Four Tips for Resolving Workplace Conflict

1. **Respect each other's opinions and time**: Everyone is busy, and everyone may be juggling multiple priorities. Those who call meetings should be respectful of participants' time by providing an agenda and limiting the meeting to a set amount of time. Meeting leaders should also expect courteous and respectful participation from all parties and explicitly state this before the meeting begins.

2. **Create a culture of open communication:** Employees who feel comfortable discussing important matters with one another during "good" times will have an easier time when it comes to discussing heavier or controversial matters. Encourage and empower others to be open with one another about expectations, deadlines and assignments. Creating clear and open lines of communication is the best way to ensure that issues will come to the table and be resolved, instead of lingering in the background, creating unnecessary tension.

3. **Find the "third way" by setting egos aside:** Those committed to resolving conflicts understand when it is time to put aside one's own motivations and desires and try to find a "third way" that all interested parties find acceptable. For some, particularly for those who have taken ownership of an idea or position, this can be difficult. In order to respect the goals of the organization, as well as the time spent invested in trying to solve the problem, offering up another option is an effective way to allow the group to move past the conflict.

4. **Focus on common goals:** When people are able to let go of the need to "get their way," they can focus on shared goals. In every conflict, it's easy to focus on the minutiae. Generally, each party to a conflict desires a positive outcome. Take time to discover the shared goals of each party. When the environment is positive, it's easier to find common ground, which may lead to a resolution more easily and in a manner that allows everyone's needs and concerns to be voiced.