STEPS FOR CONFRONTING CONFLICT

1. Explain the situation the way you see it. Emphasize that you are presenting your perception of the problem. Specific facts and feelings should be used if possible.
2. Describe how it is affecting performance. Keep attention on the work-related problem and away from the personalities involved. Present the problem in a way that will be readily understood, and concentrate on important issues.
3. Ask for the other viewpoint to be explained. Before proposing solutions, gather as much information as possible. This step confirms that you respect the other person's opinion and need his or her cooperation. Listen carefully while he or she talks and be open to learning and changing.
4. Agree on the problem. Summarize the various viewpoints and state clearly the problem that you and the other participant(s) think needs to be solved. Once both parties agree on this, they can more easily focus on developing solutions.
5. Explore and discuss possible solutions. In order to ensure shared ownership of the problem's resolution, all participants in the conflict should be involved in developing solutions. The synergy developed may result in better solutions that any participant would have produced alone.
6. Agree on what each person will specifically do to solve the problem. Every person involved must clearly understand his or her role in the solution and accept responsibility as an individual and team member for making it work. Try to develop action for each person that is measurable.
7. Set a date for follow-up. A follow-up meeting allows you to evaluate progress and make adjustments as necessary. People also are much more likely to follow through if they know they will be held accountable for their commitments at a follow-up meeting.

Conflict has both positive and negative consequences for an organization and for individuals. The absence of conflict can be as dysfunctional as excessive amounts of conflict. For more advice or coaching on handling conflict call Crossroads at (803) 808-1800