Tomato Wars: Conflict Management for Farmers’ Markets

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Conflict happens

- How we deal with conflict makes all the difference
- Process is as important as outcomes
- Each party has a piece of the truth and the solution
- There is no right answer
Market conflicts

- Space infringement
- Vendor spaces
- Display “blocking”
- Parking and set-up
- Unloading “space”
- Vendor fees
- Manager compensation
Market conflicts (cont.)

- Bad weather no shows/early departure
- Early departure in general
- Opening and closing times: early/late selling
- Customers with dogs
- Customer Parking
- Town/city regulations
- Vendor/Board/Manager relations
- Adding/removing vendors
- Vendor price wars
- Other conflicts?
Results of conflict

- **Positive Effects**
  - Clarifies interests
  - Leads to resolution and understanding
  - Increases cohesion
  - Leads to improved, stronger relationships
  - Keeps people alert to different interests

- **Negative Effects**
  - Increases bitterness
  - Leads to tension and stress
  - Divisive
  - Disruptive
  - Diverts attention
  - Destroys relationships
Conflict is

- Emotional
- Rational
- Combination of both
How to respond?

- Stay in control when under fire
- Diffuse anger and hostility
- Listen actively, acknowledge points and feelings
- Agree where you can, show respect
- Find out what all ‘sides’ really want: What interest do they have in common?
- Ask: Why? Why Not? What makes that fair?
Conflict is resolved by

- Joint problem-solving, NOT bargaining over a position either party has taken
- Separating the people from the problem
- Focusing on interests not positions
- Creating options for mutual gain
- Basing the result on objective criteria

Goal: all ‘sides’ get what they really want by working together to

- Communicate shared and opposed interests
- Create and commit to a solution
Conflict is resolved when

- Underlying interests are met
- Options to satisfy interests are widely and creatively defined
- Legitimate and fair standards are determined
- Based on two-way communication
- An improved or not damaged relationship results
- Commitment to the solution is made by all parties
**Negotiate the solution together**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Joint problem solving</th>
<th>Barriers to Negotiation</th>
<th>Strategies to Overcome</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sit side by side</td>
<td>* Reactions</td>
<td>* To the Balcony</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Emotions</td>
<td>* Listen, acknowledge, agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Face the Issue/Problem</td>
<td>* Positions</td>
<td>* Reframe</td>
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<td>Reach a mutual satisfying agreement</td>
<td>*Loosing face *Power</td>
<td>*Golden Bridge *Educate</td>
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Be strategic

- Interests: What do the parties really want?
  - Clarify and Prioritize
- Options: What are possible points of agreement?
  - Consider ways to combine skills and resources to satisfy key interests of all
- Alternatives: What will each party do if no agreement is reached?
- Legitimacy: What criteria will achieve fairness for all parties?
How can negotiation work for your Market?

What are your Market’s conflicts?
Sources

- *Getting to YES, Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In.* Richard Fisher and William Ury

*Conflict Resolution Skills, Training for Agricultural Commissions.* Pilgrim Resource conservation and Development Area Council and the MA Office of Dispute Resolution
Acknowledgements

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