

Reach Out to Step Out

As Bentley's Ombuds, I often meet with individuals who do not feel comfortable taking the risk of addressing a conflict. They seek some guidance as they realize the need to address the conflict. I try to instill the confidence in *them* to address the conflict themselves, or at least become less uncomfortable in doing so.

Others nevertheless, are hesitant to address the conflict for a number of different reasons. They might offend their manager or a colleague which they believe a risk too great to take. They appreciate their position and do not want to "rock" the boat. They decide that speaking about the issue confidentially with the Ombuds will be sufficient for now. But that last step alone rarely suffices since the conflict remains unresolved with the other person and often grows as an internal conflict.

Those who address the conflict head on are often pleasantly surprised by the outcome and express appreciation for being encouraged to act outside their comfort zone, or in other words taking the risk of stepping out of their comfort zone.

Addressing the conflict can have additional benefits as we answer the following questions:

- Does addressing the conflict help other colleagues?
- Does it help the group's mission?
- Does it help achieve one's goals more effectively?
- Does it help improve morale?
- Does it offer new opportunities?
- Does it have a negative impact in the short run but can be beneficial in the longer term?
- Does it do anything to promote our core values?

Taking a risk or stepping out of one's comfort zone will very often help us more than hurt us. How?

It gives us self-confidence by resolving conflict on our own. Even if the exercise does not end with the desired outcome, at least we have the self-assurance of having tried. But again, we may pleasantly be surprised with the outcome. Even with an unsatisfactory outcome, we may be able to learn from the experience, and make us a bit more willing to take another calculated risk next time.

Having spent many years in research and development, I have learned that researchers who have never failed are not experienced researchers. Researchers as well as anyone for that matter who have disrupted the status quo for the better took significant risks and often failed before succeeding. We can all benefit from taking calculated risks. We can benefit from failure as a growth opportunity which highlights the old saying, "no risk, no reward".

This *Reach out initiative* encourages us to *step out* of our comfort zone to try and address a challenge or a conflict facing us. Ask yourself what makes it a conflict? Is it because we see a "better" way to solve a problem or a more effective and fair process to achieve a goal? Is it because we want to contribute more to our group's success and Bentley as a whole? Is it because it is the right thing to do?

There will always be a certain level of conflict in any growing and changing organization. Taking the initiative to address a conflict in a timely manner or address an issue often yields many of the benefits mentioned above. Here is a [link](#) to an article highlighting additional benefits by reaching out to *step out* of our comfort zone.

I wish you success and please reach out if I can help.