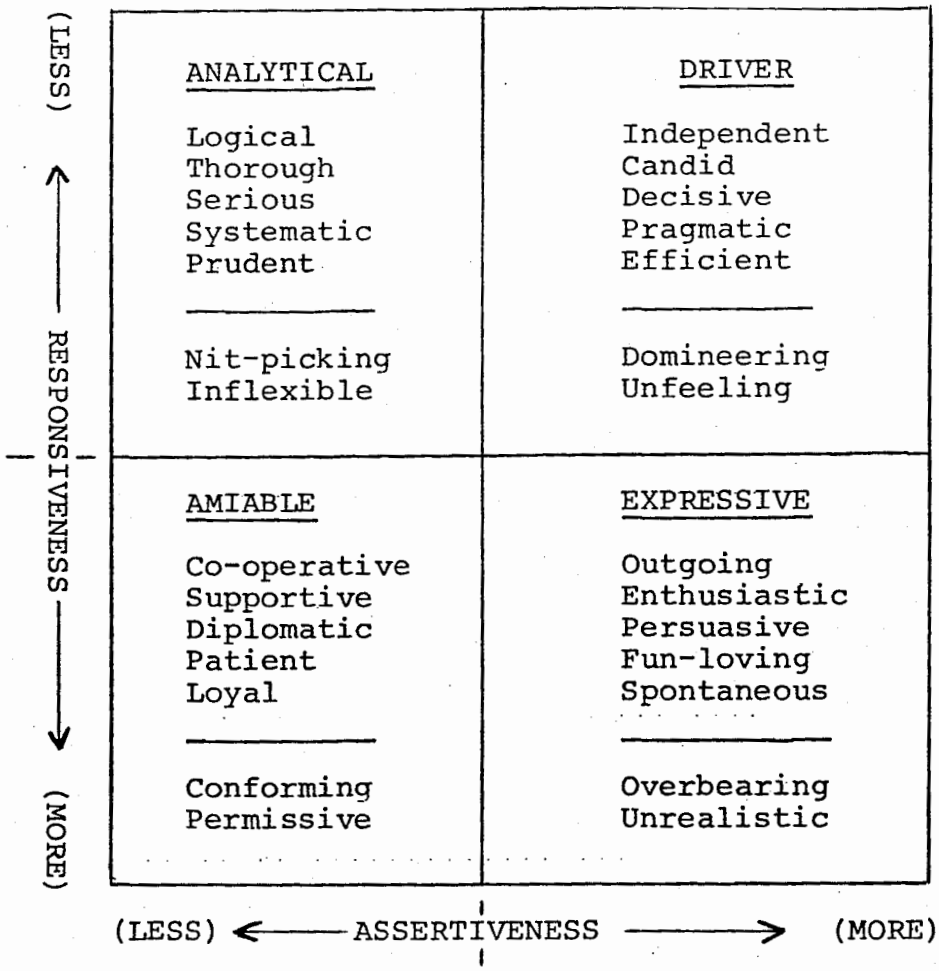
Responsiveness is defined as the degree to which a person's behaviours are seen by others as being emotionally responsive or expressive, or emotionally controlled and restrained. Very responsive people tend to react noticeably to their own emotions or the emotions of others, while less responsive people are more guarded in their emotional expression.

Thus, the second basic question to be asked is whether the person is above or below the middle point of this scale. As with assertiveness, the person's behaviours may not be limited to a single segment of the responsiveness scale on all occasions or in all situations but, over time, most of a person's behaviour would be seen as clustering in one area.

These two behaviourial dimensions form the axes of the style grid. From them, we can determine a person's position in one of the four guadrants which represent the four basic styles. These have been labelled Analytical, Amiable (or Relating), Expressive, and Driver.

THE STYLE GRID

(STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF EACH STYLE)



Analytical people combine a high level of emotional self-control with a low level of assertiveness. They tend to take a precise, deliberate and systematic approach to their work. They usually gather and evaluate much data before acting, and are generally industrious, objective and well-organised workers.

Amiable people combine higher than average responsiveness with a comparatively low level of assertiveness. They tend to be sympathetic to the needs of others and are often quite sensitive to what lies below the surface behaviour of another person. Their trust in others tends to bring out the best in customers, friends and subordinates.

Expressives, the most flamboyant style, integrate a high level of assertiveness with much emotional expression. They tend to look at the broad canvas; often take fresh, novel approaches to problems; and are willing to take risks in order to seize opportunities and realise their dreams. Their love of fun, use of humour, and spontaneous ways often lift the morale of their co-workers. They tend to decide and act quickly and have the ability to charm, persuade, excite and inspire people in a way that can be a strong motivating force.

The Driver is a blend of a high level of emotional self-control with a high degree of assertiveness. They are task-oriented people who tend to know where they are going and what they want. They get to the point quickly and express themselves succinctly. Drivers are typically pragmatic, decisive, results oriented, objective and competitive. They are usually independent, willing to take sound risks, and valued for their ability to get things done.

Some recent research has shown that effective organisations tend to be made up of and value all four types of managers. Most top management tasks are said to require at least four different

kinds of person - the thinker, the action person, the people person, and the "front man" - and it is unlikely that all four strengths will be found in any one manager. However, this does depend to some extent on just where the person fits on the style grid and on how flexible he or she is in adapting to different situations. For example, a manager whose profile places him or her near the centre of the grid is more likely to be able to move from one style to another as circumstances demand than the manager whose personal style is more extremely in one of the guadrants.

Just as each style has its strengths, so too does it have weaknesses. One way of looking at these characteristic weaknesses is that any given style, particularly if strong, tends to be less developed in those areas in which the other styles are strong. Typically, a person is especially lacking in the strengths of the style diagonally across the grid from his or her own.

On the other hand, some of the most serious weaknesses of a particular style can result from over-extending the style's strengths. For example, the Analytical's quest for quality can be misused when time is devoted to achieving it on a low-priority matter at the expense of more important issues; the Driver's push for short-term results may be inappropriate when it forfeits greater long-range gain; the Expressive's big-picture dreams can be a detriment if they prevent him or her from doing the daily, trivial but necessary chores; the Amiable's supportiveness can

be a weakness when he or she refuses to challenge a course of action which could have a negative impact on the organisation.

In essence, the wise manager capitalises on the strengths (his or her own and those of subordinates) and develops strategies for minimising the potential damage caused by the weaknesses.

A detailed consideration of how to achieve these things is beyond the scope, and certainly beyond the time available for this presentation. But these basic concepts of management style provide a useful framework for examining ways of resolving conflict.

Resolving Conflict

In conflict situations, people tend to exhibit similar behaviours to those elicited by stressful conditions. Indeed, people react with predictable, style-based behaviourial changes, known in the model just described as backup styles.

The style model parallels the findings of other stress studies, that there are two basic reactions available for coping with stress and conflict - fight or flight: a person can respond actively or passively. The more assertive styles (Driver and Expressive) tend to become more active and more aggressive when under this kind of pressure. By contrast, the less assertive styles (Analytical and Amiable) tend to appear more passive.

It has also been discovered that, under these conditions, people who are high on responsiveness (Amiable and Expressive) tend to exaggerate some of their style-based characteristics associated with responsiveness; likewise, the Analytical and Driver styles are apt to emphasise some of their style-based tendencies related to control of emotional expression.

These shifts in behaviour as a reaction to conflict are predictable for each style, are usually counterproductive for the person using them, and cause problems in relationships with others.

In brief, the backup style for each basic style can be described thus:

The Analytical becomes an avoider. He or she may even leave the room physically. More commonly, they will vocate the scene emotionally, tending to intellectualise and discuss emotional issues with a cold and detached logic.

The Amiable will usually acquiesce. Although genuinely supportive under normal circumstances, they tend now to offer compliance rather than co-operation.

The Expressive becomes attacking - typically an angry, personal attack, using strong language, high volume, and emphatic gestures.

The Driver becomes autocratic, pushy and dictatorial, often even more task oriented than usual - insisting that things be done "my way and right now."

It is apparent from these capsule descriptions that these backup styles represent a shift to more extreme forms of behaviour, which is usually rigid, non-negotiable, and highly inappropriate, in that it tends to increase the level of conflict and interpersonal tension, has a deleterious effect on the relationship, and makes an acceptable resolution of the conflict situation less likely.

Moreover, this kind of reaction represents a contingency or crisis approach to conflict management - almost a case of shutting the door after the horse has bolted. It would be far more effective and less destructive if managers could anticipate possible sources of conflict, or at least be able to recognise the early warning signs and deal with the conflicts when they are small, thereby preventing them from escalating into unmanageable situations.

Planned Re-negotiation

Such a strategy is provided by Sherwood and Glidewell's model for planned re-negotiation, designed to help anticipate and prevent disruptive conflict.

There is an expressed or implied contract at the start of any relationship - whether it be a marriage, a friendship, or a manager-employee discussion of terms and conditions, including job specification. In the model, this is described as the stage of sharing information and negotiating expectations. This dialogue, whether a relatively short job interview or a lengthy courtship, has the effect of reducing uncertainties to an acceptable level. The important point is that sufficient negotiation should take place for a future relationship to be apparent. Only then can there be some commitment to the expectations.

Commitment of this kind requires a definition of roles so that each party knows, in general terms, what is expected of him or her, and each has a fairly clear picture of what to expect of the other. The more important the relationship, the more evidence of commitment is required. For example marriage implies a heavier commitment than living together, and a signed contract specifying certain behaviours and performance is more binding than a loose, verbal agreement.

After roles have been established, a level of stability and productivity can be developed and maintained. People work together and the relationship remains acceptably predictable and comfortable for a period of time - but sooner or later a disruption will occur.

To some extent this can be because the original contract was understood by the parties in different ways according to their own interpretation of the details; and because there is a

tendency for people to add provisions to the original agreement, which are usually implied and private. Also, as the relationship progresses, people change, perceptions alter, definition and interpretation of the contract are modified - and often differently by the different parties.

Alternatively, the disruption can occur because of a change in circumstances - a new work location, unexpected job requirements, illness, or any of a variety of reasons which can cause uncertainty, anxiety or threat.

When this occurs, it represents some degree of failed expectation - what we might call a "Pinch". If the conflict is dealt with adequately at this point, it can lead to the re-establishment of stability. Sometimes, if the parties are prepared to devote the required time and emotional energy, it can provide an opportunity for extensive re-examination of the contract - a planned re-negotiation - which either starts the process again or leads to termination of the contract under conditions of relative calm, reason and unemotional, informed judgement.

More often though, "pinches" in relationships are <u>not</u> dealt with - either adequately, or at the time they arise - and they tend to be stored up. Usually they are not dealt with because we are hesitant to deliver the "bad news", or we just don't know what to do or what to say - and our concern is often more for our own feelings rather than for the other person or for the relationship.

As the "pinches" then start to accumulate, our role becomes increasingly ambiguous and we become less and less certain of the nature of the original contract. As we become more amxious, we also begin to feel more resentful and angry. Before long, both parties have cast themselves in the role of victim and the other in the role of aggressor. It doesn't take long for these symptoms to build up to a "Crunch" point and a consequent explosion, with strong forces of conflict and tension coming into play.

When this happens, three main possibilities are available:

1. A return to the way things used to be - but often without dealing with the real underlying issues that led to the "crunch". The result is usually an acceleration of the rate of storing up "pinches" and, naturally, a shorter period before the next "crunch."

   This solution is really a form of avoidance, with both parties in collusion. It appears to have immediate rewards in a painful situation, but it increases the likelihood of continuing to use the same strategy and inevitably causes long-term damage to the relationship.

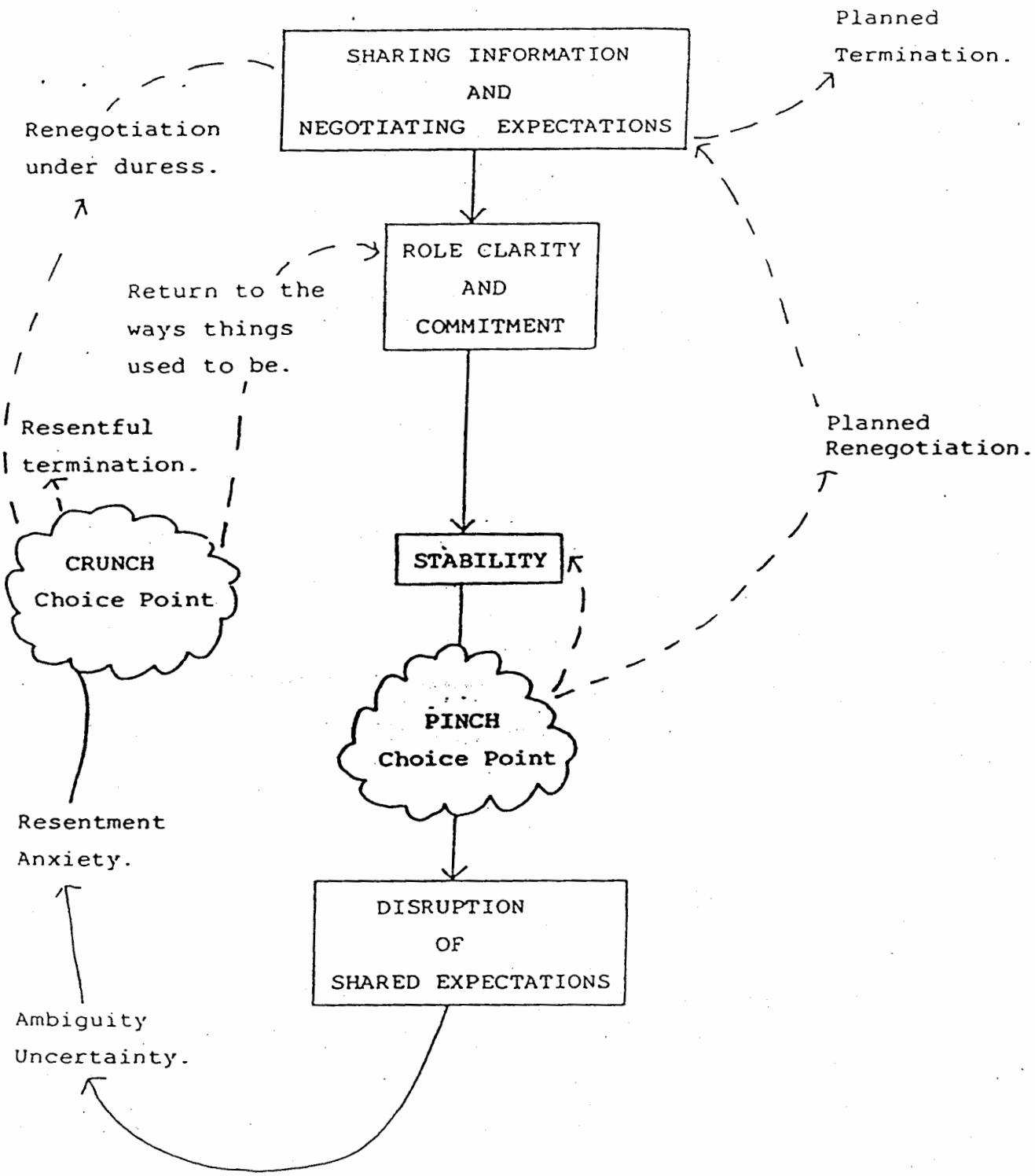
2. Resentful termination - the contract is discontinued, but because the decision has been made in a situation highly charged with emotion, the residue of resentment and hostility is great.

3. The contract may be re-negotiated under duress, but it is not likely to be effective. Again, because emotions are probably running high, the real issues may not be adequately dealt with and, while there is a return to the contract, there is a higher probability of problems leading to a planned termination.

Strategies for dealing with "pinches" at the time they arise need to be developed within the particular relationship to suit the given situation. They often require imagination, and the exercise of general communication skills. It can be made much easier if the sources of possible "pinches" can be identified ahead of time and likely "pinch points" built into the initial contract - but that is not always easy.

The desired outcome, the goal of any conflict resolution, preferably at the "pinch point" rather than the "crunch point". is for as little as possible hurt and resentment to remain. Unfortunately, the arationality of human beings tends to preclude this much of the time.

MODEL FOR PLANNED RE-NEGOTIATION



Adapted from Sherwood and Glidewell (1972)

However, the chances of achieving this goal are increased if we improve our understanding of ourselves and of others (and the style model discussed earlier suggests one way of doing this), and if we use the skills of negotiation in dealing with the conflict, however serious it has become.

The Art of Negotiation

There is insufficient time to consider the skills of negotiation in any detail. But I would suggest to you that the form of negotiation that most of us typically use involves an attempted trade-off between getting what we want and getting along with people. This sort of negotiation usually involves some form of positional bargaining - where each side takes a position, argues for it, and makes concessions to reach a compromise - the classic example is the customer haggling over price with a storekeeper.

However, this kind of positional bargaining does not meet the three criteria necessary for effective negotiation, namely:

1. That it produces a wise agreement - one that meets the legitimate interests of each side as far as possible, that resolves conflicting interests fairly, that is durable, that takes community interests into account, and that recognises the psychological values at stake.

2. That it is efficient - in terms of both monetary and psychological or emotional cost.

3. That it should improve, or at least not damage the relationship between the parties.

Positional bargaining tends to lock people into their committed positions; less attention is devoted to meeting the underlying concerns of the parties; even if reached, an agreement is likely to be less satisfactory to both sides than it could have been; the process is time-consuming and energy sapping; and it places a great strain on the relationship and can generate bitter feelings.

A better and more effective alternative is the technique of principled negotiation, which can be summarised in terms of four basic points. (Note: A detailed discussion of this method can be found in R. Fisher & W. Ury: Getting to Yes: The Art of Principled Negotiation. Boston; Houghton Mifflin, 1981.)

1. Separate the people from the problem. Taking positions leads to entangling emotions with the objective merits of the problem, because people's egos become identified with their positions. Therefore, the people problem should be separated from the task problem and dealt with separately. In that way, the people can together attack the problem rather than each other.

2. Focus on interests, not positions. Since the object of most negotiations is to satisfy people's underlying interests, if we focus on their positions, what they really want tends to be obscured.

3. Generate a variety of options or possibilities before deciding what to do. It is difficult to design optimal solutions while under pressure. Trying to decide in the presence of an adversary tends to narrow your vision. Having a lot at stake, or searching for the one right solution, tends to inhibit creativity, and makes it less likely that the solution will be a good one. These problems can be avoided, or at least reduced, simply by taking the time to think up a range of possible solutions that advance shared interests and/or attempt to reconcile differing interests.

4. Insist that the result be based on some objective standard, criteria or principles. A negotiator may be able to obtain a favourable result (for himself or herself) simply by being stubborn. But such a result is likely to be arbitrary and often one-sided. You can counter this by insisting that the agreement must reflect some fair standard, independent of the will of either side. This does not mean insisting that the terms must be based on the standard you select rather than accepting the other person's standard - it means having recourse to some fair, external criterion, such

as market value, expert opinion, law, job description, quality control, stated policy etc.

By discussing such criteria in terms of the principles involved, rather than what the parties are willing or unwilling to do, neither party need give in to the other: both can yield to the fair solution.

Concluding Remarks

My comments have been related to general principles of management, without any specific reference to the management of heritage parks and museums. I would hope that you have been thinking as I spoke, or preferably that you have been listening and will be able to think later about the application of these ideas to your own situations and their particular idiosyncracies.

I hope that you have found these ideas helpful and that you will be able to use them to advantage in developing sound and effective management practices, in concert with the prevailing philosophies of your operation, whether these be historical, educational, preservational, conservational, or simply related to amusement and entertainment.