



Creative Contention™

Align, Engage, and Innovate.

The Business Case for Creative Contention™

A common scenario:

As a leader, you hire people with different experiences, backgrounds, and ideas so that you can build diverse teams that generate innovative ideas and thinking and can contribute to growing the business. You bring people together for meetings, put them on project teams, and ask for fresh ideas. *What happens?* More often than not, you get a room full of people who think alike, share the same approaches, or just end up going along with “whatever the group decides”. The result? You end up with the same thinking, stale ideas, and old perspectives that have been done before.

Why does this happen?

It’s not that you don’t have good people. A lack of engagement is the challenge. For example:

- The group defers to the most senior person in the room to make the final decision
- The person who “makes the most noise” in the room shuts down everyone else and ends up getting his/her ideas heard
- Some prefer to “get along by going along” instead of sharing a contrary or less popular point of view, idea, or perspective
- People remain silent out of fear of sharing a “bad idea” or not being seen as being as smart as others in the room

What can be done?: Introducing Creative Contention™

Creative Contention™ is a 2-day, highly interactive development program that provides participants with the skills, tools, and behaviors they need to engage in tough, even contentious work situations. Over the course of the program, participants are put into a series of metaphorical and common company-specific scenarios where the participants face the same challenges that they encounter back on the job. Within these scenarios, they are asked to apply the concepts from Creative Contention™ and practice “what to do and say” to contribute to the goals of their teams, departments, and company.



Creative Contention™ :

Key Concepts



Styles – Four communication styles (*thinker, feeler, sensor, and intuiter*) that demonstrate different values and perspective. Participants learn how to adjust their communication, so it complements the other person's style



Principles – Four Creative Contention™ principles:

1. *Maintain mutual esteem* of everyone involved in the conflict. This makes it more likely that all parties will...
2. *Maximize information flow*, which ensures that all relevant data about the problem is shared. This, in turn, makes it easier for all parties to....
3. *Foster creative solutions* and generate the most innovative approach to the problem.
4. *Focus on the higher business purpose*, consciously redirecting the focus from narrow, parochial interests to shared organization vision, mission, and goals.



Creative Contention™ : Key Concepts



Behaviors – High performers apply the key cooperation skills of drawing out and playing back when too much conviction is present in a conflict. They also use the conviction skill of expressing assertively when too much cooperation is present. Specifically, they demonstrate the ability to:



Express Their Ideas, Needs/Wants, and Feelings, which helps communicate what they want and need from the situation;



Ask Questions, which helps uncover information, especially about underlying needs of the other party;



Test for Understanding, which helps show they understand what the other party has said and builds the relationship; and



Confront and Clarify Differences, which helps clarify what has been resolved/agreed to, and what differences remain, in such a way as to keep the dialogue moving forward to generate creative solutions.



Contention Meter – A visual tool that helps participants recognize when they or others are in the zone of “creative contention” (i.e., engaged) or disengaged.



Contention Planner – A planning tool that helps participants plan for applying the ™ concepts in upcoming critical interactions with peers and team members.

The Learning Approach



Discovery learning. Participants learn by doing. More than two-thirds of the program is spent in actual simulations, followed by structured debriefings in which skill-building needs are identified and addressed.



Extensive feedback. During the program, participants receive verbal feedback from peers and their instructor.



Application planning. Participants periodically pause during the program to document how they plan to apply what they have learned to actual contentious situations.





Creative Contention™ Workshop Agenda

DAY 1

- Workshop Introduction
- Discussion: Our Company's Contention Challenges, Wrong Turns, and Consequences
- *Drivers Exercise: What Works—and What Doesn't Work—When Handling Contentious Issues*
- Discussion: *Creative Contention™ Principles*
- Introduction: Styles In Contention
- Discussion: Your Styles Profile

LUNCH BREAK (45 min)

- Exercise: *Working Constructively With People Who Have Different Styles*
- Introduction: *Creative Contention™ Skills and Behaviors*
- Practice: *The Express Skill*

DAY 2

- Discussion: *Needs and Wants*
- Introduction: The *Draw Out* and *Play Back* Skills
- Practice: The *Draw Out* and *Play Back* Skills
- Exercise: *Giving and Receiving Feedback*
- Exercise and Discussion: *Reframing*
- *Capstone Case Simulation: Planning*

LUNCH BREAK (45 min)

- *Capstone Case Simulation: Putting It All Together*
- Wrap-Up and Evaluation



About RED BEAR Negotiation Company

RED BEAR Negotiation Company is a global leader in business-to-business negotiation training. Our discovery-based learning approach, first developed by BayGroup International, empowers sales and procurement teams to negotiate more profitable agreements and build stronger relationships with clients, suppliers, and colleagues.

Visit us at: www.redbearnegotiation.com