



INSTITUTE  
PROJECT  
MANAGEMENT

# Communication & Negotiation Masterclass

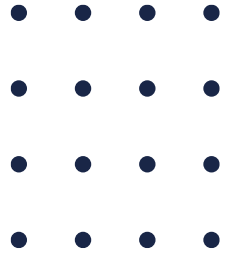


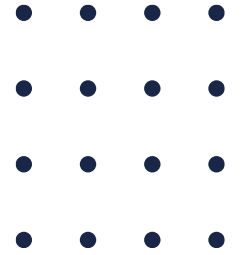


# Agenda

<http://stada.pages.dev>

1. Introduction
  2. Leading Productive Meetings
  3. Communications
  4. Assertiveness & Negotiations
  5. Reflection & Action Planning
- 





# Today's Plan

## Time

## Module

0:00 – 0:45

Leading Productive Meetings

0:45 – 1:30

Communications

1:30 – 1:40

Break

1:40 – 2:40

Assertiveness & Negotiations

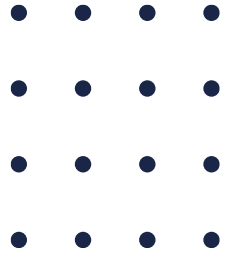
2:40 – 3:00

Reflection & Action Planning



# By the end of this Masterclass, you will be able to:

- Facilitate meetings with structure, confidence, and clear outcomes
- Identify your personal communication style and adapt it to different stakeholder types
- Apply the Blake Mouton Managerial Grid to assess and flex your management approach
- Recognize and reduce communication barriers that slow down cross functional collaboration
- Use a 3-step assertiveness model to express needs clearly and manage pushback
- Apply Win-Win negotiation strategies to resolve conflict and build alignment under pressure



# Leading Productive Meetings

Module 1

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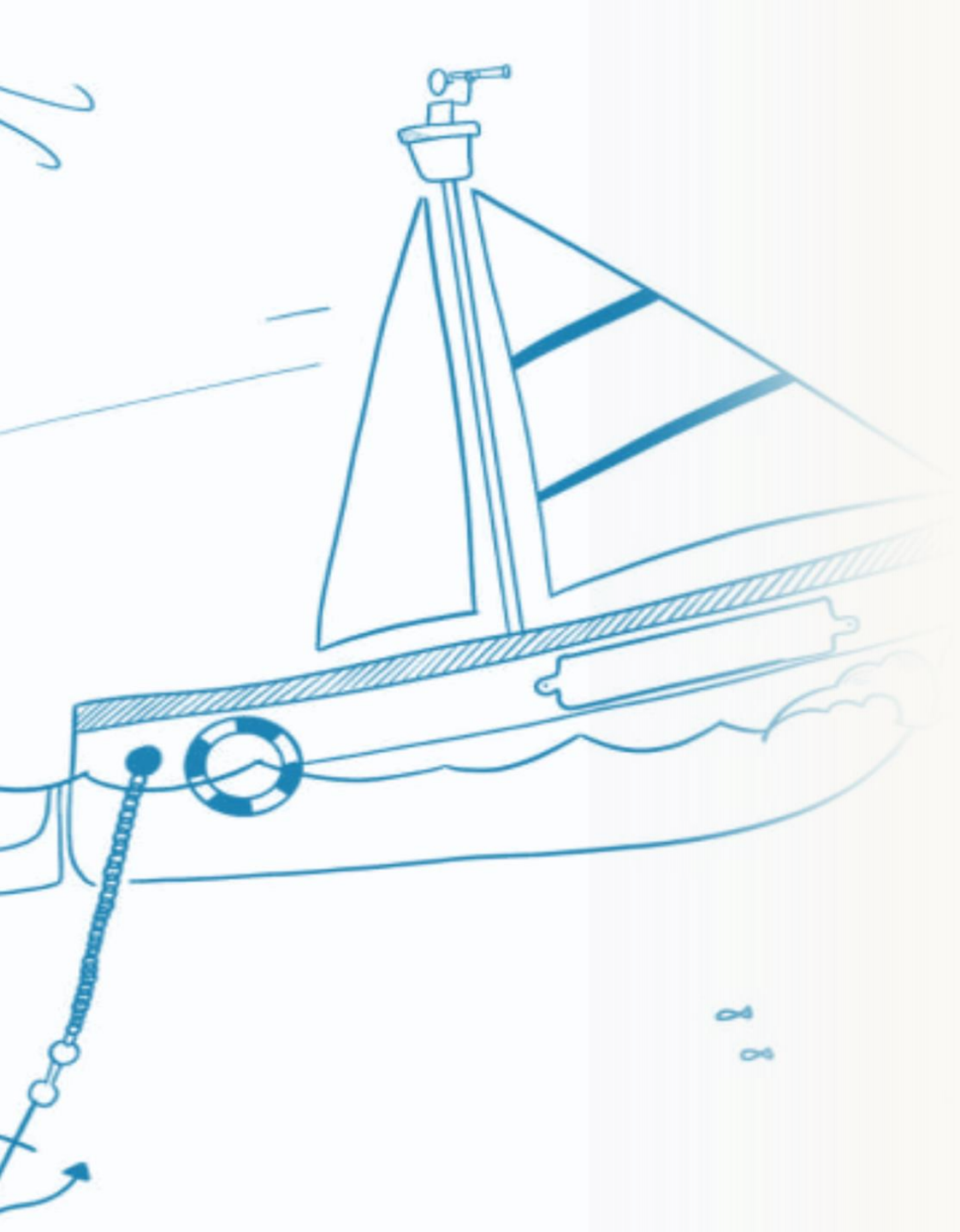
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# The meeting problem

- 71% of senior managers say meetings are unproductive and inefficient.
- Microsoft's 2022 Work Trend Index: time spent in meetings up 252% since pre-pandemic baseline (Feb 2020).
- Shopify eliminated all recurring meetings of 3+ people in January 2023. Result: 322,000 hours saved across the company in 12 months.

So: this module is not theory. It's reclaiming your week.

Harvard Business Review, "Stop the Meeting Madness", Perlow, Hadley & Eun, July-August 2017.



# Activity: What Slows Down Productive Meetings?

**Groups of 4-5 people. 8 min + share-back in 5 min.**

The boat represents a productive meeting moving toward a clear outcome. The anchors represent the habits or conditions that slow the meeting down or hold it back.

- Draw a speedboat with anchors on your group flip chart
- Discuss: what slows down productive meetings in your team?
- Write one barrier per “sticky note” and place it as an anchor
- Select 2-3 key anchors to share back

# Leading Productive Meetings

## Set Clear Objectives & Agenda

- Define purpose & goals
- Allocate time for each topic
- Distribute agenda in advance.

## Invite the Right Participants

- Limit attendees to those directly involved
- Encourage diverse perspectives

## Establish Ground Rules

- Promote a respectful & inclusive atmosphere
- Set guidelines for participation

- Start and end meetings punctually
- Encourage concise contributions
- \* Monitor progress and adjust

- Create open discussion and idea sharing
- Ensure equal participation
- Address conflicts constructively

- Summarize key points and decisions
- Assign responsibilities and deadlines
- Track progress.

## Manage Time Effectively

## Facilitate Active Engagement

## Follow Up & Take Action

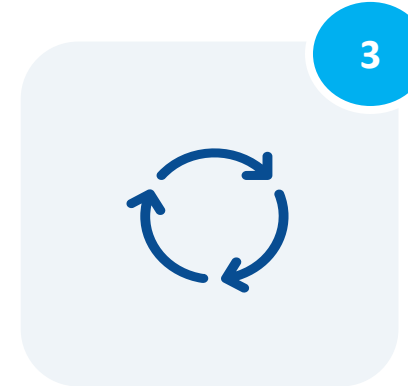
# Tools and Techniques



POP Model



Strict Agenda



Round Robin



Action Items & Follow  
Ups

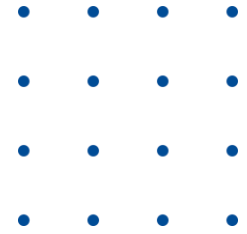


Asynchronous  
Tools



2 Pizza Rule

# Strict Agenda



- Share an agenda before the meeting and follow it closely.

## Keep or drop the meeting?

- Stick to the agenda for focus.

## Why it is important

- Prevents off – topic discussions.

## When to use it

- For all meetings, especially recurring ones.

## How to use it

- Share and follow the agenda closely.

# POP Model

Define why you are meeting, what you want to achieve, and how you will do it.

Keep or drop the meeting?

- Define purpose, outcome, and process first.

Why it is important

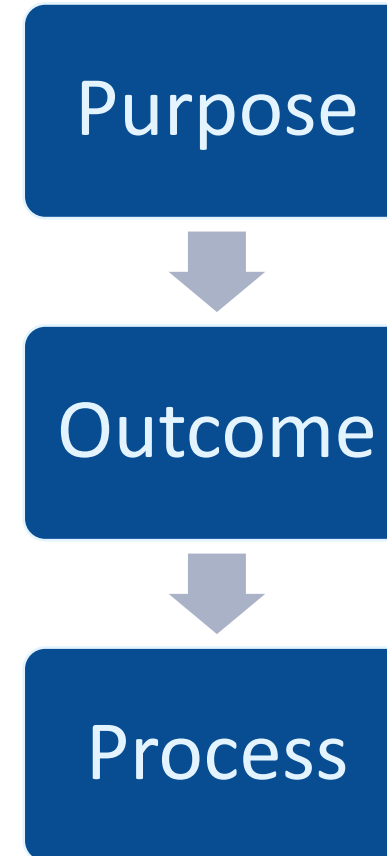
- Ensures meetings are goal oriented.

When to use it

- Before scheduling any meeting.

How to use it

- Outline details in the invite.



# POP Model: example

Imagine the weekly launch war-room meeting. Most start with "any updates?".  
Wrong.

Use POP before scheduling:

- **Purpose:** decide whether Germany can still hit Q3 launch given the regulatory delay.
- **Outcome:** go/no-go decision with alternative date if no-go.
- **Process:** 5' status Germany, 10' options supply chain, 10' decision, 5' owner and deadline.

Suddenly the meeting has a shape. People prepare differently.

## 2- Pizza Rule

If two pizzas can not feed the group, the meeting is too big

Keep or drop the meeting?

- If two pizzas can not feed the group, drop it

Why it is important

- Keep meetings small and focused

When to use it

- For decisions and brainstorming

How to use it

- Invite only essential team members

# Round Robin Technique

Give everyone a chance to talk by taking turns

Keep or drop the meeting?

- Ensure everyone speaks

Why it is important

- Encourage full participation

When to use it

- When team input is crucial

How to use it

- Rotate speaking opportunities.

# Action Items & Follow Ups

Assign tasks and review them later to ensure they are done.

Keep or drop the meeting?

- Make meetings actionable

Why it is important

- Ensures accountability

When to use it

- At the end of every meeting

How to use it

- Assign tasks and review them

# Asynchronous Tools

Send updates by email or use collaboration tools.

Keep or drop the meeting?

- Avoid unnecessary meetings

Why it is important

- Saves time, keeps efficiency

When to use it

- For updates and non-urgent talks

How to use it

- Use email or collaboration tools

# Amazon's silent start

Bezos **banned PowerPoint** in executive meetings.

Every meeting starts with 20 minutes reading a 6-page memo, in silence. Then discussion.

The reason: **writing in complete sentences forces better thought.**

Can you replace your weekly status deck with a 2-page written update?  
10 min silent reading, then decisions. Same meeting, half the time.

# Virtual Teams

How many of you work with team members in 3+ time zones?

## Benefits

- Geographically dispersed individuals
- Experts in different geographical areas
- Inclusion of workers from home offices
- Project members with varying schedules
- People with mobility issues
- The deletion or reduction of travel expenses

## Challenges

- Reduced team cohesion
- Performance visibility
- Communication breakdowns
- Cultural and work style differences
- Leadership adaptation
- Onboarding and knowledge transfer gaps
- Coordination complexity

# One company's meeting diet (real case)

## Shopify, January 2023:

- Eliminated ALL recurring meetings of 3+ people
- Banned all meetings on Wednesdays
- Capped large meetings (50+ people) to one per week

## Result in first 12 months:

- 322,000 hours of meeting time eliminated
- 14,000 events removed from calendars
- Equivalent of \$50M+ in productivity recovered

Source: Shopify internal report, 2024;  
coverage in Wall Street Journal, Jan 2024

What changed: they didn't add tools. They removed meetings.

# Meeting redesign

Think of a meeting YOU organize or chair. Recurring or one-off, doesn't matter. Pick one that usually drifts or ends without clear decisions.

- 1. The meeting.** What is it, how often, how long?
- 2. Does it need to be a meeting?** Could it be async? If yes, kill it.
- 3. POP:** Purpose / Outcome / Process with time slots. Silent start?
- 4. Who's really invited:** 2-pizza test. Cut the list.
- 5. Facilitation + closing:** One technique during. How you close.

# Meeting redesign

## Pair share

- Turn to your neighbor. 90 seconds each.
- Read your redesign out loud.
- Partner's only job: ask ONE sharpening question.
- Not criticize, just sharpen.



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# Communications

Module 2

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# The communication problem

- McKinsey: cross-functional projects fail 70% of the time.

The #1 reason: communication breakdowns between functions.

- Grammarly Business, 2023: employees lose 7.47 hours per week to poor communication. That's nearly one full working day.
- For Global Launch: every function encodes in their own language. Regulatory doesn't hear what Marketing says. Medical doesn't hear what Supply Chain says.

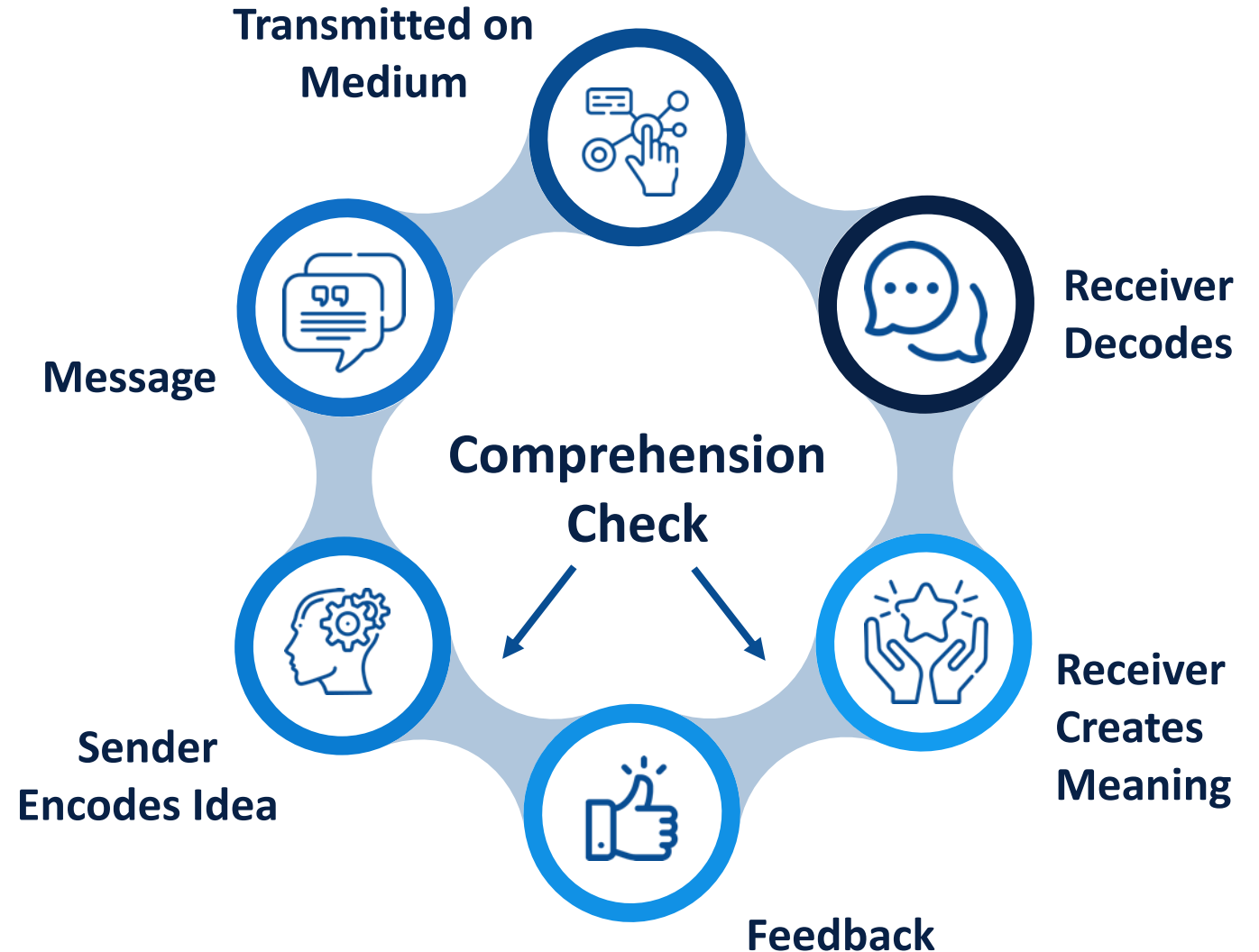
So: this module is not theory. It's the gap that kills launches.

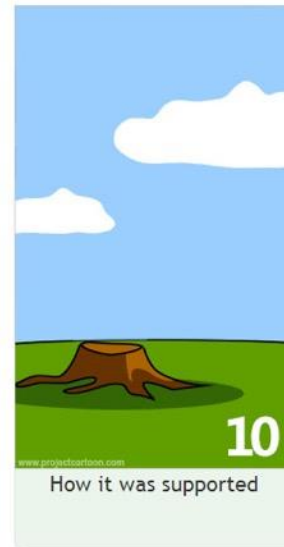
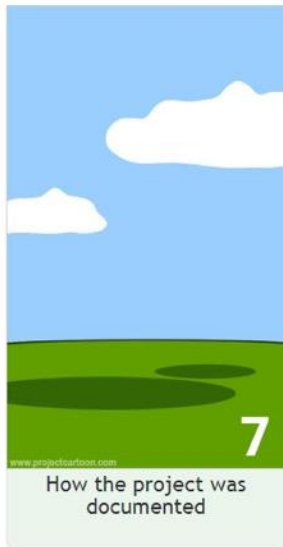
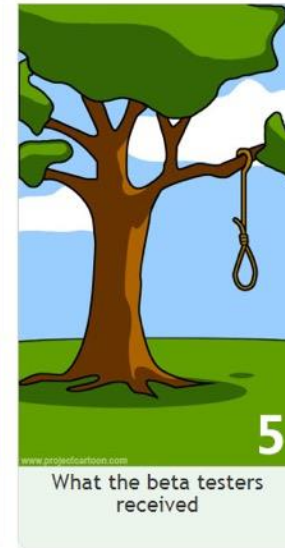
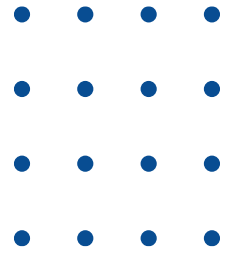


# What is communication?

Communication is the means by which information or instructions are exchanged.

# A Perceptual Model of Communications





# Communications Barriers



- C** Communication Networks
- O** Organisational Structures
- M** Media
- M** Message
- U** Unclear Lines of Communication
- N** Natural Resistance
- I** Interpersonal
- C** Culture
- A** Assumptions
- T** Time frames
- E** Environment

# Communication Behaviours

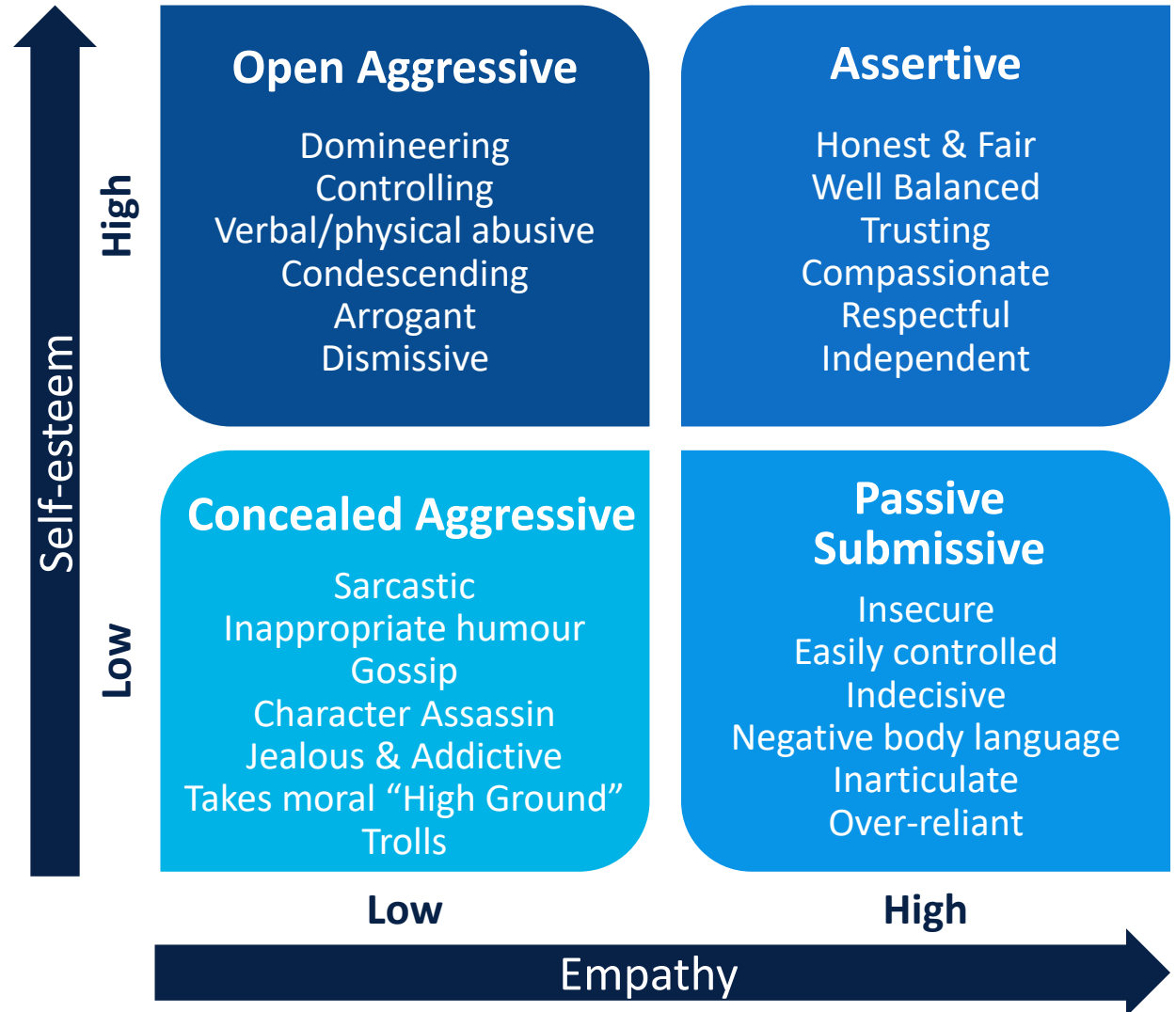
ASSERTIVE: "I see X. It affects Y. I propose Z."

PASSIVE: "It would be great if maybe... no, never mind."

AGGRESSIVE: "You always do this. It's impossible to work with you."

PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE: "Oh, dates changed again. Interesting."

You've used all four this month. The question is when, and whether you chose it.



## 3 situations. Silent reflection.

For each situation, write down which behavior you'd default to. Honest, not textbook. No one sees it except you and your pair.

1. Your Italy affiliate lead just copied your Global Medical Director on a complaint about the launch timeline, without talking to you first. It's 17:00 on Friday.
2. A Marketing peer presents a launch plan in front of 20 people. You spot a critical data error that will embarrass them if it reaches the Executive Committee.
3. Your Head tells you in 1-on-1 you need to "lead with more authority". You disagree.

Then pair: 90 seconds each. What did you pick? What surprised you?

# Self-assessment: your communication style

Download the excel workbook at <http://stada.pages.dev>

Complete it in silence. 8 minutes. Around 30 questions. It scores your default across the four styles: assertive, passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive.

Then pair share (2 min each):

- What was your highest score?
- Any surprises?
- What would you want to change?

# Blake & Mouton's Managerial Grid

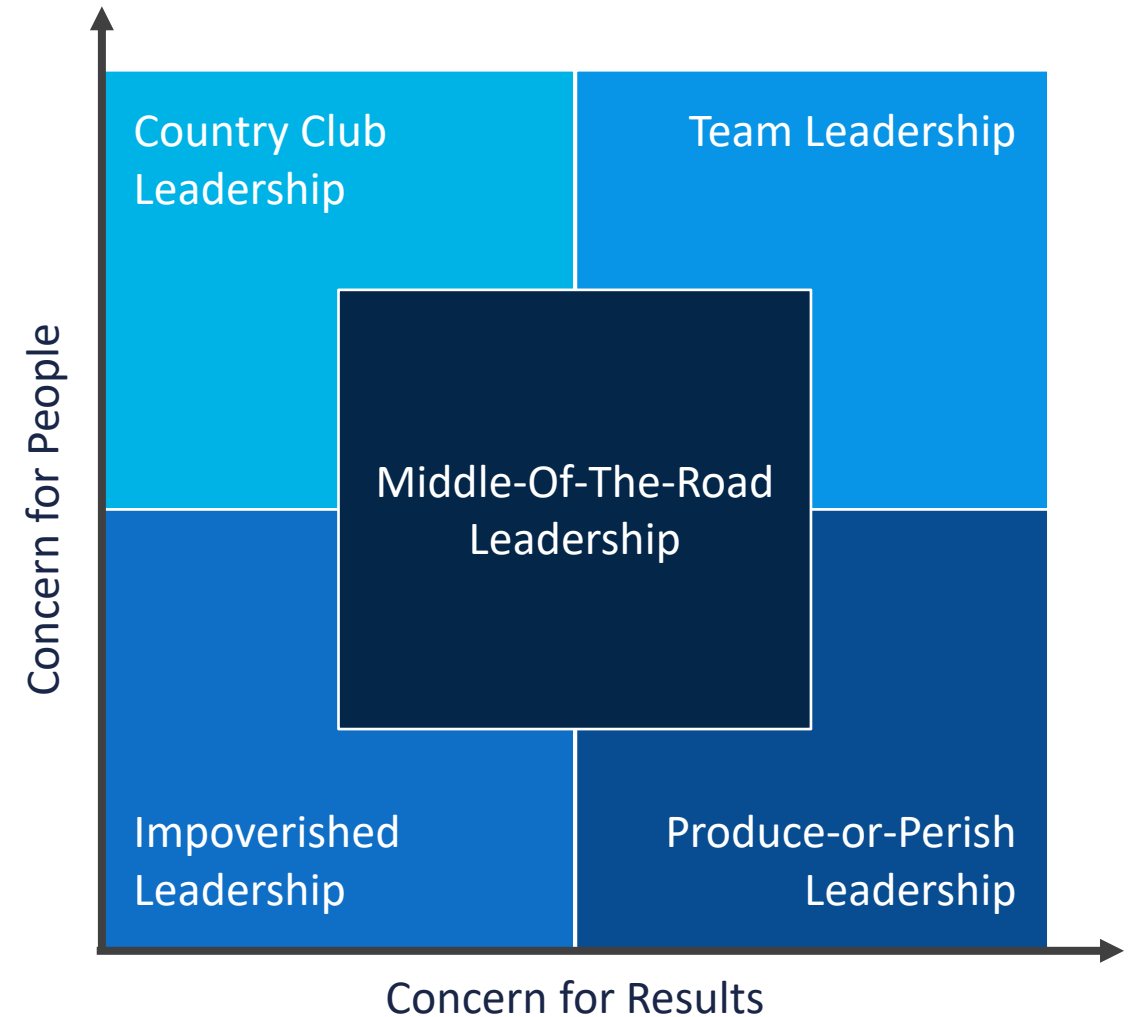
A lens on leadership behavior  
Robert Blake & Jane Mouton, 1964



# Managerial Grid

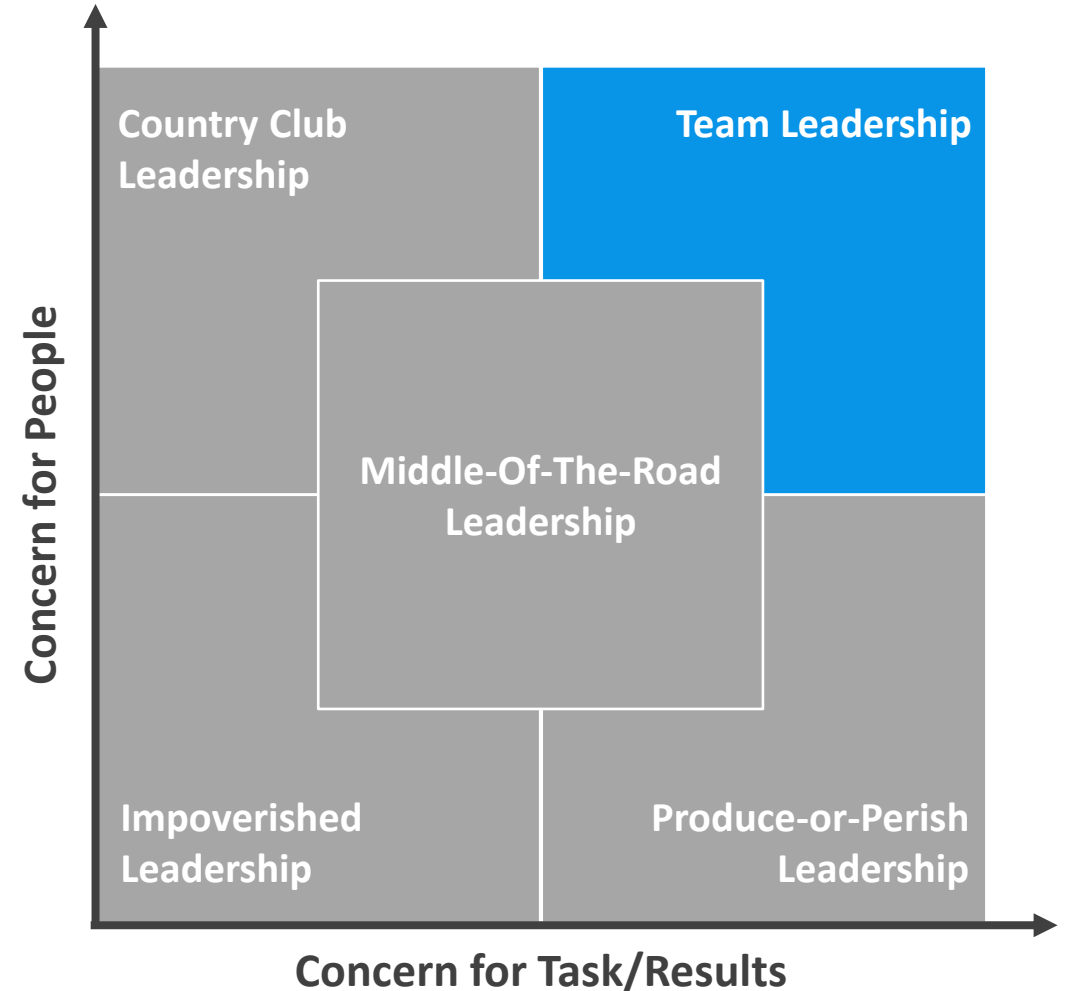
Leaders can be categorized based on how **focused** they are across two different dimensions:

- Concern for production  
(completing tasks)
- Concern for people  
(supporting individuals)



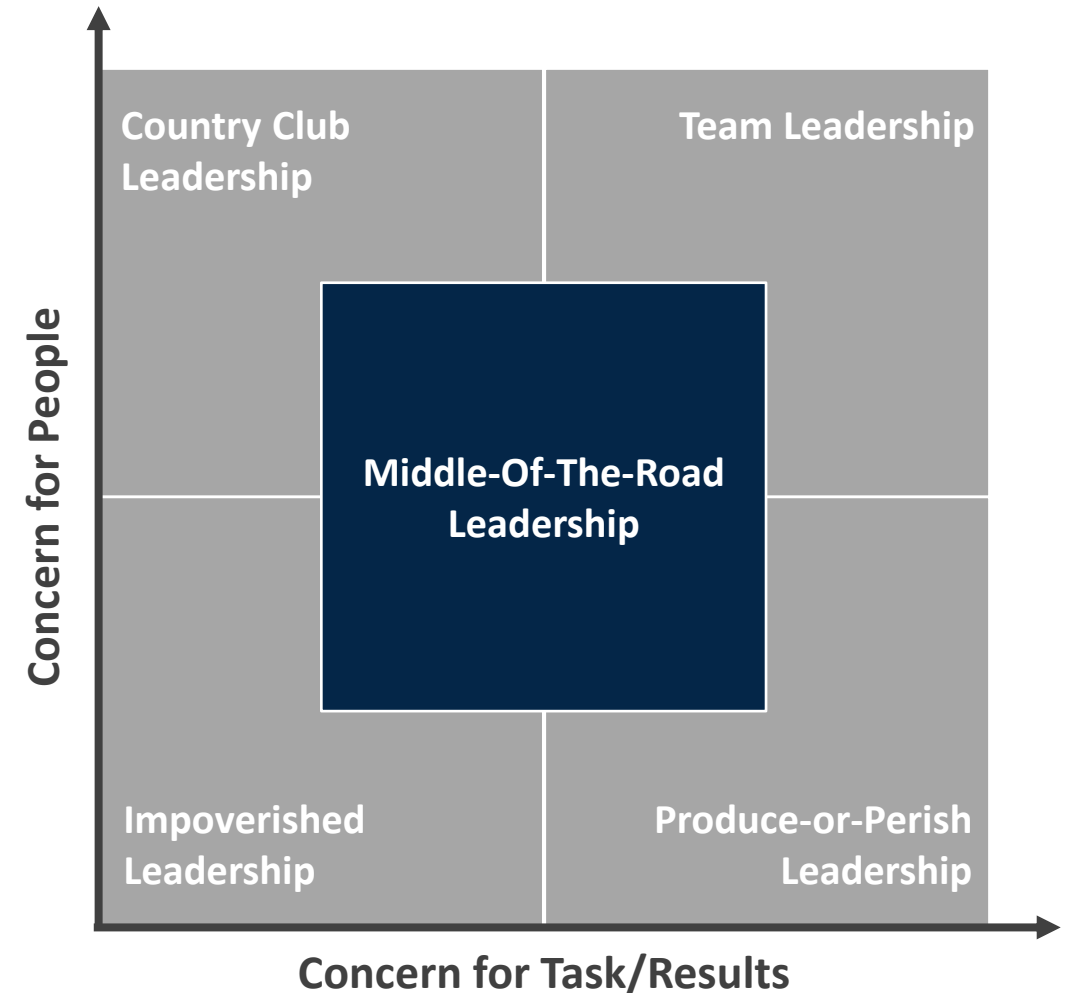
# Team Leadership

- High concern for both people and production.
- Teamwork and commitment is encouraged; consistent with McGregor Theory Y.
- Relies on making employees feel as constructive parts of the company.



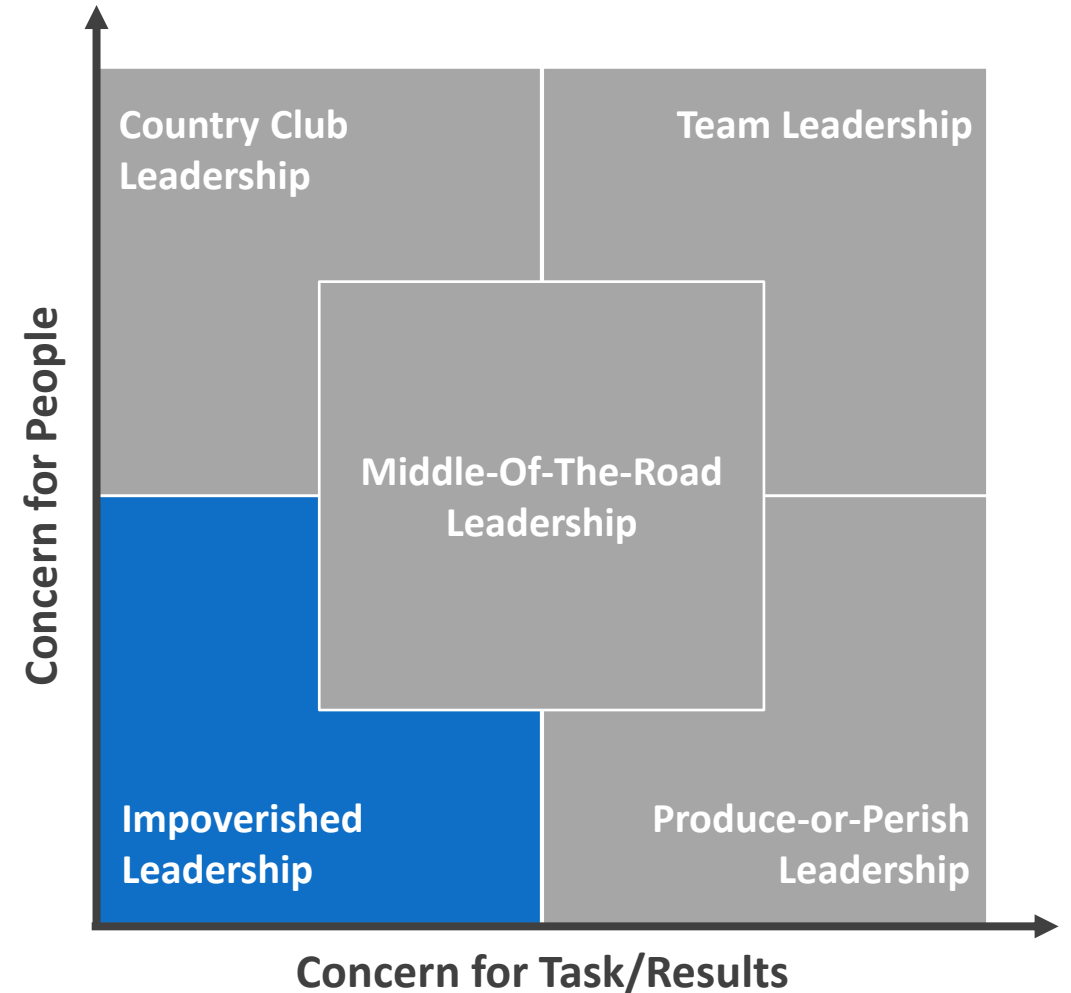
# Middle-Of-The-Road Leadership

- Concern for both people's engagement and task completion.
- Balance between company goals and workers' needs; status quo.
- Hope to achieve suitable performance.



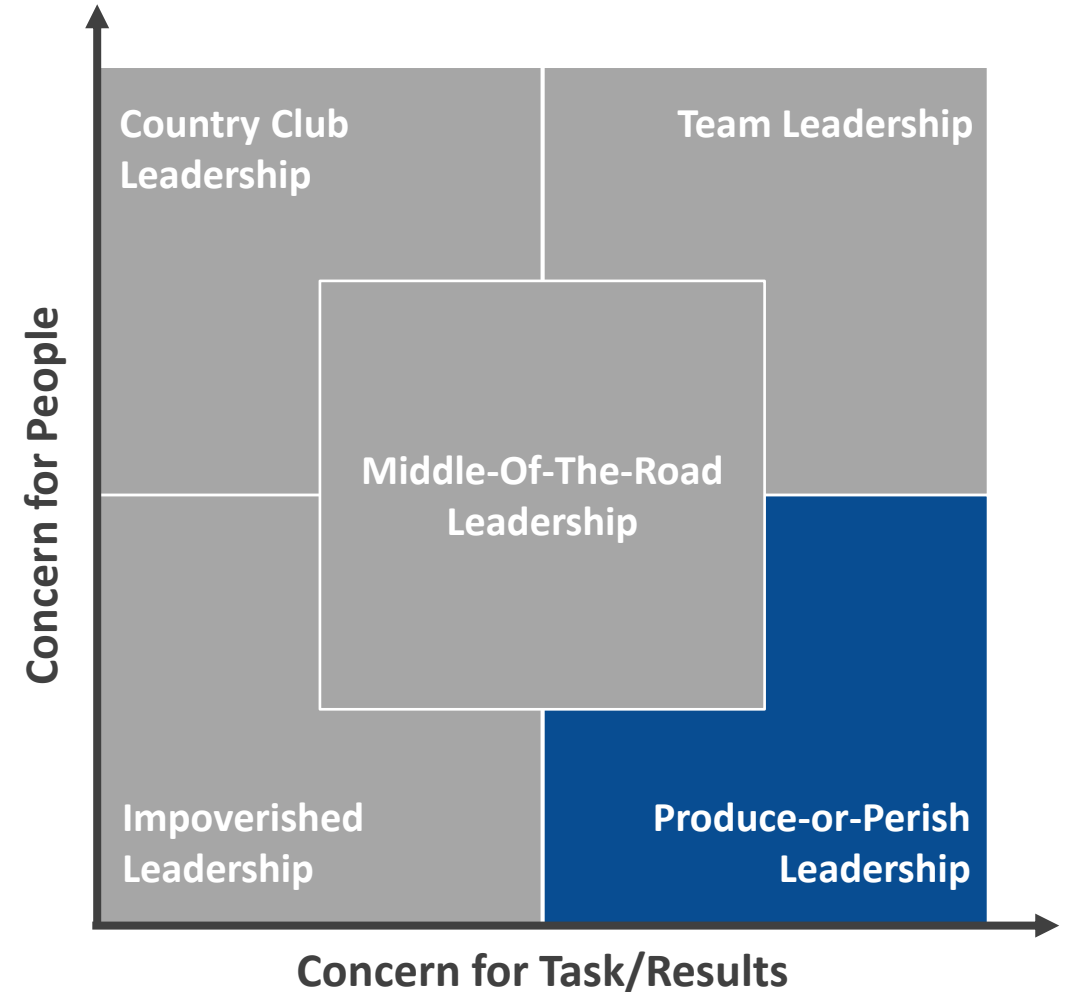
# Impoverished Leadership

- Low concern for both people and production; indifference.
- Nothing is achieved, work is chaotic and disorganised.
- Main concern is not to be held responsible for any mistakes.



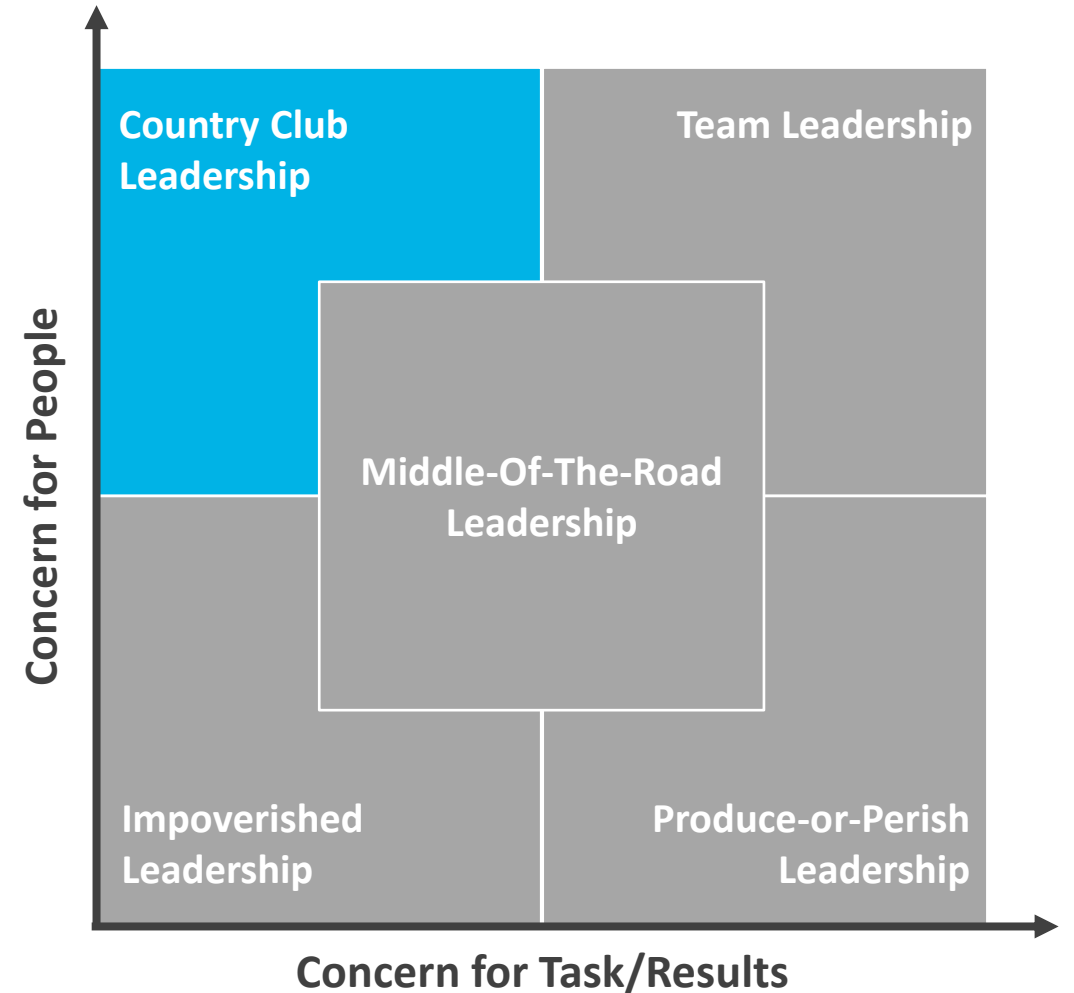
# Produce-or-Perish Leadership

- High concern for production and a low concern for people; dictatorial.
- Rules and punishments to achieve goals.
- Employee needs are unimportant, people are not engaged & motivated.



# Country Club Leadership

- High concern for people and low concern for task completion.
- Attention to the security and comfort of the employees to increase performance.
- Accommodating, friendly, but not necessarily very productive.



# Emotional Intelligence

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# Emotional Intelligence



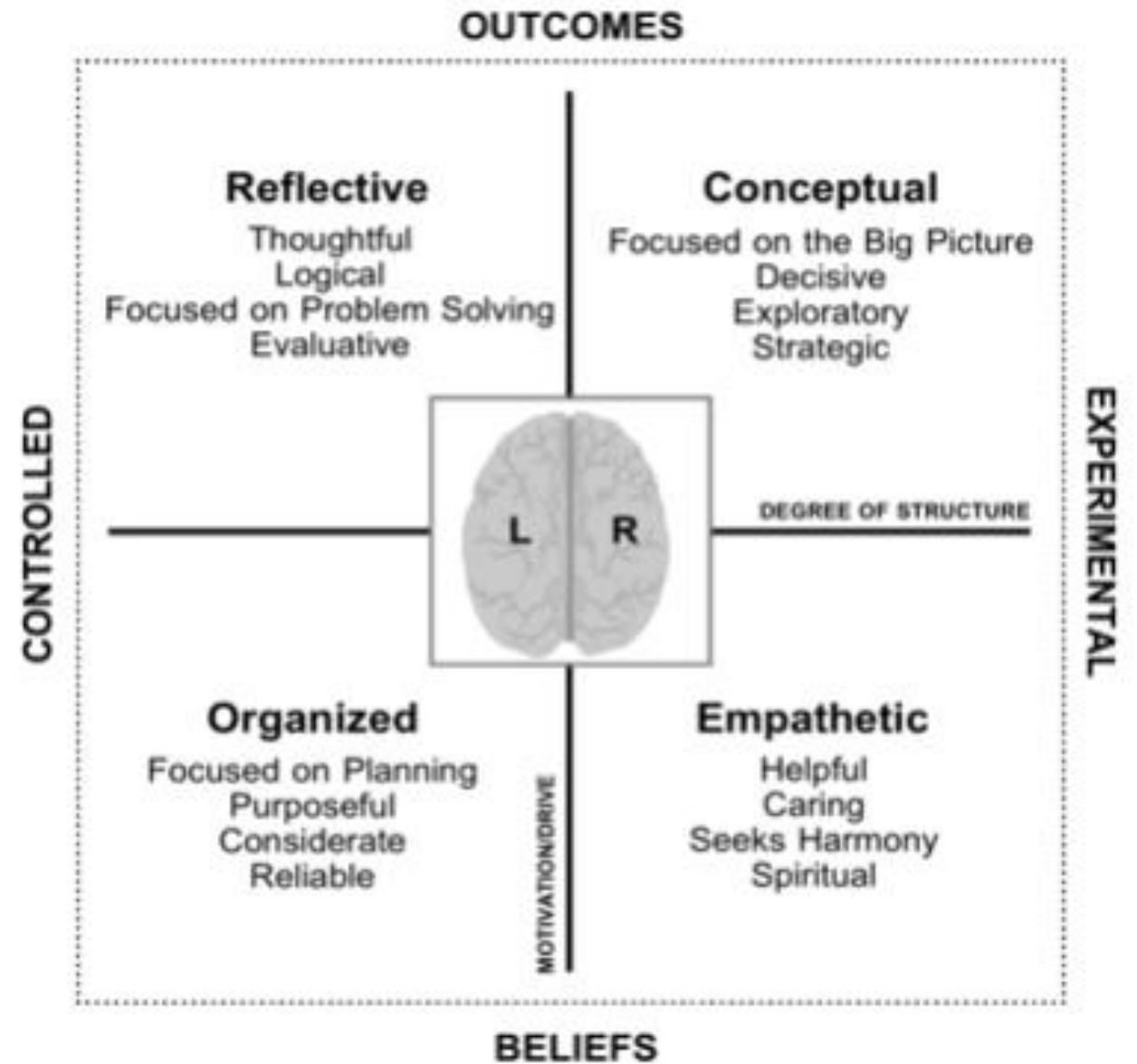
*“The capability of a project manager to recognise, understand, and regulate their own emotions — and to perceive, interpret, and influence the emotions of others — in order to build trust, strengthen collaboration, and support effective decision-making across the project environment.”*

*(adapted from Goleman 1995; PMI 2021)*

# Elements of Emotional Intelligence



# Emotional Intelligence



# Activity: Stakeholder reset

Pick ONE stakeholder you find hardest to communicate with. Someone real. Someone you'll see next week.

1. Their behavior vs yours
  - Where on the 2x2? (assertive / passive / aggressive / passive-aggressive)
  - What's their EI type? (reflective / conceptual / organized / empathetic)
2. The last difficult conversation. What specifically went wrong? One sentence.
3. The barrier (pick 1 or 2 from COMMUNICATE)
  - Medium. Message. Natural resistance. Interpersonal. Culture. Assumptions. Time. Environment.
4. ONE concrete change "Next time I see X, I will..."

# Assertiveness & Negotiations

Module 3

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# The negotiation problem

“70% of negotiations end in suboptimal outcomes because parties assume a fixed pie”.  
Harvard Program on Negotiation, 2019.

**Chris Voss (FBI lead hostage negotiator):** "Negotiation is not a battle of arguments. It's the pursuit of what's already there, hidden beneath positions."

**For Global Launch:** every launch is 300 micro-negotiations stitched together. With regulators. With affiliates. With supply. With medical. With commercial.

So: this module is not theory. It's what you do every day.



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# What is Negotiation?

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# Negotiation is...

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A communication process



Between two or more people



Who need to reach agreement



At some time



Which is mutually acceptable



And stands the test of time

# Sources of Negotiation Problems



Perceptual  
errors



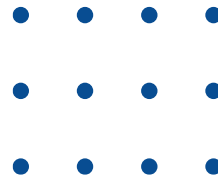
Unrealistic  
expectations



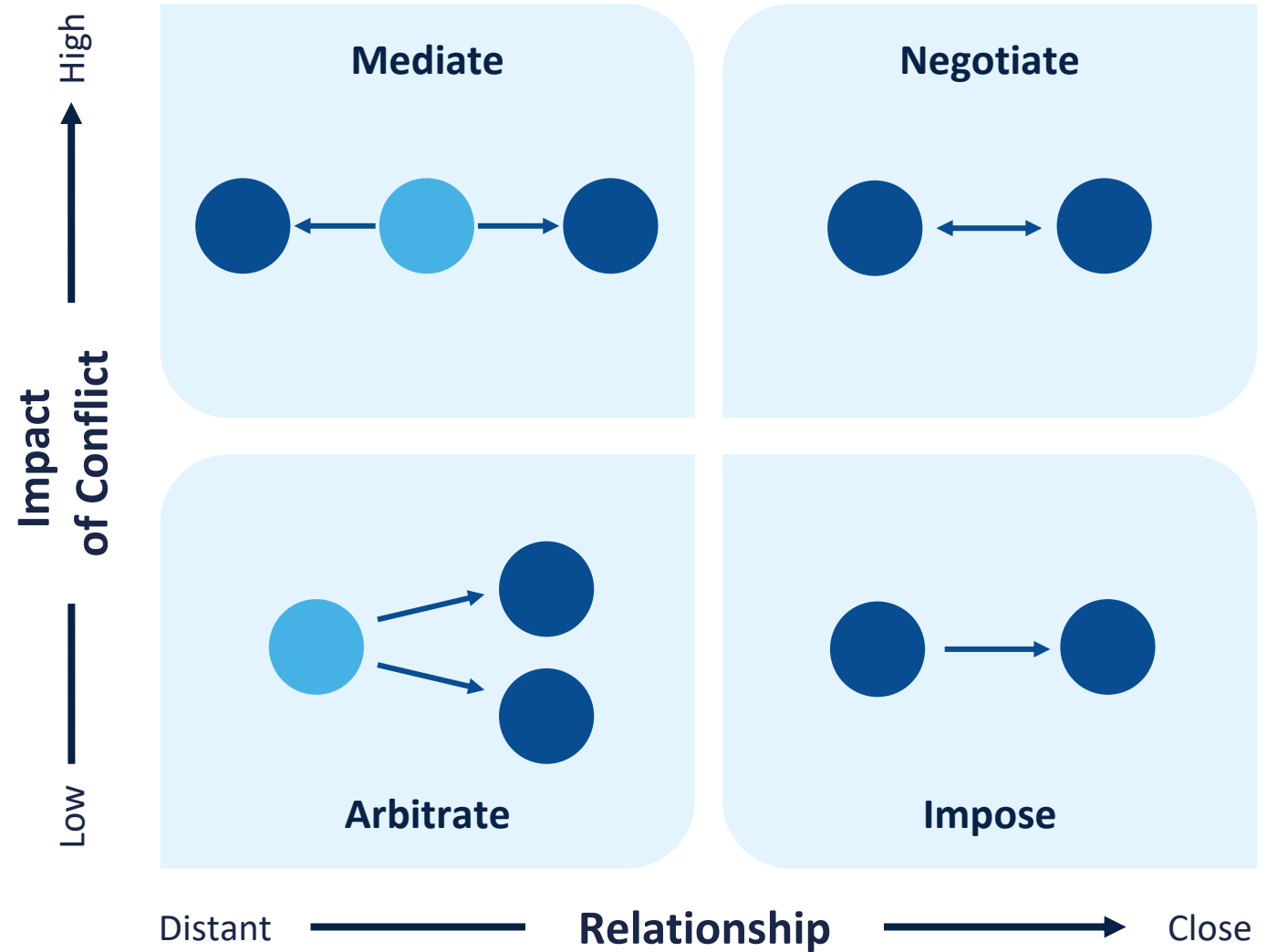
Unwillingness or  
inability  
to engage



Perceived  
non-negotiability

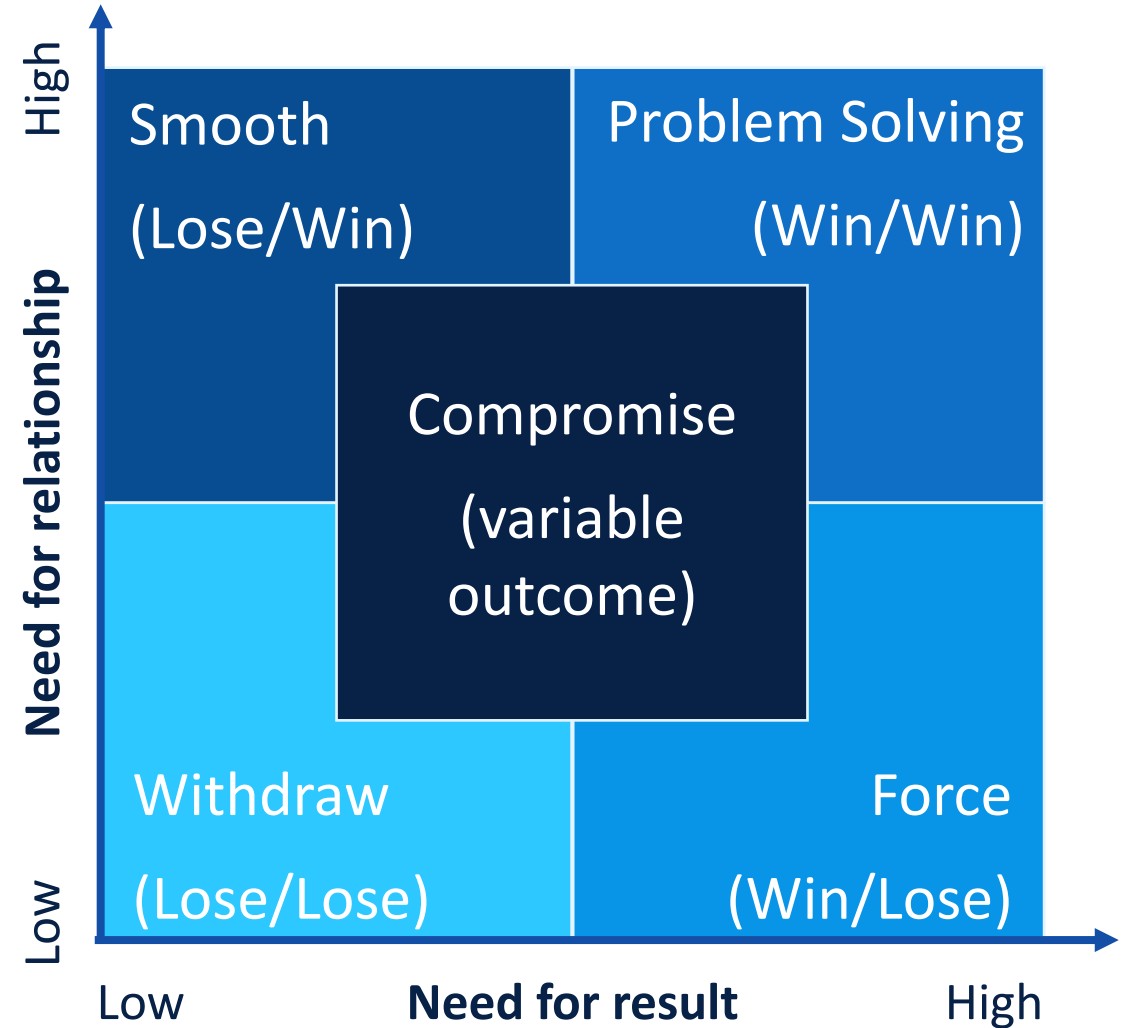


# Facilitating Negotiation



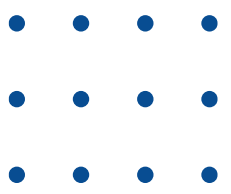
# Classic Negotiation Outcomes

Adapted from the Thomas Killman  
Conflict Mode Instrument.

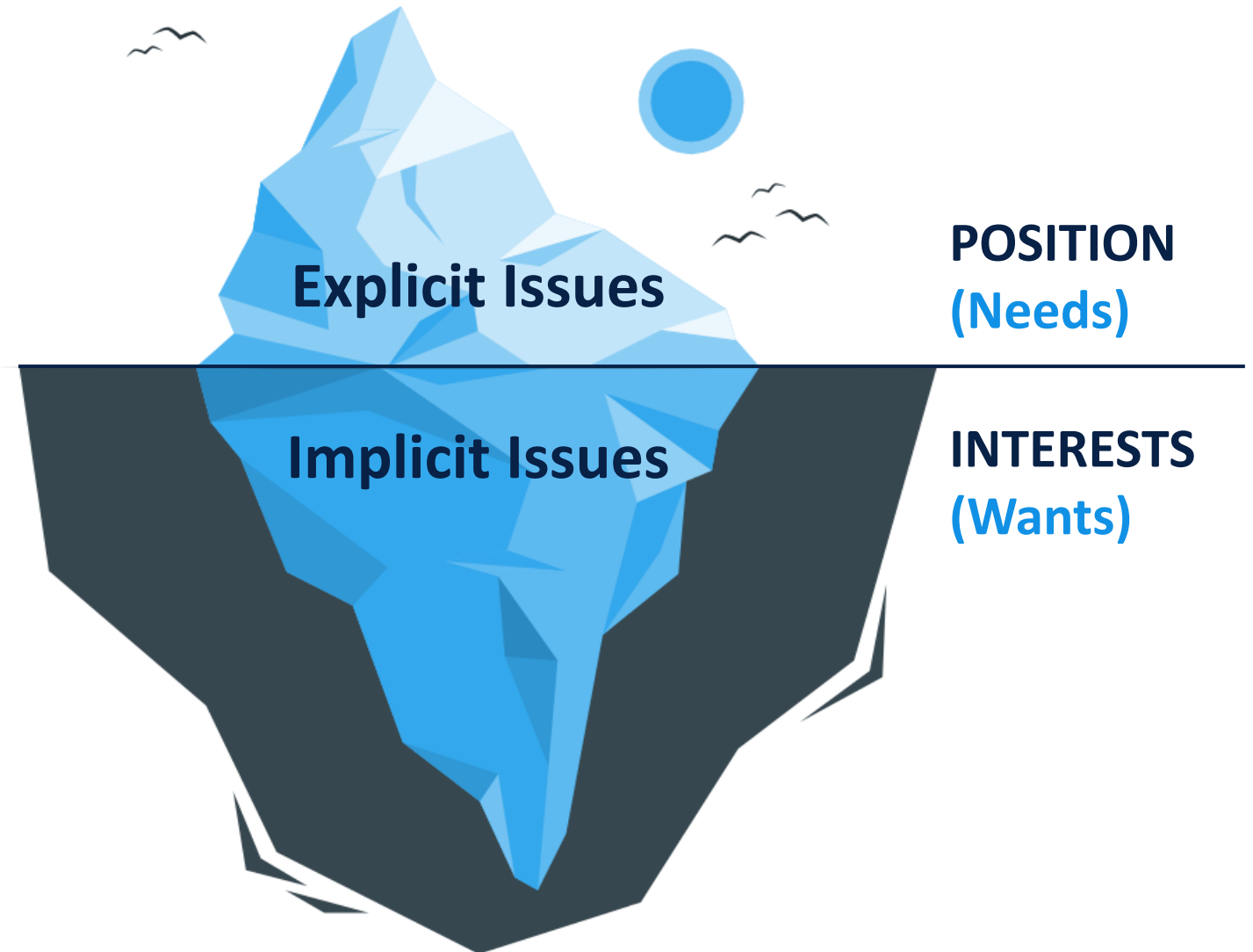




Style	Approach	Tactical Use	Threat
Smooth	Lose/Win	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Building rapport</li><li>- Going “fishing”</li><li>- Part of the sandwich tactic</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- You appear a “soft touch”</li></ul>
Force	Win/Lose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Matter of ethics/legality</li><li>- Back to the wall</li><li>- Relationship of no value</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- They want to fight or get even</li><li>- They build alliances</li><li>- You might lose all</li></ul>
Compromise	Any	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- No time</li><li>- External pressure</li><li>- All needs have been satisfied</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Short term solution</li><li>- Problem returns</li><li>- We don’t understand them</li><li>- Both lose</li></ul>
Withdraw	Lose/Lose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- No value to you</li><li>- They are abusive/manipulative</li><li>- To Test their resolve</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- They call your bluff</li><li>- Lose respect and let you walk</li></ul>
Problem Solving	Win/Win	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- You build trusting relationship</li><li>- Better understanding</li><li>- Long term solution</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Requires excellent skills</li><li>- Needs planning/preparation</li><li>- Takes longer</li></ul>



# Think beyond positions





## POSITION (Needs)



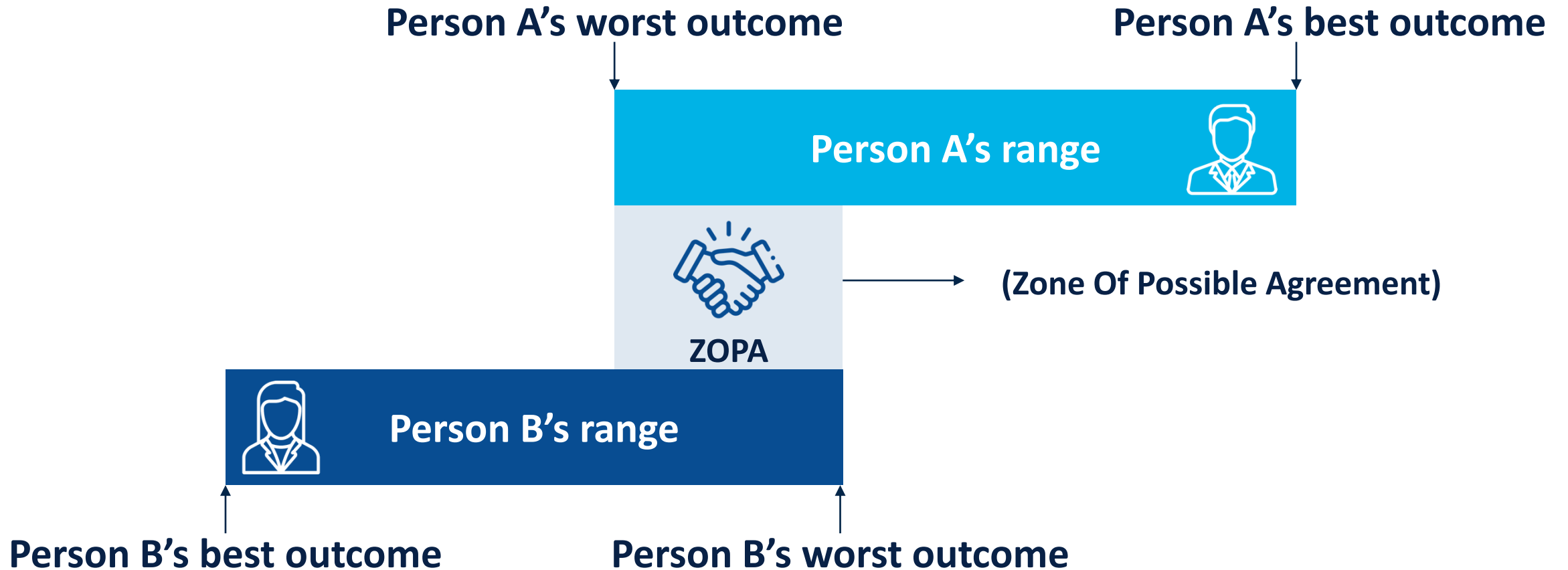
## INTERESTS (Wants)

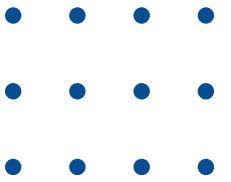


- Opposed to progress
- Concern about noise
- Spoiled view

- Environment and biodiversity
- Property Value
- Local Economy

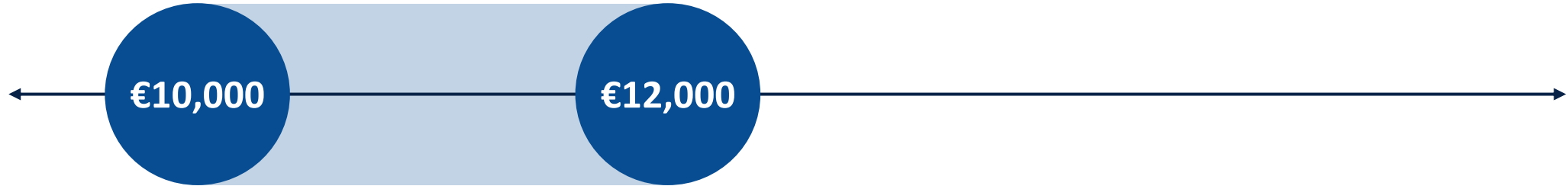
# ZOPA – Zone of Possible Agreement





**Buyer**

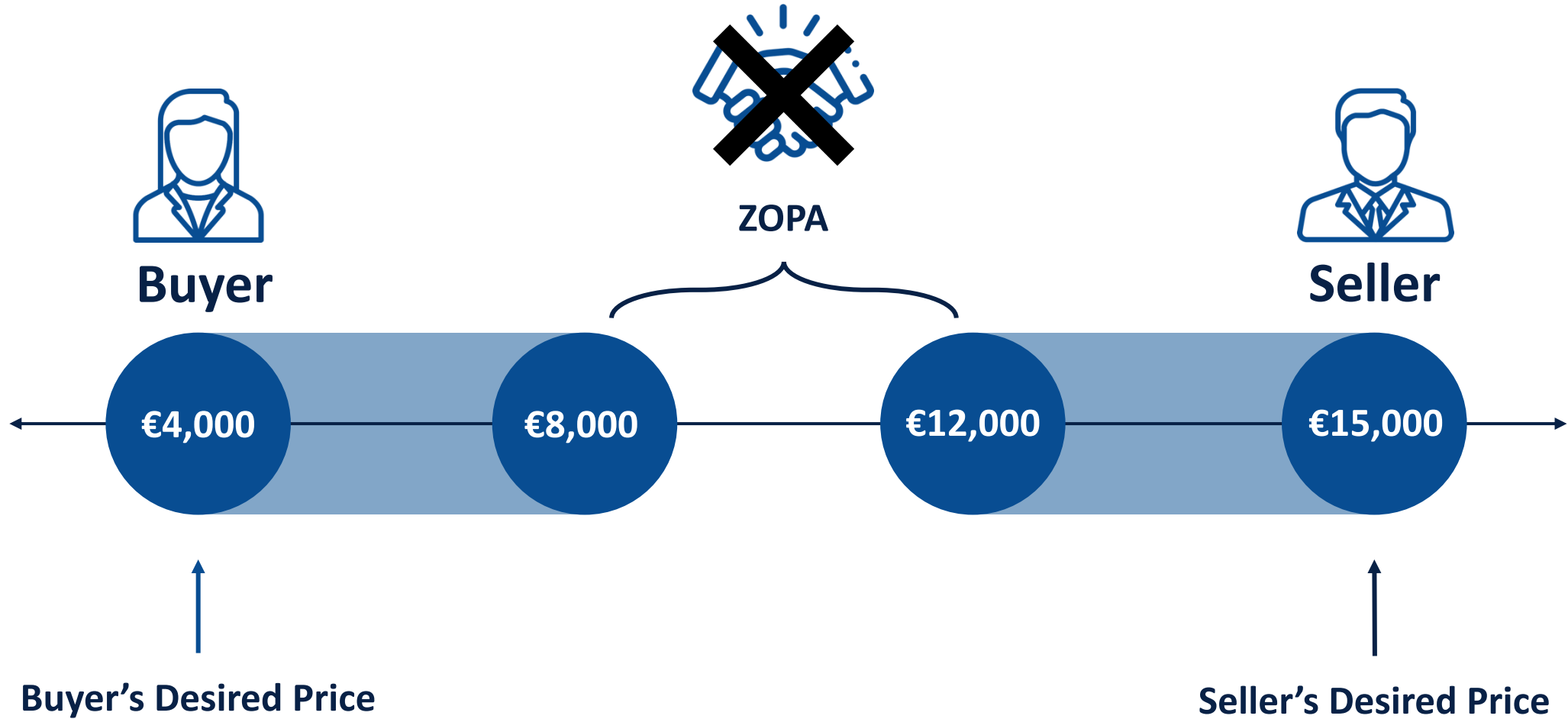
Buyer's Desired Price



**Seller**

Seller's Desired Price





Target = what you want (inside this negotiation)  
BATNA = what you do if it fails (outside this negotiation)

**B**

**Best**

**A**

**Alternative**

**T**

**To a**

**N**

**Negotiated**

**A**

**Agreement**

# Using BATNA



**Two or more  
BATNAs are  
better than  
one.**



**Research the  
other party's  
BATNA.**



**Don't reveal a  
weak BATNA.**



**Be aware of  
complexity.**



**Don't let them  
diminish your  
BATNA.**



**Beware self-  
entitlement.**

# BATNA: concrete example

You currently work at Company X at EUR 68k. You have a written offer from Company Z at EUR 72k. You're now negotiating with Company A for a new job. Your target: 75k from A (what you want)

Your BATNAs (what you do if A doesn't reach your target)

1. Take the offer from Company Z at EUR 72k
2. Stay at Company X at EUR 68k
3. Keep searching for 2-3 more months

Your strongest BATNA: Company Z at 72k. That's your walkaway: below 72k from A, you go to Z.

If A offers 70k → you say no. Z pays more.

If A offers 74k → you say yes. Below target (75k) but above walkaway (72k).

The point: Target = what you want. BATNA = what you do if you can't get it. Know both before you enter the room.

# Assertive communication: 3 steps

**FACTS** What happened. Observable. No adjectives.

**IMPACT** Concrete effect on you, the team, the launch.

**ASK** Specific request. Not a complaint.

# Assertive communication: 3 steps

## Example:

Passive: "It would be great if we could align on timelines."

Aggressive: "You're always changing dates. Impossible to work."

Assertive (Facts-Impact-Ask):

"The Germany date moved three times in two weeks."

"Supply planning redone every time. 4 days lost."

"Can we agree any change goes through the weekly committee?"

# From a hostage negotiator

Chris Voss led international kidnapping negotiations for the FBI for 24 years.

In his book "**Never Split the Difference**" (2016), he argues: Calibrated questions beat demands. **Start with "How" or "What"**. Never "Why" (sounds accusatory).

Haiti, 2003

An American was kidnapped. The family received a call demanding \$150,000 within 24 hours, with kill threats. Instead of pleading or bargaining, Voss coached the family to use calibrated questions. Questions starting with "How" or "What", never "Why": - "How do we know he is alive?" - "How are we supposed to come up with that kind of money?" Each question forced the kidnappers to slow down, explain, and solve the family's problem for them. The final ransom: \$4,751. Less than 3% of the original demand. The hostage came home.

# From a hostage negotiator

## "Never Split the Difference" (2016)

Try phrases like

- "How do we make July 1 work given the regulator's question?"
- "What's your worst outcome if we do nothing?"
- "How am I supposed to explain this to my Director?"

# Three more techniques from Voss

## "That's right" beats "you're right"

When someone says "that's right", you've reached real emotional agreement. When they say "you're right", they're shutting you down. Aim for "that's right".

## Labeling

Name the emotion you sense in the other side.

"It sounds like you are under pressure from your GM..."

"It seems like this timeline feels unrealistic to you..."

Naming the emotion may defuse it.

## Mirroring

Repeat the last 2 or 3 words the other person said. Them: "We cannot delay the launch." You: "Cannot delay the launch?" They elaborate. They do not feel interrogated.

# Role-play: HQ vs Germany Affiliate

- MediCore is launching a new product across several European markets with a coordinated date of July 1, 2026. Today is April 21.
- All the preparation is done, including packaging, pricing, marketing materials, sales training and supply chain. A significant investment has been committed.
- The simultaneous launch matters for three reasons. A competitive window opens on July 1 that the company wants to capture. Senior leadership decided the strategy eight months ago. And other upcoming launches will look at this one as the benchmark.
- An urgent meeting has been called this morning between HQ and one of the major country markets, because the country wants to delay and HQ does not. You are in that meeting.

# Role-play: HQ vs Germany Affiliate

Trios. 40 minutes total.

- Role A: HQ Global Launch Manager
- Role B: Germany Affiliate Lead
- Role C: Observer

Each of you receives access to ONE role sheet. Read only yours. Do not share.

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# Role-play: timing

## Individual prep (15 min)

- Read your role silently. Fill your ZOPA/BATNA grid.
- Use Facts-Impact-Ask at least once.

## Negotiation (15 min)

- Reach an agreement you can defend to your boss on Monday.
- Observer: stay silent. Take notes on specific moments.

## Debrief (10 min)

Observers first: ONE specific moment you saw.

Outcomes round: what did you agree, one sentence each trio.

Meta: what surprised you about your own behavior?

# Role-play: style used

Which one did YOU use just now? Not which one you wanted to use. Which one you used.

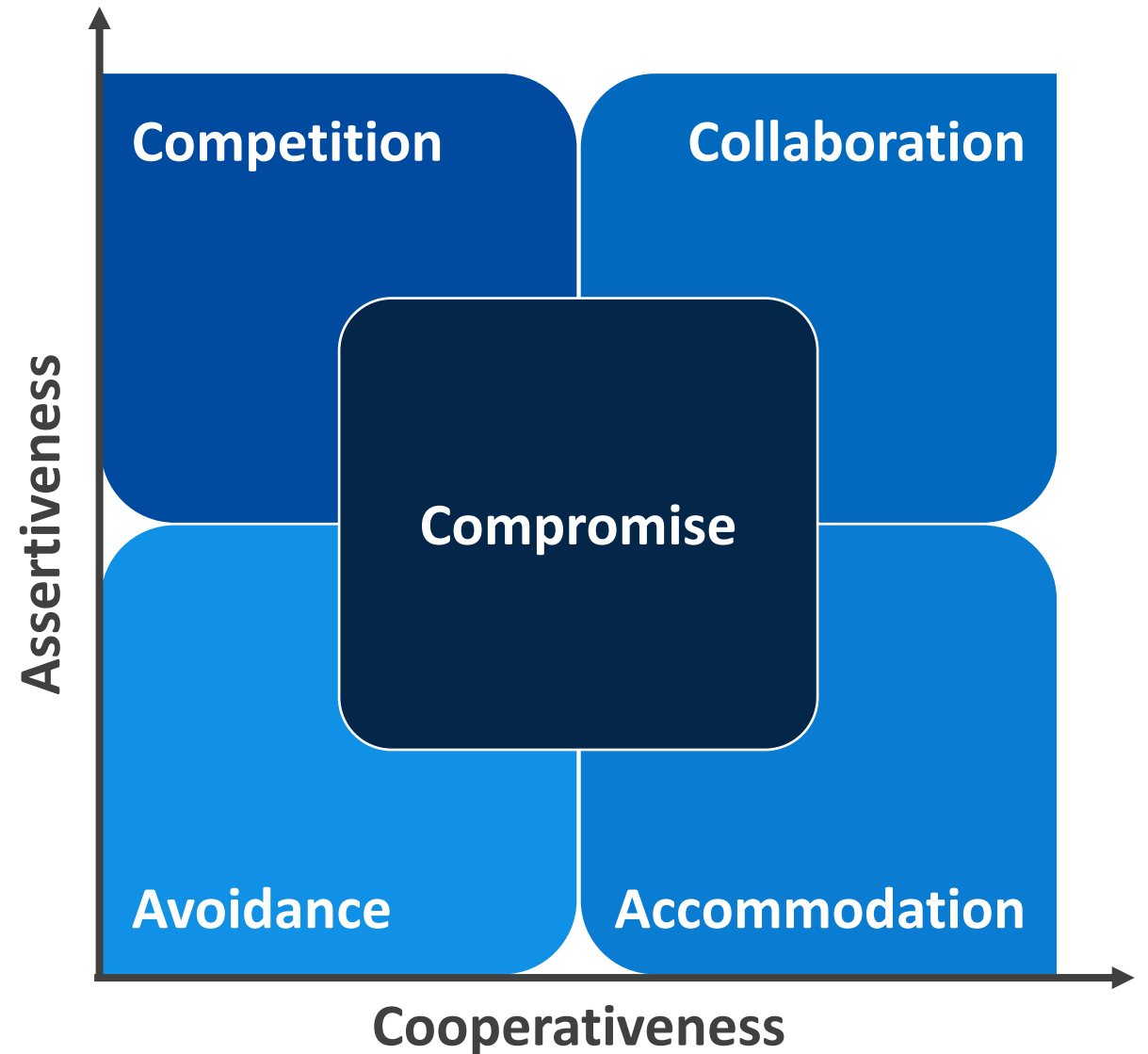
- Competition win/lose, force, control
- Collaboration win/win, joint problem solving
- Compromise split the difference
- Avoidance lose/lose, withdraw
- Accommodation lose/win, smooth, give in

(Thomas Kilmann Conflict Model)

# Thomas Killman Conflict Model

A model that can help us to understand our response to conflict in a given situation in two measures:

- Cooperativeness
- Assertiveness



# Reflection & Action Planning

Module 4

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# Knowledge Check

# Quiz

## True negotiation is...

- A. Acting as a go-between.
- B. Imposing a decision on another party.
- C. Acting as a judge and picking a winner.
- D. Conferring to achieve a mutually satisfactory solution.

# Quiz Answer

**True negotiation is...**

- A. Acting as a go-between.
- B. Imposing a decision on another party.
- C. Acting as a judge and picking a winner.
- D. **Conferring to achieve a mutually satisfactory solution.**

# Quiz

**Prioritising a relationship over an outcome by ‘letting them win’ is which negotiating outcome?**

- A. Smooth
- B. Force
- C. Withdraw
- D. Compromise

# Quiz Answer

**Prioritising a relationship over an outcome by ‘letting them win’ is which negotiating outcome?**

- A. Smooth
- B. Force
- C. Withdraw
- D. Compromise

# Quiz

**Negotiating over whether quality requirements have been met typically occurs at which life cycle stage?**

- A. Concept
- B. Initiation
- C. Delivery
- D. Closure

# Quiz Answer

**Negotiating over whether quality requirements have been met typically occurs at which life cycle stage?**

- A. Concept
- B. Initiation
- C. Delivery
- D. Closure

# Quiz

**The ideal negotiation outcome is known as a...**

- A. Win
- B. Win/Win
- C. Win/Lose
- D. Compromise

# Quiz Answer

5. The ideal negotiation outcome is known as a...

- A. Win
- B. Win/Win
- C. Win/Lose
- D. Compromise



**What is one specific action you will take after this course?**

**When will you do it?**

**How will you hold yourself accountable?**



INSTITUTE  
PROJECT  
MANAGEMENT

# Thank you

If you have any questions, please send us an email to: [courses@projectmanagement.ie](mailto:courses@projectmanagement.ie)

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