



SALES AND MARKETING ROUNDTABLE #269

Conflict Resolution Techniques to Improve Team Dynamics with Samantha Adler and Onawa Gigliotti

Thank you to everyone who attended our latest Sales and Marketing Roundtable!

NOTE: To provide anonymity during the Roundtable discussion, participants and their communities will not be identified.

ABOUT OUR GUEST

This week on Varsity's Roundtable, we're joined by Onawa Gigliotti and Samantha Adler from the SEA Conflict Consulting, a leading provider of conflict resolution and mediation services.

Onawa and Samantha will share proven techniques for managing conflict, improving team communication, and building trust – skills that can directly enhance internal collaboration and strengthen the senior living sales process.



“Conflict is going to happen no matter what, but let’s not use it to devolve and not get anything out of it.” (Samantha Adler)



FRESH PERSPECTIVES

- **UNPACKING MEDIATION, DEESCALATION, AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION –**
Understanding the unique roles of mediation, deescalation, and conflict resolution is essential for fostering effective communication and lasting solutions. Mediation focuses on facilitative dialogue, deescalation addresses immediate tension, and conflict resolution tackles core disagreements, each promoting proactive conflict management.
- **EMBRACING OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION –** Utilizing open-ended questions in conflict and negotiation settings invites comprehensive dialogue. Techniques such as "Tell me more" and active listening help clarify issues. These open-ended techniques foster mutual understanding, transforming potentially negative interactions into constructive exchanges.
- **CULTURAL AWARENESS IN MEDIATION ENHANCES UNDERSTANDING –**
Acknowledging cultural differences is crucial in mediation. By remaining open-minded and using broad questions, mediators can avoid misinterpretations and ensure respectful, inclusive dialogues. This approach helps address systemic issues like classism and racism, fostering effective conflict resolution.
- **TRANSFORMING CONFLICT INTO OPPORTUNITY –** Conflicts, often viewed negatively, can become productive brainstorming opportunities with the right skills and mindset. Emphasizing transparency and openness can turn disagreements into opportunities for innovation and stronger connections, promoting a positive conflict resolution approach.

LINKS & CONTACT INFO

Samantha Adler ([Linkedin](#))

Onawa Gigliotti ([Linkedin](#))

SEA Conflict Consulting ([website](#))

SEAConflictConsulting@gmail.com

COMING UP ON VARSITY'S ROUNDTABLE!

Please join our next Roundtable gathering on Thursday, August 14 at noon ET, 11 a.m. CT and 9 a.m. PT. We'll be joined by Maggie Seybold from WelcomeHome. She will share insights from their latest benchmark report.

NEW ON VARSITY'S PODCAST, ROUNDTABLE TALK

The most recent episode of Varsity's podcast, Roundtable Talk, features a conversation with Bob Kramer, a nationally renowned authority on aging and senior living. As the co-founder of the National Investment Center for Seniors Housing and Care (NIC) and founder of Nexus Insights, Bob has been called a “disruptive force” in the field — always challenging us to think differently about aging, housing and care.

In the episode, Bob challenges the prevailing negative perceptions of aging, describing ageism as a prejudice against our future selves. He also highlights the significant, yet overlooked, potential of older adults in the workforce and addresses the epidemic of loneliness. Check it out on the [Roundtable Talk page](#) of the Varsity website!





3

TERMS TO KNOW: MEDIATION, DE-ESCALATION, CONFLICT COACHING

Mediation

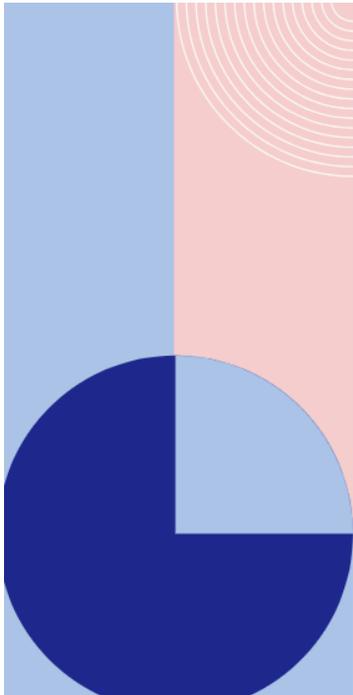
A conversation between parties facilitated by a neutral trained mediator who will use techniques to get under the apparent issues and help the parties find a mutually agreeable path forward.

Pettiness is actually the lynchpin to the conflict, mediators get granular, and these are the underlying issues that people often avoid but make the most difference.

We started off by diving into key terms like mediation, deescalation, and conflict coaching. Mediation was all about having a conversation guided by a neutral mediator, who helped uncover the core issues beneath the surface chatter. The aim was for parties to collaboratively find solutions that are more lasting because they're self-generated rather than imposed.

There was often confusion between mediation and arbitration. Unlike arbitrators, mediators didn't make decisions; instead, they guided discussions to help parties reach their own resolutions. The focus was on a facilitative approach, encouraging parties to identify their best options without external dictation or advice.

When moving on to the notion of 'pettiness' in arguments, we found that addressing these seemingly minor details was crucial as they often held the key to resolution. By addressing these specifics, both parties ensured they were on the same page, leading to a meaningful resolution.



De-escalation and conflict resolution, while related, are distinct processes 4

De-escalation focuses on immediately calming a tense situation to prevent it from becoming violent or dangerous.

Conflict resolution, on the other hand, aims to address the root causes of a disagreement and find a mutually agreeable solution. Essentially, de-escalation is a reactive, immediate response, while conflict resolution is a proactive, longer-term approach

We then moved on to clarify the differences between mediation, deescalation, and conflict resolution. While related, these concepts are distinct. Deescalation focuses on the immediate calming of a tense situation to prevent it from escalating into violence or danger. It involved finding quick solutions to lower tension, serving as the first step before any thorough conversation could take place.

In contrast, conflict resolution aimed to address the fundamental causes of a disagreement, seeking a mutually agreeable solution. It was more proactive and long-term compared to deescalation, resembling mediation in its approach. Whereas deescalation offered an immediate and reactive response, conflict resolution worked towards enduring outcomes. Samantha affirmed that both processes could be taught, emphasizing what actions to take immediately and what strategies to employ for longer-term resolution.

IMPACT TO YOUR ORGANIZATION

Important for companies to ensure a better working environment, build trust and provide professional development to front-line staff

Promote and market that these programs exist in your housing spaces. Being able to say that staff are trained in this, that these mechanisms are in place gives you a selling point and allows you to stand out



Samantha explained that the tools and techniques for conflict resolution are versatile and applicable across all areas of life, not just in professional settings. Many people find them beneficial for resolving personal conflicts with family members, such as kids or spouses. While initially presented in a professional context, these skills often help with personal situations as well.

In a sales and marketing context, these tools can enhance team management and improve workplace environments by installing effective conflict resolution systems. Moreover, having unique conflict resolution methods can serve as a selling point, giving companies a competitive edge in the market. It's vital for organizations to foster a positive working environment, build trust, and support the professional development of all staff members, especially those on the front lines, emphasizing that these benefits extend to everyone involved.

3 TIPS & TAKEAWAYS

What is the Issue?

Active Listening

Open-ended Questions

Reflection

Samantha discussed the universal power of open-ended questions, sharing an experience with JetBlue, where such questions led to a successful resolution after a frustrating situation. These questions are broad, requiring more than *yes* or *no* responses, and are crucial in conflict or negotiation settings.

She described open-ended questions as essential for gathering detailed information, with "Tell me more" being a staple in mediation. As one becomes more skilled, questions can become slightly more targeted, focusing on concerns or future outcomes.

Samantha also linked this to active listening, likening it to understanding the full iceberg beneath the surface. Reflection plays a key role, ensuring that one's understanding of the other's issues and feelings is accurate. This involves observing cues like body language, confirming shared information, and aligning perceptions.

Overall, she highlighted how these techniques – open-ended questions, reflection, and active listening – form a continuous cycle in effective communication.

QUESTIONS

HOW CAN CONFLICT, WHICH IS OFTEN SEEN AS NEGATIVE, ACTUALLY LEAD TO BETTER, MORE INTERESTING SOLUTIONS?

Samantha and Onawa addressed the question by acknowledging that conflict is inevitable in both personal and professional arenas. They emphasized that with the right skills and tools, conflict can be transformed into a productive brainstorming opportunity rather than a negative event. The focus should be on using conflict constructively to generate innovation and progress.

Onawa reinforced the idea that conflict should be seen as an opportunity to move past or work through issues, and emphasized the potential to create closer connections with others. While not entirely positive, there's a valuable alternative perspective and approach to conflict. They then prepared to discuss specific skills and tools to handle conflict productively.

WHAT ROLE DO CULTURAL DIFFERENCES OR DIFFERENT CULTURES PLAY WHEN MEDIATING CONFLICT?

Cultural differences significantly impact conflict mediation by shaping how behaviors and emotions are interpreted. In diverse settings, recognizing cultural nuances such as eye contact or tone is crucial to avoid misinterpretations. Open-ended questions and check-ins help ensure clarity and overcome cultural assumptions.

Mediators must stay open-minded and adaptable, acknowledging systemic issues like classism or racism. It's key to approach each case with neutrality and readiness to embrace diverse expressions, maintaining grace regardless of unfamiliar behaviors.

Self-awareness is vital; mediators reflect on their cultural biases to enhance effectiveness, ensuring they remain a neutral presence in any interaction, whether in sales or mediation.

MICHAEL SCOTT FROM "THE OFFICE" LIKED TO SHOW OFF HIS WORKPLACE CONFLICT MEDIATION SKILLS. HOW WOULD YOU RATE HIM AS A CONFLICT MEDIATOR?

Michael Scott's conflict mediation skills might score a 10 for hilarity, but around a three for effectiveness. Despite his comedic approach, he does make efforts to build community and is transparent, earning high marks in those areas. However, the technique needs work.

HOW SHOULD ONE ACKNOWLEDGE AND ADDRESS POTENTIAL CULTURAL DIFFERENCES TO ENSURE RESPECT, AND IS IT ACCEPTABLE TO DO SO?

Samantha emphasized the importance of conducting individual check-ins in conflict situations to address any cultural differences or misunderstandings. These check-ins involve broad, open-ended questions like "Is this conversation working for you?" and "Have I missed anything?" Such questions invite participants to express concerns without overtly focusing on cultural differences, allowing them to clarify any misinterpretations.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR PEOPLE WHO DON'T LIKE CONFLICT?

For those who dislike conflict, the key advice is to normalize the discomfort. Recognize that these conversations are tough but necessary, often because past communication attempts have failed. Being transparent about the difficulty helps build trust.

It's also important to assess the significance of the conflict. If it's something you can genuinely let go, then it may not need addressing. However, if resentment builds, especially in workplace settings, it's crucial to confront it. Writing down your thoughts can be extremely helpful. If needed, show up to difficult conversations prepared with notes. This is a good way of showing transparency, using reminders to stay on track. This approach helps ensure you communicate fully and effectively, making the process more manageable.

You can also check out these additional resources:

- Books:
 - [Ask For More: 10 Questions to Negotiate Anything](#) by Alex Carter
 - [Getting to Yes](#) by Roger Fisher and William Ury
 - [Bringing Peace Into the Room: How the Personal Qualities of the Mediator Impact the Process of Conflict Resolution](#) edited by Daniel Bowling and David Hoffman
 - [The Promise of Mediation: The Transformative Approach to Conflict](#) by Robert A. Baruch Bush and Joseph P. Folger
- Podcast:
 - [Negotiate Anything](#) by Kwame Christian

HOW CAN WE MAINTAIN THE MINDSET OF ASSUMING BEST INTENT IN OTHERS?

Assuming best intent is a positive mindset, but it can be difficult to discern if someone truly had good intentions. If you're unsure about someone's intent, it might be valuable to have a conversation to clarify misunderstandings, as differences in communication styles often cause frustration.