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Conflicts in Construction

Avoiding, Managing, Resolving

Jeff Whitfield

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MACMILLAN

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Preface

To a significant extent the characteristics and consequences of conflict impact on us every day. The influences of conflict can be felt in the family, the workplace, in politics and in our religions. Beyond these external situations we can also find character-building internal conflicts within our very being. We live with conflict every day whether we are alone on a desert island or a part of a large team negotiating a significant new contract.

Any book that deals with the control or management of conflict must, therefore, inevitably deal with five basic fundamentals:

- 1) The Recognition of Conflict
- 2) The Avoidance of Conflict
- 3) The Limitation of Damage Caused by Conflict
- 4) The Control of Unavoidable Conflict
- 5) The Resolution of Intractable Conflict.

While the techniques of managing conflict in the home or at work are similar, and many of the behaviours interchangeable, conflict within construction covers such a diverse range of issues that it deserves to be addressed specifically and in depth.

The construction industry comprises a wide diversity of interests, professions and procedures which theoretically interact to create a completed project. All of those involved may share a common goal, but inevitably they have differing and often divergent purposes. The likelihood of disharmony and contention is great.

This work is intended to guide students and practitioners alike through the maze of conflictive behaviours and to suggest some solutions. Where solutions are not available and a painful conflict is inevitable, we prescribe suitable analgesics to reduce the effects of the trauma.

In this book you will be invited to identify the differing meanings of conflict and to understand the causes of each defined meaning. By

this process you will be able to apply the appropriate technique for the elimination, reduction, management or resolution of that conflict. Because we are all human beings, and because our lives are peppered with conflicts, much of what you read will be familiar.

When you have completed the book you should be ready to address the old and familiar conflicts with new vigour and face new conflicts with enthusiasm and imagination.

Jeff Whitfield