

Using creative conflict effectively

Bob 'Idea Man' Hooey

In both the dialectical approach and the devil's advocacy approach, 'structured' conflict is a central part of fleshing out or defining the soundest recommendations and thoroughly understanding the assumptions that underlie them.

However, there is always some risk involved when individuals engage in creative conflict. For this reason, it is important to develop the right attitude for any creative conflict activity.

Here are some quick tips to help your group use creative conflict-based problem solving effectively:

First and foremost, don't be afraid of creative conflict.

If you don't normally like to engage in creative conflict, remember that this is a structured debate. While you must either give or receive criticism, you don't have to be confrontational and antagonistic to do it.

Remember that critical evaluation is the crux of these creative conflict-based models of problem solving.

Don't mistake legitimate criticism for a personal attack.

Refrain from basing your criticisms on the character of another group member.

In other words, keep your focus on the recommendations themselves, not who made them or why.

Always keep in mind that the goal of subjecting your recommendations and assumptions to an intense critique is to '*develop better ones*' and ensure that the team's plan will ultimately be able to survive the same sorts of critiques from outsiders. **Strive for creative quality.**

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