



# PROACTIVE RESOLUTIONS™

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT



## Cutting the Costs of Conflict

**ProActive ReSolutions** builds respectful workplaces through prevention programs and incident management. Companies that work with us care about their people, want to attract top-notch talent and realize employees are their most valuable asset.

We've always said it: a little prevention goes a long way. In this issue we talk about some of the early warning signs of workplace conflict. Take the temperature of your organization and see if you can spot any of the problem behaviours listed here.

**Catching conflict early is key.**



## Positive News

### Did the first half of 2007 uplift or upset?

We were glued to our televisions on April 16th when the media covered the tragic shootings at Virginia Tech in the USA. As the days passed, stories emerged about the warning signs that were Ignored— Seung-Hui Cho was known for his troubling behaviour prior to that heart-breaking day. Many experts seemed to agree the events could have been averted. Phones at ProActive were ringing off the hook as the American media looked for answers. What should have been done?

At the same time there has been an exciting surge at the corporate level to be more proactive about workplace conflict and prevention is the new managerial mantra. A respectful workplace is today's gold standard. Positive cultures keep people (and profits!) healthy. ProActive is busy teaching its Respectful Workplace Fundamentals to organizations around the globe, and not just to small management teams but to whole companies.

This is good news for business. And the planet.

**Judy Brooks**  
*Managing Director*



### Australia Winter/ Canada & USA Summer 2007:

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# STRONG WORDS

Did you know **ProActive ReSolutions** presents all over the world? Our speakers draw upon a vast range of academic and in-the-field experience. **ProActive** presents regularly to municipal, health, resource, tech, legal, human resources, communications & marketing, first nations & Aboriginal, government and defense audiences.

For more information on speaking topics, fees and availability please call Val Litwin at the Vancouver office at **1.877.585.9933**.

*"The ProActive presentations at the Human Resources Institute of Alberta's provincial conference and the Canadian Public Relations Society's national conference, were excellent. The case study approach, tailored to each specific audience, brings a reality and clarity to the information. The learning experience was highly relevant and enjoyable."*

**Kathy Morin, Principal**  
Greystone Recruiting



## GETTING TO KNOW PROACTIVE RESOLUTIONS

**Does ProActive offer customer service training?**

Not per se. **ProActive** does offer the Respectful Workplace Training Fundamentals which, when rolled-out company wide, have a phenomenal impact on the quality of service customers receive.

**ProActive** firmly believes that before a company can boast unbelievable customer service, employees must first treat each other unbelievably well.

Customers walking into a company with great respectful workplace fundamentals can feel it. When employees learn to treat each other with respect and dignity they have fun with customers, deliver exceptional service and create life-long relationships.

## IN THE MEDIA



**"Crime prediction: The jailer's dilemma."**  
June 23, 2007

ProActive principal, Dr. Stephen Hart recently published a paper in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* that was reported on by The Economist. Dr. Hart and colleagues examine the reliability of tests designed to predict recidivism. Dr. Hart continues to do leading edge research on the Incident Management side for ProActive.



**"Bully-proofing the office" by Andrew Hanon**  
Friday May 4, 2007

Journalist Andrew Hanon was intrigued by a recent talk ProActive delivered in Edmonton to a HR audience and subsequently wrote an article on how to deal with "the jerks at work." Check out this link to the story and learn how energy vampires can poison workplace atmosphere and make us dread getting up in the morning. ProActive reveals how to stop the downward spiral before it starts. (go to [www.edmontonsun.com](http://www.edmontonsun.com) and enter the search: "Bully-proofing the office")

# The Warning Signs



**W**orkplace conflict always signals before its arrival, even when companies can't see it directly. Without a puff of smoke in sight we know a locomotive is making its way down the line when we feel the rumbling of the tracks. Conflict works the same way. If organizations pay attention to the warning signs they can derail its effects before conflict flattens their workforce.

Over the next two newsletters, **ProActive** will be introducing the Early Warning Signs of Workplace Conflict. The Warning Signs can show up as causes or effects – either way, they are clues that something is wrong and needs to be addressed.

## PEOPLE AREN'T PERFORMING

They are not meeting reasonable expectations in terms of productivity and effort.

*As a Cause of Conflict:* When we see our peers not working to the same standards in terms of productivity and effort, we often start to feel resentful towards them and the managers who are failing to hold them accountable.

*As an Effect of Conflict:* Workgroup conflict is a huge de-motivator. Nothing sucks the life and energy from a workgroup in quite the same way.

## PEOPLE ARE DISENGAGING

They are uninterested in what is happening in the workplace and in the projects and initiatives that are being undertaken.

*As a Cause of Conflict:* People who are disengaging

from the workplace often leave us feeling as if we are carrying the ball, not just for getting the work done, but also for keeping the workplace environment a pleasant one.

*As an Effect of Conflict:* When conflict is present in the workplace, people are generally thinking about being anywhere but at work.

## PEOPLE ARE LEAVING

They are quitting, transferring to other departments and inquiring about opportunities for alternative placement.

*As a Cause of Conflict:* When we see everyone else leaving the ship, we question our own commitment to the organization and the people who work there.

*As an Effect of Conflict:* When conflict runs unchecked in the workplace, fantasies, dreams and plans of leaving the workplace are never far from mind.

## PEOPLE ARE OFF SICK

They are taking time off for short-term or long-term sick leave.

*As a Cause of Conflict:* When we suspect others are taking time off by abusing sick leave entitlements while we are at work, we feel angry with them and the managers who let them get away with it.

*As an Effect of Conflict:* When conflict runs unchecked in the workplace, the associated stresses can cause a variety of associated illnesses and medical conditions.

## PEOPLE ARE BREAKING THE RULES

They are engaging in behaviours that are explicitly prohibited by laws or by policy.

*As a Cause of Conflict:* When we see others breaking rules with which we take effort to comply, we feel resentful – and maybe tempted to break some rules ourselves.

*As an Effect of Conflict:* Under the strain of intense conflict, people can feel driven to act in ways they would not consider under normal circumstances – including breaking some important rules they would normally respect.





## FEATURE PRODUCT: Respectful Workplace Booklet

No resource guide more succinctly maps out how to create and maintain a respectful workplace. Starting with awareness and concepts, this 12-page booklet moves quickly into strategies and ways to steer a workplace towards more respectful shores. Highly readable and a perfect stand-alone resource or supplement to any training program. Can also be used as a “self-study” guide.

**Price: \$3.00 CDN / booklet**  
(discounts available with volume orders)

## TESTIMONIAL

"ProActive ReSolutions gave all the groups the same level of constant energy and commitment, no small feat when you were tasked with doing 8 sessions in three days."

*Respectful Workplace participant*

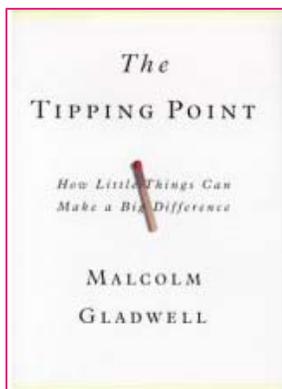


## Conflict As Creative Tension

**"All men have an instinct for conflict: at least, all healthy men" Hilaire Belloc**

Call it “creative tension” or “diversity of opinion”, but whatever you call it organizations need some degree of creative friction to move forward. Individuals can disagree but still be interested in moving toward a collective goal. Workplace conflict, by contrast, is emotionally based and occurs when people are working at cross purposes: it shuts people down and discourages collaboration. Telling the two apart lets you know whether you are dealing with an innovative workgroup or a dysfunctional one.

## BETWEEN THE LINES



***The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make A Big Difference***  
By Malcolm Gladwell

In this provocative and well-researched book, Gladwell speaks as engagingly about social epidemics as he does Sesame Street. *So what's the ProActive connection?* We like Gladwell's discussion around the little things making a big difference — we've always said low-end behaviors are the prelude to big troubles in the workplace. But the reverse is also true, subtle preventative actions can tip the energy in the workplace and amplify any culture towards more positive frequencies. Check out Gladwell's theory on why New York City was able to quell crime in the mid-1990's. Companies and managers take note: there are valuable lessons here.

## Cutting The Costs of Conflict Worldwide



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