

# Project Management

Prof. A. Ramesh

Department of Management Studies

Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee

Week: 2

## Lecture 09 : Resolving Conflicts

Dear students, today I am going to talk about conflicts. In the previous class, I have discussed about some of the attributes that is required for a project manager. In that one important attribute is having conflict resolving skills. So, in this lecture, we are going to study in detail about conflicts. Remember, the last class I discussed about managing for stakeholders. This class, we are going to discuss about resolving conflicts that is very important skill required for a project manager.

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<b>Phase-I</b> <b>Project Initiation</b>	<b>Course outline</b>
Introduction to project management-I	
Introduction to project management-II	
Agile project management	
Project selection models	
Examples of Project selection Model	
Project manager	
Attributes of Effective Project Manager	
Managing for stakeholders	
Resolving Conflicts	
Negotiation	
Project in the organization structure	
Human factors and the project team	



So, the agenda for this lecture is, I am going to say what is conflict and categories of conflict. Then, how the conflict occurs different stages of the project life cycle. Next, I am going to discuss about how to resolve, how to deal with the conflicts. We are going to study about two techniques.

## Agenda

- Conflict
- Conflict and Project life cycle
- Dealing With Conflict



Source: Meredith, J. R., Shafer, S. M., & Mantel Jr, S. J. (2017). *Project management: a strategic managerial approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

First, I will define what is the conflict. The process which begins when one party perceives that other has frustrated some concerns of his, that is the definition of conflict. Our concern is goal conflict that occur when a group pursues goals different from other groups. There are two groups, but the goal is common, but the two groups perceive that goals in different perspective that lead to conflict. So, to resolve that conflict, we need to have the skill called negotiation.

## Conflict



**Conflict:** the process which begins when one party perceives that the other has frustrated some concern of his



Our concern is goal conflicts that occur when a group pursues goals different from other groups



**Negotiation:** the skills required to resolve most conflicts



The skills required to resolve most conflict is called negotiation. Now, we will discuss about categories of conflict. There are three sources we can say categories and sources of conflict. The first source is different goals and expectations, same group, but they have different goals and different expectation that lead to conflict. The second source for the conflict is uncertainty about authority, whether this work should be done by person X or person Y.

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## Categories of Conflict



Different Goals  
And Expectations



Uncertainty  
About Authority



Interpersonal  
Conflict



So, that is the uncertainty about authority. So, that leads to conflict. The last and important source for conflict is interpersonal conflict. Now, we will discuss the categories of conflict in detail. As I told you, the first category is different goals and expectation.

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## Categories of Conflict

### Different goals and expectations

- Some conflicts happen as day-to-day work on projects is usually carried out by many different units of the organisation that often differ in their objectives and technical judgments
- These units have different expectations about the project, its costs, rewards, relative importance, and timing



ara: Masoudh, I. D., Qasbi, C. M., & Mantal, I. C. (2017). *Strategic management: a strategic managerial approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

Some conflicts happen as day-to-day work on projects is usually carried out by many different units of the organization that often differ in their objectives and technical judgments. These units have different expectation about the project, its cost, rewards and relative importance and timings. So, this different expectation leads to conflict. Conflict about schedules, intra and inter project priorities, cost estimates and staff time tend to fall into this category. At base, they arise because the project manager and the functional managers have different goals.

## Categories of Conflict

### Different goals and expectations

- Conflicts about schedules, intra and interproject priorities, cost estimates, and staff time tend to fall into this category.
- At base, they arise because the PM and the functional managers have different goals.
- The project owner and PM's concern is the project.



Source: Meredith, J. R., Shafer, S. M., & Mantel Jr, S. J. (2017). *Project management: a strategic managerial approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

The project owner and the project manager's concern is the project. Now, there are different perspective on the objectives. So, goals, so that lead to conflict. The second source of the conflict is uncertainty about authority. Other conflict reflect the fact that both technical and administrative procedures are important aspects of project management.

## Categories of Conflict

### Uncertainty about authority

- Other conflicts reflect the fact that both technical and administrative procedures are important aspects of project management
- Uncertainty about who has the authority to make decisions on resource allocation, administrative procedures, communication, technological choices, and all the other matters affecting the project produces conflict between the various stakeholders.



Source: Meredith, J. R., Shafer, S. M., & Mantel Jr, S. J. (2017). *Project management: a strategic managerial approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

Uncertainty about who has the authority to make the decisions on resource allocations, administrative procedures, communication, technological choices and all other matters affecting the project produces conflict between the various stakeholders. Whenever there is uncertainty about authority, then that leads to project conflict. That uncertainty is due to resource allocation, who should allocate the resources. Then what are the administrative procedures, communications, these are the sources of conflict that arise

due to uncertainty about authority. It is simple enough and correct to state that the functional manager controls who work on the project and make the technical decisions, while the project manager controls the schedule and flow of work.

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## Categories of Conflict

### Uncertainty about authority

- It is simple enough (and correct) to state that the functional manager controls who works on the project and makes technical decisions, while the PM controls the schedule and flow of work.
- In practice, amid the day's countless little crises faced by project and functional manager alike, the distinction is rarely clear.



In practice, amid the days countless little crisis faced by the project and functional managers alike, the distinction is rarely clear. Because since there are so many activities are taking place, the rules and responsibilities, authorities of the project manager and the functional manager is very small. So, that lead to conflict. Another source of conflict is interpersonal conflict. While cooperating with many persons, it seems inevitable that the some personalities will clash when there is a different opinion with different personalities.

## Categories of Conflict

### Interpersonal conflict

- While cooperating with many persons, it seems inevitable that some personalities will clash
- Also, in conflicts between the project and senior management, it is the PM who personifies the project and thus is generally a party to the conflict



ce: Meredith, J. R., Shafer, S. M., & Mantel Jr, S. J. [2017]. *Project management: a strategic managerial approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

So, that lead to conflict. Also, in conflict between the project and senior management, it is the project manager who personifies the project and thus is generally a party to the

conflict. Because the important skill for a project manager is interpersonal skills. If there is a good interpersonal skills, then this conflict can be that is interpersonal conflict can be minimized. Now, we will see that project conflicts by category and stakeholders.

## Project Conflicts by Category and Stakeholders

Stakeholders	Categories of Conflicts		
	Goals	Authority	Interpersonal
Project team	Schedules	Technical	Personality
	Priorities		
Functional and senior management	Schedules	Technical	Personality
	Priorities	Administrative	
External stakeholders	Labor cost		
	Priorities	Administrative	



You see there are different stakeholders, one is project team. So, project team, they may have conflicts on with respect to goals, they can have conflicts on schedules and priorities. Then about authority, there may be a technical issues that may lead to conflicts. So, the project team members, there may be different, people have different personal feelings, so that lead to personality. So, that is the interpersonal conflict.

## Project Conflicts by Category and Stakeholders

Stakeholders	Categories of Conflicts		
	Goals	Authority	Interpersonal
Project team	Schedules ✓	Technical ✓	Personality ✓
	Priorities ✓		
Functional and senior management	Schedules } Priorities }	Technical Administrative	Personality
	Labor cost		
External stakeholders	Priorities	Administrative	



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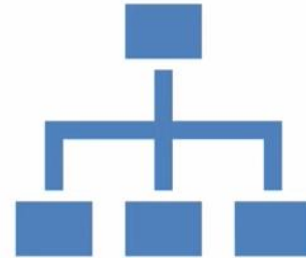
Then the functional and senior management, they may have conflicts due to schedule and priorities. So, that conflicts are comes under category of goals related conflicts. Then the functional senior management may have conflict on technical and administrative responsibilities. So, that comes under category of authority related conflicts. Then the personality issues will be there between functional senior management that comes

interpersonal category of conflict.

The external stakeholders, there may be conflicts due to labour cost and priorities. Then there may be a conflict due to administrative responsibilities. So, that was the authority category of conflict. Now, I will discuss about conflict and project lifecycle, because the conflict may occur different stages of project lifecycle. For example, during the project formation stage, how the conflict can occur.

## Conflict and Project life cycle: Project Formation

- Conflict centers around the confusion of starting a new project
  - Many of the policies and procedures have not yet been formed
  - The objectives of the project are not yet finalized
- Conflict cannot be avoided at this phase
- In fact, much of this conflict is good conflict



Source: Meredith, J. R., Shafer, S. M., & Mantel Jr, S. J. (2017). *Project management: a strategic managerial approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

So, conflict centres around the confusion of starting a new project. Generally, in the project formation stage, whether this project should be started or not started that itself leads to conflict. Many of the policies and procedures have not yet been formed at the project formation stage. So, that lead to conflict and the objectives of the projects are not yet finalized. This also another reason for the conflict during the project formation stage.

So, in this stage, that is a project formation stage, conflict cannot be avoided at this phase. In fact, much of this conflict is good conflict. Because we are able to solve the conflict at the project formation stage, you need not carry that conflict into the another stage of project lifecycle. So, it is better to have more conflict during the project formation stage. So, once it is solved, need not be carried to another stage of the project lifecycle.

## Handling Project Formation Conflict

Four fundamental issues that must be handled to get order

1. Technical objectives must be set
2. Senior management and line managers must commit to the project
3. Organizational structure of the project must be established
4. The priority for the project must be set



So, handling project formation conflict, if any conflict occurs during project formation stage, how to handle that? There are four fundamental issues that must be handled to get order. First one is the technical objective must be set, especially during the project formation stage. If you fix the technical objectives, then many conflicts can be minimized. And the second point is the senior management and the line managers must commit to the project. If you sincerely commit to the projects, many of the conflict will be resolved.

The third point is that organization structure of the project must be established. There should be a proper organization structure. Because when there is a proper organization structure, the authority is clearly defined, who should do what work. If there is no proper organization structures, there are many conflict due to authority, who will do what work. The last point is the priority of the project must be set.

What are the first priority? What is the second priority? That has to be set. So, that will reduce lot of conflict during the project formation stage. Now, we will discuss the conflicts during project build up stage. In this stage, conflict tend to be technical in nature. Conflict between the project manager and the functional areas tend to



predominate.

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## Project Buildup

- Conflicts tend to be technical in nature
- Conflicts between the PM and the functional areas tend to predominate



source: Meredith, J. R., Shafer, S. M., & Mantel Jr, S. J. (2017). *Project management: a strategic managerial approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

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## Main Program



Schedules are a major source of conflict.



Some tasks will be late, and the schedule should be adjusted, or the time made up



The more complex the project, the more difficult it is to trace the sources of conflict.



There are also technical conflicts.



source: Meredith, J. R., Shafer, S. M., & Mantel Jr, S. J. (2017). *Project management: a strategic managerial approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

Now, we will discuss about the conflict during the main program of the project lifecycle. Here, schedules are a major source of conflict during the main stage of the project or program. The schedule is the main source for the conflict because there is a very crucial during this time to meet the schedule. Some task will be late and the schedule should be adjusted or the time should be made up. The more complex the project, the more difficult it is to trace the source of conflict during the main program stage.

## Project Phase-Out

ned in



Deadlines are a major source of conflict



Technical problems are rare



Personality conflicts will be a big deal due to time pressures



There are also technical conflicts during the main stage of the project or program. The next point is conflict during the project phase out, last stage. So, in this stage, the conflicts are mainly due to deadlines. So, deadlines are a major source of conflict. Another point is the technical problems are rare because your project is almost to complete.

Personality conflicts will be a big deal due to time pressure. So far, we have discussed about what are the sources of conflict in different stages of project lifecycle. Now, I am going to discuss about how to deal with the conflict. People deal with the conflict along with the two dimensions. One is assertiveness, second one is cooperative.

## Dealing With Conflict

- People deal with conflict along two dimensions

Assertive → Unassertive

Cooperative → Uncooperative



**Assertiveness** is the quality of being self-assured and confident without being aggressive to defend a right point of view or a relevant statement.



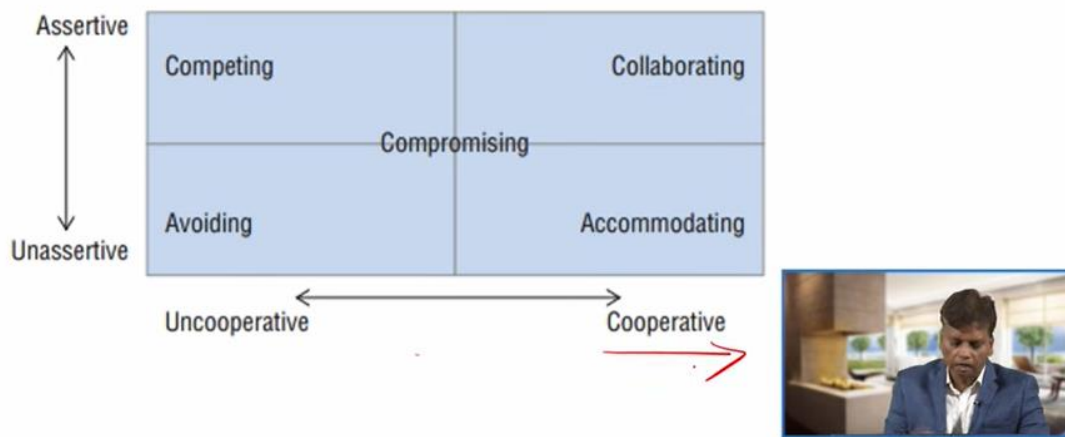
Source: Meredith, J. R., Shafer, S. M., & Mantel Jr, S. J. (2017). *Project management: a strategic managerial approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

So, a person may be assertive or unassertive that is one scale or the person may be cooperative or uncooperative. So, this is the another scale. So, in these two scales, we are going to suggest some conflict resolution techniques. Before going to that, I will discuss

what is assertiveness, an assertiveness of solving the problem. Here, assertiveness is the quality of being self-assured and confident without being aggressive to defend the right point of view or a relevant statement.

You may be very clear on your point, but you need not be aggressive on that. So, that quality is called assertiveness. That is very important quality for a project manager that is required for resolving conflict. Now, look at there are five strategies for resolving conflict. So, in the horizontal axis, I have taken cooperative on the extreme right side and uncooperative.

## Conflict Resolution Strategies

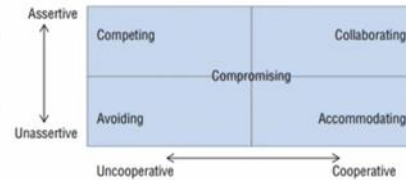


Source: Meredith, J. R., Shafer, S. M., & Mantel Jr, S. J. (2017). *Project management: a strategic managerial approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

In the vertical axis, assertiveness at the top and the unassertiveness at the bottom. There are five strategies, one is competing is one strategy, then avoiding is another strategy, accommodating is another strategy, collaborating is another strategy and compromising is another strategy. I will discuss about these strategies in detail. First one is competing, when to compete with other person, when there is a conflict, whether we really have to compete with that person or that issues. So, look at the figure, approaching a situation assertively and being willing to cooperate is referred to as competing strategy.

## Dealing With Conflict- Competing

- Referring to Figure , approaching a situation assertively and being unwilling to cooperate is referred to as a “**competing**” strategy.

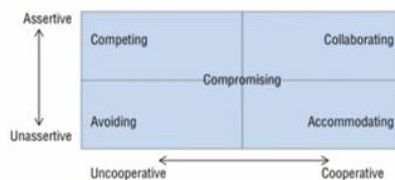


Source: Meredith, J. R., Shafer, S. M., & Mantel Jr, S. J. (2017). *Project management: a strategic managerial approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

So, this strategy. So, competing is a person is uncooperative at the same time is assertive. Look at the figure, approaching a situation assertively and being unwilling to cooperate is referred to as competing strategy, is very stubborn on cooperation, is not willing to cooperate. So, with that fellow, we have to compete. When a competing strategy is employed, the person views the situation as though someone must lose for the other to win or in this case, I win, you lose, that is win-lose strategy. Competing strategy is win-lose, one person is winning, in that process other person will lose, we call it is zero-sum game in game theory.

## Dealing With Conflict- Competing

- When a competing strategy is employed, the person views the situation as though someone *must* lose for the other to win, or, in this case, I win, and you lose (win–lose).
- This competing strategy may be appropriate when the decision must be made quickly.



Source: Meredith, J. R., Shafer, S. M., & Mantel Jr, S. J. (2017). *Project management: a strategic managerial approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

So, this competing strategy may be appropriate when the decision must be made quickly. The second strategy is avoiding the strategy. The person is uncooperative, but unassertive. So, alternatively, when the position is not asserted aggressively, but the person is still unwilling to cooperate, we have a conflict avoiding strategy. So, we have

to avoid that conflict, because he is not assertive also and he is not cooperative also, there would not be any harm for you.

## Dealing With Conflict –Avoiding

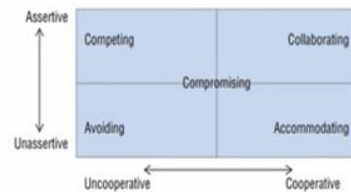
- Alternatively, when the position is not asserted aggressively, but the person is still unwilling to cooperate, we have a conflict “avoiding” strategy.



Source: Meredith, J. R., Shafer, S. M., & Mantel Jr, S. J. (2017). *Project management: a strategic managerial approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

## Dealing With Conflict –Avoiding

- This is a lose-lose strategy because you are not cooperating with the other person to help them achieve their goals, nor are you actively pursuing your own goals
- This strategy might be applied when the issue is not that important to you or you deem the detrimental effects of the conflict outweigh the benefits of resolving the issue in a desirable way

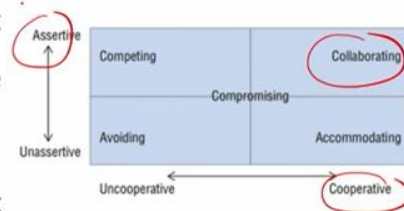


Source: Meredith, J. R., Shafer, S. M., & Mantel Jr, S. J. (2017). *Project management: a strategic managerial approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

So, we can avoid that conflict. This is a loss-loss strategy, because you are not cooperating with the other person to help them achieve their goal, nor you are actively pursuing your own goals. This strategy might be applied when the issue is not that important to you, or you deem the detrimental effect of the conflict, outweigh the benefit of the resolving the issue in a desirable way. The next strategy is collaborative, this stage, a person is cooperative and he is assertive. When you assertively state your position, but do so in a spirit of cooperation, you are employing collaborating strategy. Here, your focus is on achieving your goals, but with the recognition that the best solution is one of the benefits for both the parties.

## Dealing With Conflict –Collaborating

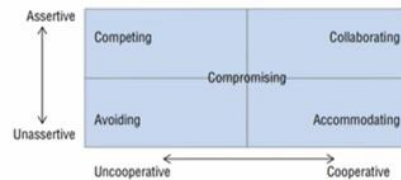
- When you assertively state your position but do so in a spirit of cooperation, you are employing a “collaborating” strategy
- Here your focus is on achieving your goals but with the recognition that the best solution is one that benefits both parties.



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## Dealing With Conflict –Collaborating

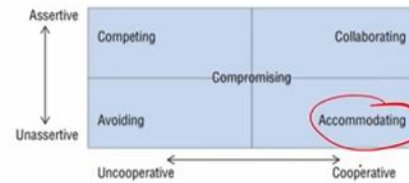
- Thus, the collaborating strategy can be considered a win–win strategy.
- Preferred strategy in most situations and particularly in situations where the needs of both parties are important.



Most of the time this strategy is preferred because both are benefiting out of this solution. So, that solution is called collaborating strategy for solving the conflict. Thus, the collaborating strategy can be considered a win-win strategy. It is a preferred strategy in most situations and particularly in situations where the needs of both parties are important. So, the next strategy is accommodating, that is a person is highly cooperative, but unassertive.

## Dealing With Conflict - Accommodating

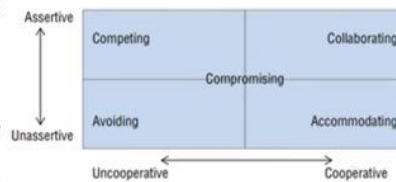
- In situations where you do not assert your position and focus more on cooperating with the other party, you employ an “accommodating” strategy.
- In this case, the focus is on resolving the issue from the other person’s point of view.



source: Meredith, J. R., Shafer, S. M., & Mantel Jr, S. J. (2017). *Project management: a strategic managerial approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

## Dealing With Conflict - Accommodating

- Here the situation can be described as I lose, you win, or lose–win.
- It would be appropriate to employ the accommodating strategy when you were wrong, or the issue is much more important to the other person.



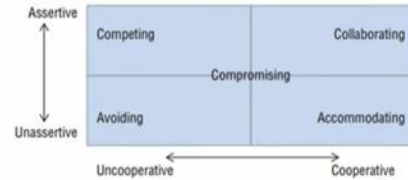
source: Meredith, J. R., Shafer, S. M., & Mantel Jr, S. J. (2017). *Project management: a strategic managerial approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

In situation, when you do not assert your position and focus on cooperating with the other party, you employ an accommodating strategy. In this case, the focus is on resolving the issue from the other person's point of view. Here, the situation can be described as I lose, you win or lose-win strategy. It would be appropriate to employ the accommodating strategy when you are wrong or the issue is much more important to the other person. Finally, we discuss about the another important strategy called

compromising.

## Dealing With Conflict- Compromising

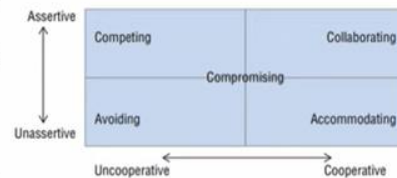
- Finally, when you take a middle-ground position on both dimensions you are “**compromising.**”
- In these cases, nobody wins, and nobody loses.



Source: Meredith, J. R., Shafer, S. M., & Mantel Jr, S. J. (2017). *Project management: a strategic managerial approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

## Dealing With Conflict- Compromising

- Thus, you have likely arrived at a solution that you and the other party can live with but are not particularly happy about.
- You might employ a compromising strategy when the potential benefits of trying to develop a win-win solution are exceeded by the costs.



Source: Meredith, J. R., Shafer, S. M., & Mantel Jr, S. J. (2017). *Project management: a strategic managerial approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

When you take a middle ground position on both the dimensions, you are compromising. That is the middle ground position both on cooperation and assertiveness. In this case, nobody wins and nobody loses. Thus, you have likely arrived at a solution that you and other party can live with, but are not particularly happy about that. You might employ a compromising strategy when the potential benefits of trying to develop a win-win solution are exceeded by the costs.



## Dealing With Conflict

- The value of this framework is, it helps us to recognize that there are alternative strategies that can be utilized to resolve conflicts.
- Successful project management requires that when conflict arises, the situation is carefully evaluated and the approach for managing the conflict is proactively chosen in a way that best enhances the quality of the relationship between the parties.

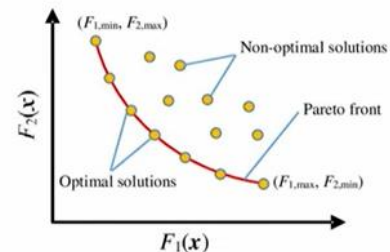


Source: Meredith, J. R., Shafer, S. M., & Mantel Jr, S. J. (2017). *Project management: a strategic managerial approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

The value of this framework is it helps us to recognize that there are alternative strategies that can be utilized to resolve the conflict. Successful project management requires that when conflict arises, the situation is carefully evaluated and the approach for managing the conflict is proactively chosen in a way that the best enhances the quality of the relationship between the parties. The purpose of the framework which I discussed earlier is to identify the right strategy so that the both the parties are fulfilling their requirement. The another technique for resolving the conflict is Pareto optimal solution. So, Pareto optimal solution to the two-party conflict and discuss the nature of bargaining process required to reach optimally a complex and time-consuming process.

## Pareto optimal solution

- Pareto-optimal solution to the two-party conflict and discusses the nature of the bargaining process required to reach optimality, a complex and time-consuming process
- For example, if you want to buy a car, you may have objectives such as low price, high fuel efficiency, good safety rating, and so on



Source: Meredith, J. R., Shafer, S. M., & Mantel Jr, S. J. (2017). *Project management: a strategic managerial approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

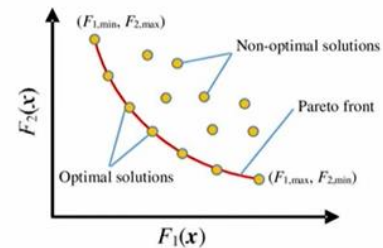
Look at the figure on the right hand side. There is a two functions, Function one and function two. So, this boundary is called Pareto front. So, all the points on this boundary is called Pareto optimal solution. If you go away from this boundary either side, then it will become non-optimal solutions. For example, if you take this position, so the person

F1 should take this stand and F2 should take this stand.

Then only it is benefit for both the persons. If you go outside or inside this curve, then there is a loss for one person. So, this type of solutions called Pareto optimal solution. For example, if you want to buy a car, you may have objectives such as low price and high fuel efficiency, good safety rating and so on. A Pareto optimal solution is a car that has the best possible combination of these objectives, such that you cannot find another car that is cheaper, more efficient or safer without compromising on some other objectives. The picture which is showing on this slide, we consider only two criteria, criteria 1 and criteria 2.

## Pareto optimal solution

- A Pareto-optimal solution is a car that has the best possible combination of these objectives, such that you cannot find another car that is cheaper, more efficient, or safer without compromising on some other objective.
- Approaching intra-project conflicts with a desire to win a victory over other parties is inappropriate.



Source: Meredith, J. R., Shafer, S. M., & Mantel Jr, S. J. (2017). *Project management: a strategic managerial approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

If there are more than these two criteria that cannot be shown in the two dimensional figure. So, any solution if you say it is a Pareto optimal solution, if you go away, you cannot find another alternative that satisfies your expectation. If you go away from that point, you have to compromise on other objectives. So, approaching intra project conflict with a desire to win a victory over the other parties is inappropriate. So, we have to see that both are, both the parties expectations are fulfilled.

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## Pareto optimal solution

- The PM must remember that he or she will be negotiating with project stakeholders many times in the future
- If he or she conducts a win-lose negotiation and the other party loses, from then on, he or she will face a determined adversary who seeks to defeat him or her. This is not helpful



source: Meredith, J. R., Shafer, S. M., & Mantel Jr, S. J. (2017). *Project management: a strategic managerial approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

In that situation, we should go for this Pareto optimal solutions, which is beneficial to both the persons. The project manager must remember that he or she will be negotiating with the project stakeholders many times in the future. If he or she conduct a win-lose negotiation and the other party loses from then on, he or she will face a determined adversary who seeks to defeat him or her, this is not helpful. So, always we should prefer win-win negotiation. If you go for win-lose negotiation, because you are going to spend a lot of time with that other parties, so that will give you a very bad effect in future.

That is why always it is recommended do not go for win-lose negotiation, you should prefer win-win negotiation, because you have to travel along with the other parties. In this lecture, I have discussed about the conflict and different categories of conflict that is the sources of the conflict. Then I have connected conflict with the project life cycles. The next I discussed about how to deal with the conflict. I have explained two methodology, two techniques, one is a framework.

In that I have discussed about five strategies for resolving the conflict. Next I have discussed about Pareto optimal solution, that is another way to resolve the conflicts. Thank you. Thank you.