

Strategic Conflict Management:

Training in Engagement and Communication for Effectively Managing Controversy and Conflict

About the Training Event

Strategic conflict management is the art and science of anticipating controversy and conflict to minimize its direct and collateral damage. Social change creates controversy and conflict. Nonprofit organizations at the forefront of social change will stir up both. Many nonprofits, however, do not anticipate and prepare for it. Failure to prepare for controversy and conflict can put any gains already made at risk and can even undermine the entire effort. This research-based training event draws upon the qualitative research of the trainer, Tom Klaus, Ph.D., with leaders of organizations engaged in high-stakes, high-pressure social change efforts. The training is designed to teach nonprofit leaders, board members, program managers, and "front line" staff how to forecast conflict, work proactively to minimize its damaging effects, and respond effectively to controversy before it becomes all-out conflict. Change is never easy and is rarely welcome. This training can make the way forward less stressful and more productive for leaders and their organizations.

Objectives:

Because of participating in this training, it is expected attendees will be able to:

- ✓ Define strategy, strategic engagement, strategic communication, and strategic controversy management
- ✓ Describe the difference between controversy and conflict
- ✓ Describe how controversy becomes conflict
- ✓ Utilize a five-step process for more effectively managing controversy and conflict

In Their Own Words

Participants have identified *several ways this training has helped them contribute more effectively to managing controversy and conflict both inside and outside their organization*, including:

- ✓ Planning strategic messages and preparing how to present them; trying to understand the opposition; developing contingency plans
- ✓ Maintain a neutral position to bring the "us"/"them" thoughts to the table
- ✓ Suspending my reactions so that I may be an effective listener and an approachable staff member
- ✓ Creating a strategy where I can forecast hot spots and create more appropriate dialogue in response
- ✓ Actively brainstorming with my supervisor on talking points that can keep our messaging strong, consistent, and positive
- ✓ Practicing mindful dialogue with others
- ✓ Thinking of every conversation as a means to promote positive messages about my organization and the issues I care about

- ✓ Take my time in response, pause, in answering difficult or emotionally charged questions - I particularly liked the information on humble inquiry
- ✓ Utilize the steps to self-evaluate/evaluate the situation; I will utilize the message analysis and framing techniques to better respond to controversy

Participants also enjoy the training and the trainer:

- ✓ Love Tom Klaus...and he makes everything relate to all parts of life
- ✓ Nice time management; Great engagement of audience without pressure; Nice handouts.
- ✓ For a wonderful training and for a really effective training that I will definitely use in the future. I found this training entertaining and highly valuable!
- ✓ (When) Tom Klaus conducts training (here again), I will be here!

Evaluation Results:

Participants reported increased:

- ✓ Ability to distinguish between “controversy” and “conflict”
- ✓ Awareness of the signs of conflict escalation
- ✓ Understanding of the importance of forecasting controversy
- ✓ Confidence to accurately forecast controversy
- ✓ Understanding of how to analyze messages in a conflict
- ✓ Confidence in their ability to use a message box to create core messages
- ✓ Confidence in their ability to strategically manage conflict

Training Sponsorship

Ideal Audience:

The best audience for this event will be nonprofit leaders, personnel, board members, and stakeholders engaged in social and community change.

Optimal Number of Participants:

20 to 100

Optimal Room Set Up and A/V:

To facilitate small group discussion and convenient working groups, participants should be seated in “half-rounds,” four or five to a (round) table. Trainer will need: rectangular or square table for materials at the front; projector & laptop table; projection screen; LCD projector and computer connection cords (for PowerPoint and other media); power strip and extension cord (to power up laptop and projector); flipchart stand with full pad of sticky back (Post-It) flipchart paper; flipchart markers (please, no whiteboard markers due to the strong chemical odor); and for groups larger than 50 or in oversized rooms, a lavalier microphone (or cordless hand-held microphone) and speaker system.

Training Schedule and Length:

The training designed to be six (6) content/contact hours. An optimal training schedule is as follows:

8:30 AM	Arrival and Registration
9:00 AM	Training Begins – Section 1
10:00 AM	Mid-morning Break
10:30 AM	Training Resumes – Section 2
Noon	Lunch
1:00 PM	Training Resumes – Section 3
2:30 PM	Mid-afternoon Break
3:00 PM	Training Resumes – Section 4
4:30 PM	Dismissal

Sponsor Responsibilities:

- ✓ Handle all logistics for the program (site, room arrangement, A/V, meals, etc., etc.)
- ✓ (Optional) Reproduce all program handouts in accordance with instructions from the trainer
- ✓ Diligently promote the event
- ✓ Effectively manage registration
- ✓ Assume all costs for logistics, promotion, and management of the event
- ✓ Work collaboratively with the Tenacious Change, LLC to deliver a high-quality event

Costs:

For an estimate, please email info@tenaciouschange.us or call 240-319-8525 or 571-241-7583 for a brief, free consultation to discuss specifics.