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The Conflict Advantage – Using Workplace Friction to Fuel Success

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Today's Topics

- The Research Study
- Research Findings
- A Conflict Model
- Conclusions and Recommendations

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THE RESEARCH STUDY

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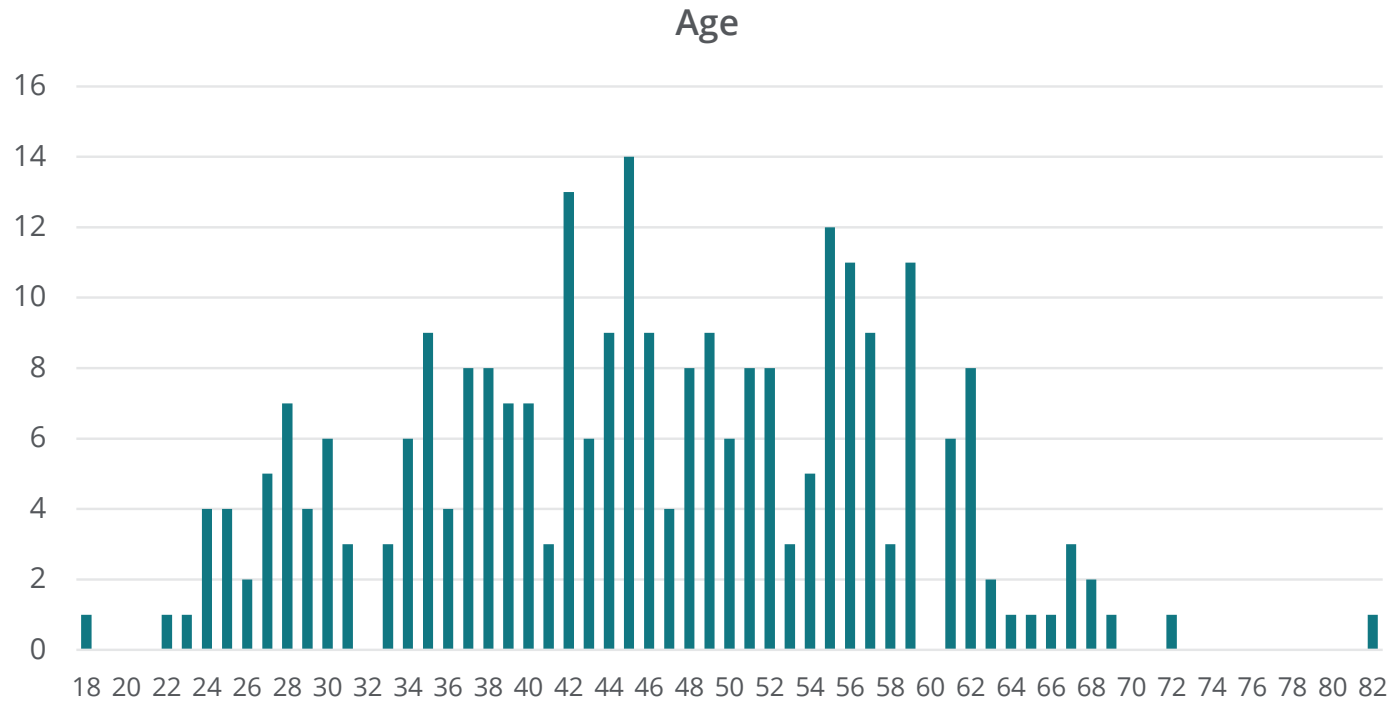
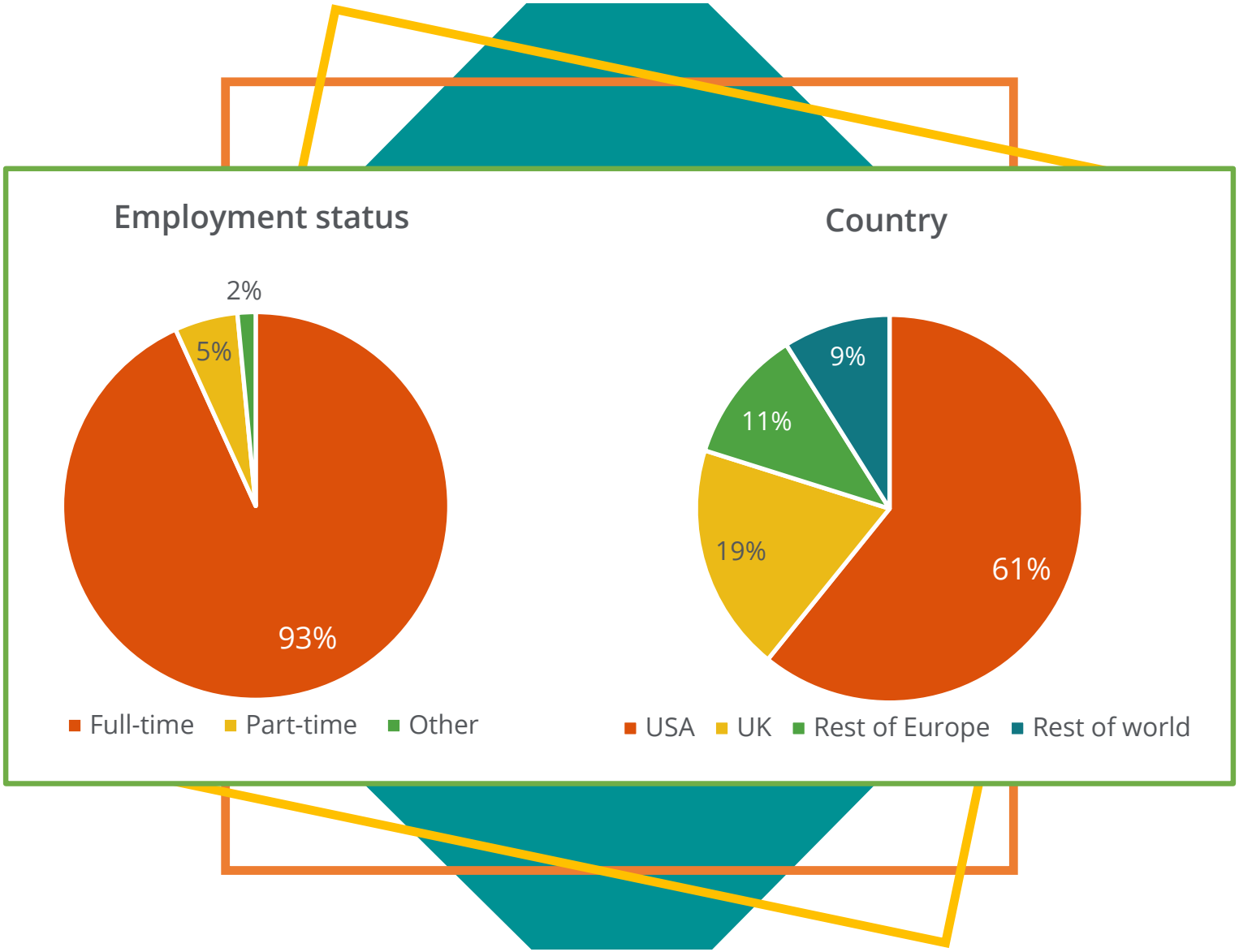
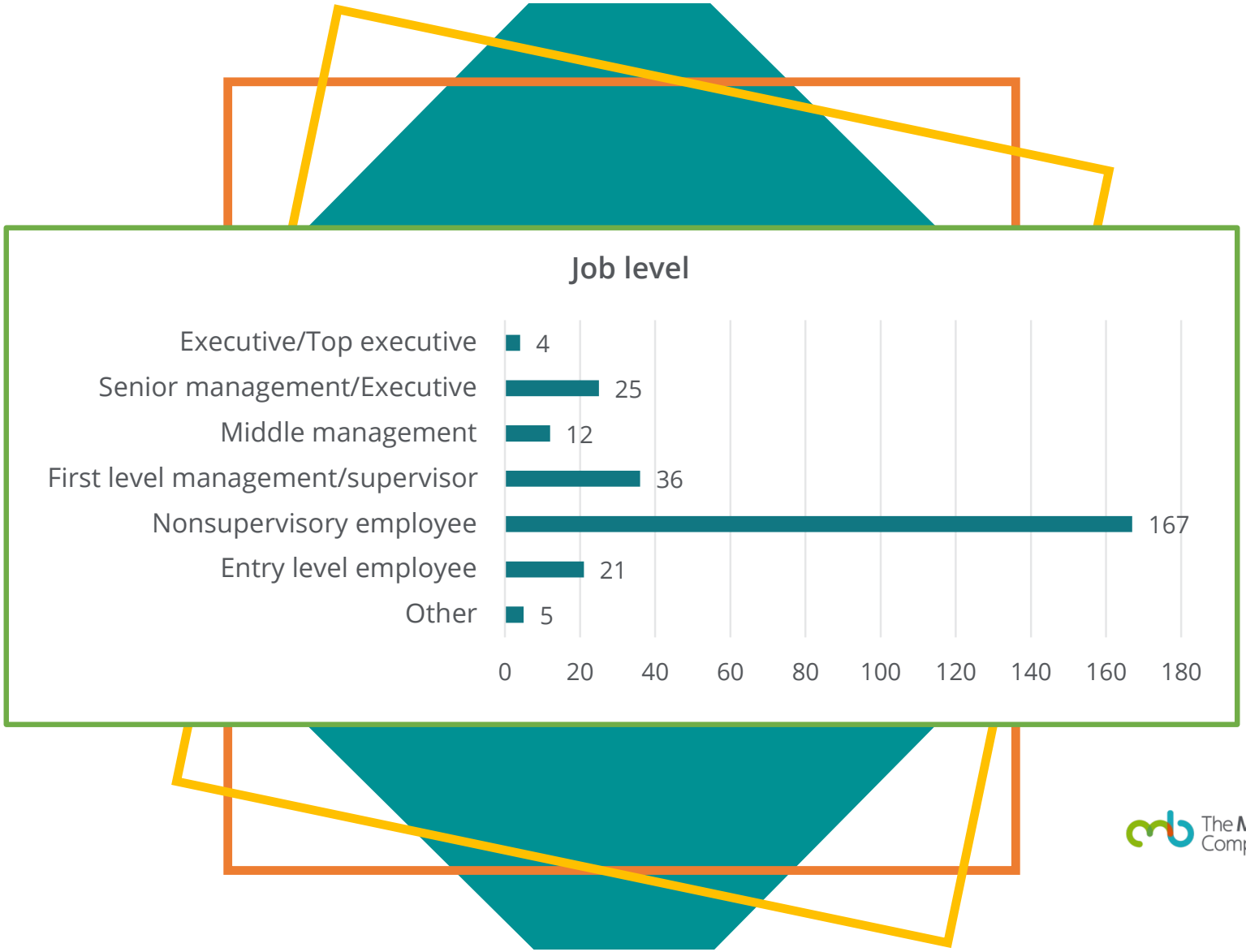
Group demographics

71% of the group were female, and 28% male, with 1% choosing “prefer to self-describe” or “prefer not to say”. Age ranged from 18 to 82 years, with an average (mean) age of 46.




Employment status
2%
5%
93%
Full-time
Part-time
Other
Country
9%
11%
19%
61%
USA
UK
Rest of Europe
Rest of world



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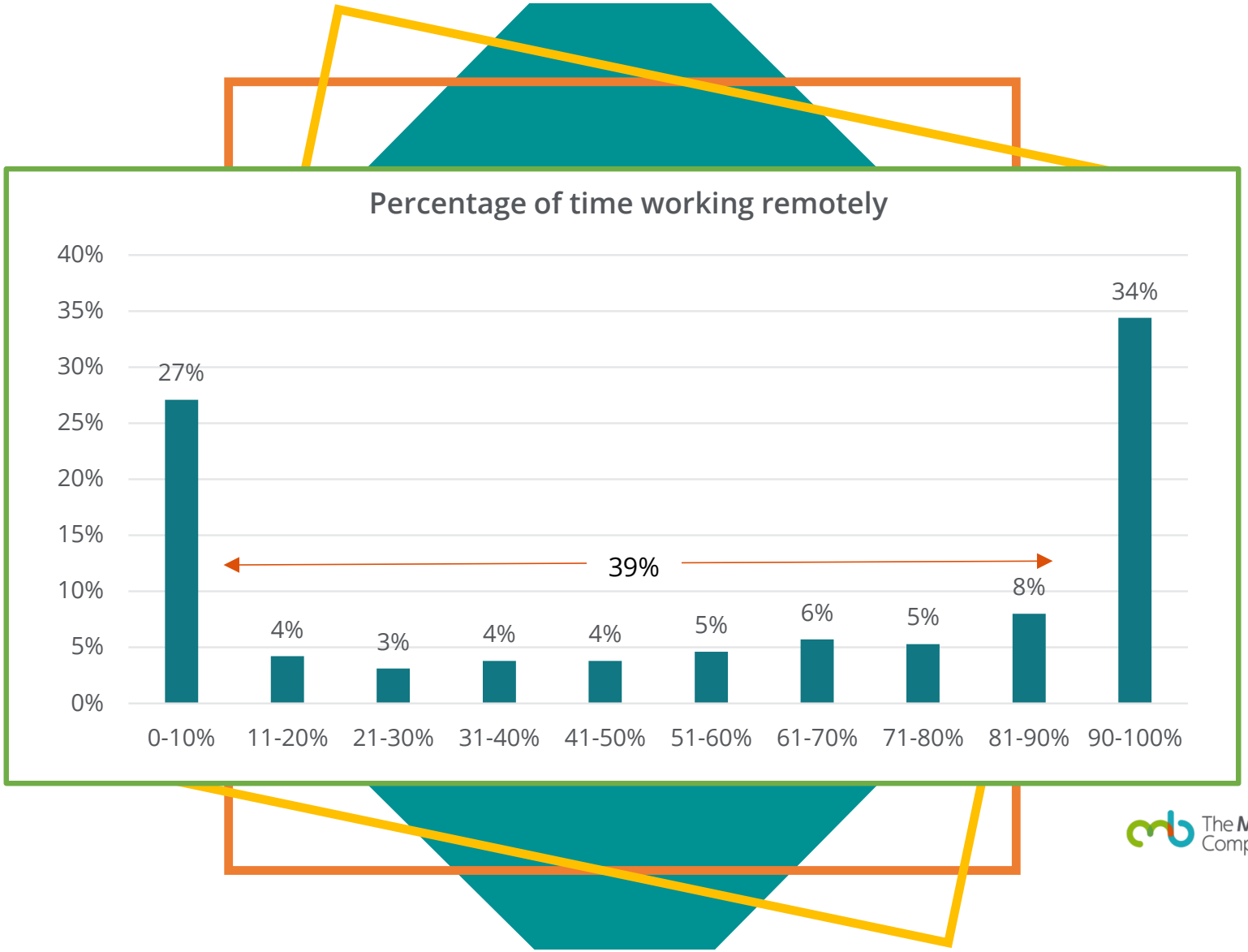

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RESEARCH FINDINGS

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Research Findings

- Conflict in the Workplace
- Impact of covid / working remotely
- Impact of managers
- Job Satisfaction

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Conflict in the Workplace

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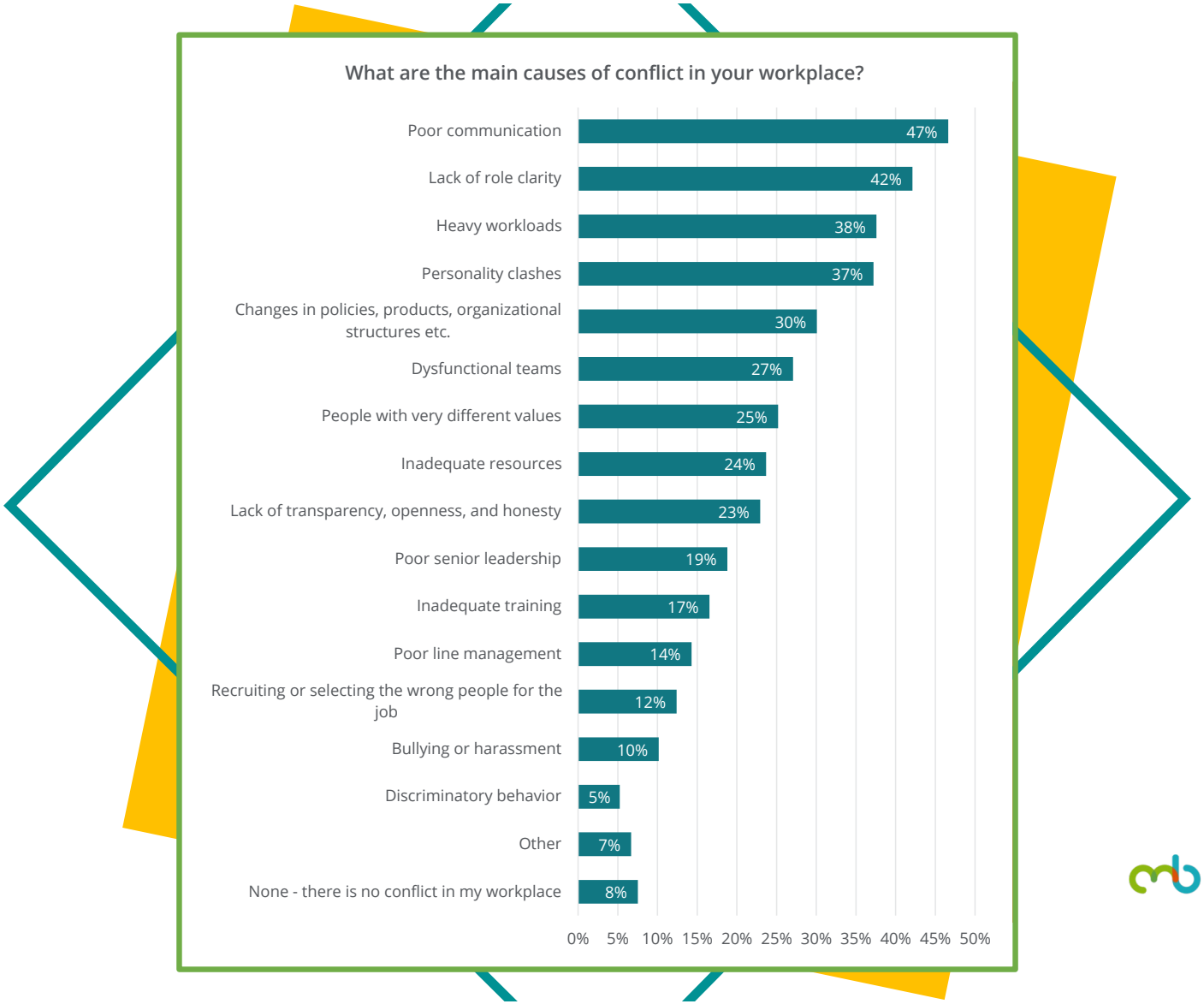

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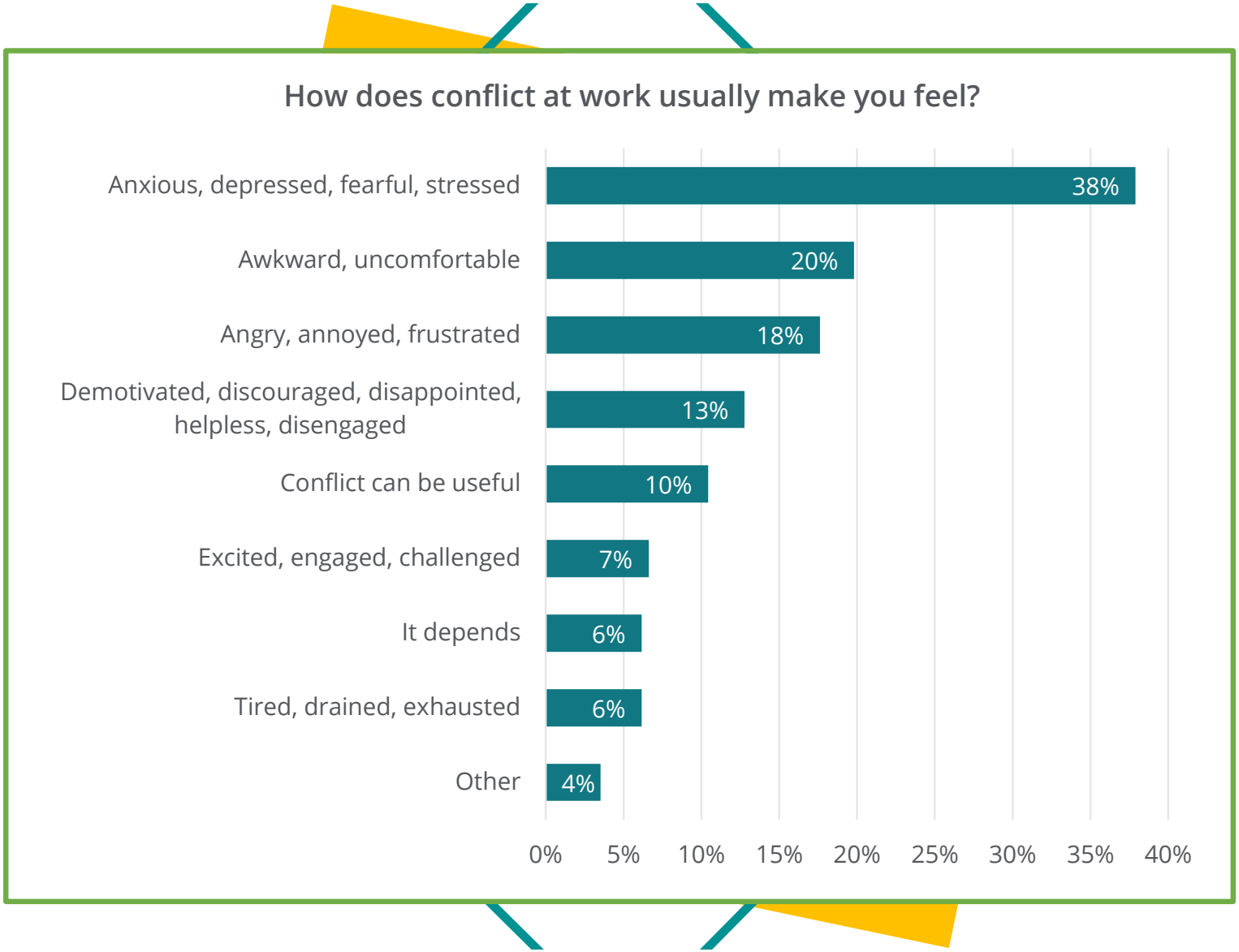
How does conflict at work usually make you feel?
Anxious, depressed, fearful, stressed
38%
Awkward, uncomfortable
20%
Angry, annoyed, frustrated
18%
Demotivated, discouraged, disappointed, helpless, disengaged
13%
Conflict can be useful
10%
Excited, engaged, challenged
7%
It depends
6%
Tired, drained, exhausted
6%
Other
4%
0%
5%
10%
15%
20%
25%
30%
35%
40%

POLL

Overall, how do you see workplace conflict?

- Always or almost always giving positive results
- Generally giving more positive than negative results
- Giving a mix of positive and negative results
- Generally giving more negative than positive results
- Always or almost always giving negative results

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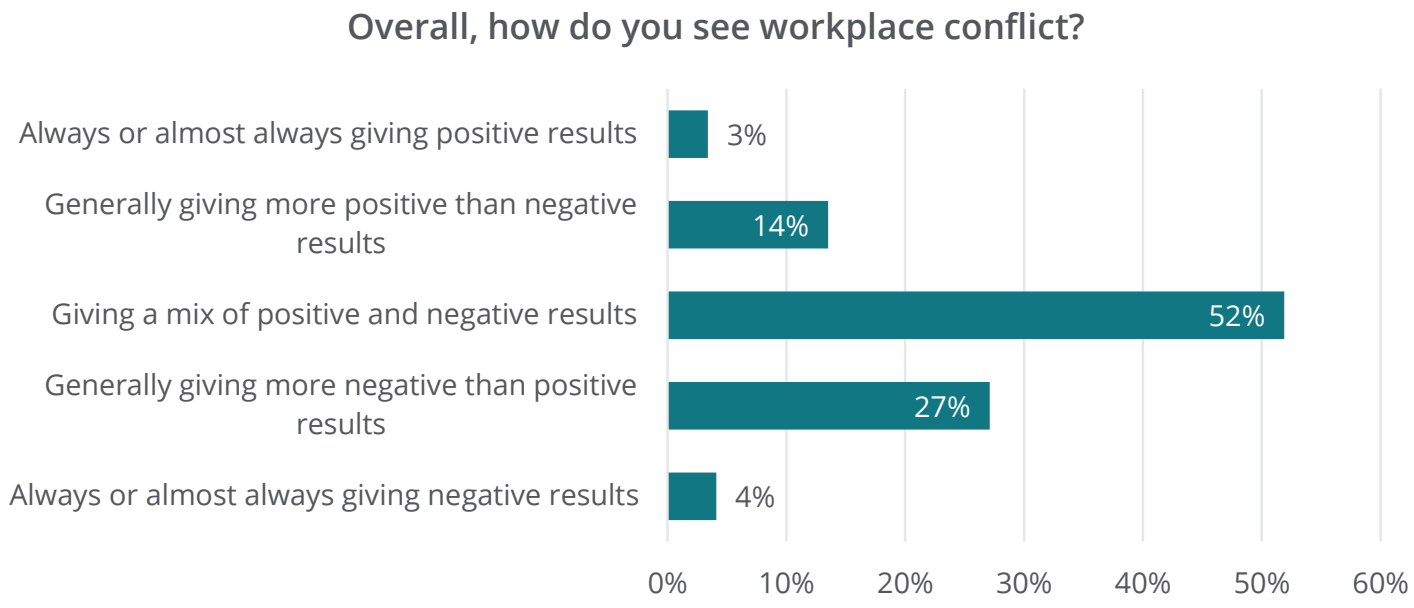
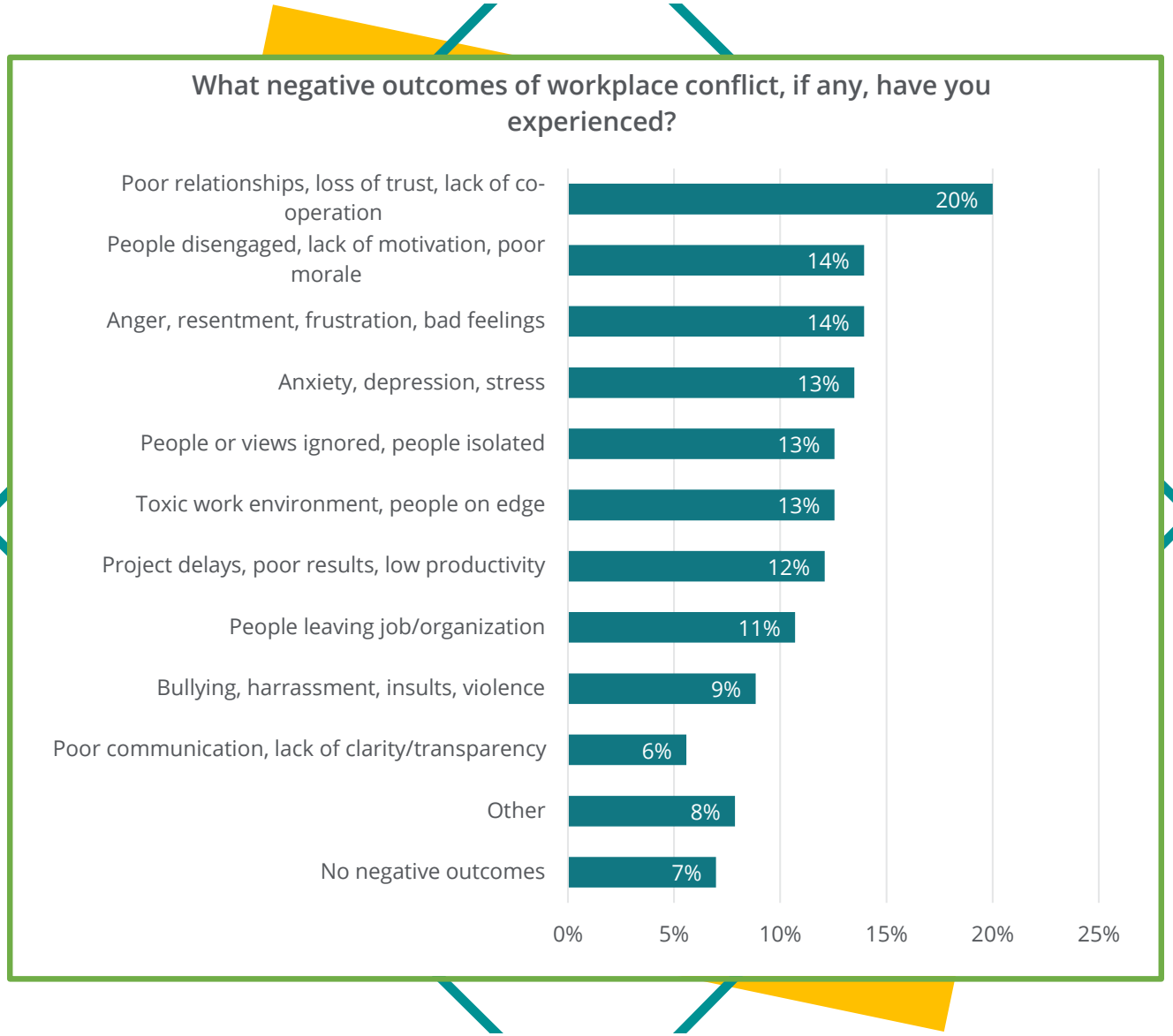
Is conflict positive or negative?

Overall results

Survey respondents were asked how, overall, they saw conflict.



What positive outcomes of workplace conflict, if any, have you experienced?


What negative outcomes of workplace conflict, if any, have you experienced?
Poor relationships, loss of trust, lack of co-operation
20%
People disengaged, lack of motivation, poor morale
14%
Anger, resentment, frustration, bad feelings
14%
Anxiety, depression, stress
13%
People or views ignored, people isolated
13%
Toxic work environment, people on edge
13%
Project delays, poor results, low productivity
12%
People leaving job/organization
11%
Bullying, harrassment, insults, violence
9%
Poor communication, lack of clarity/transparency
6%
Other
8%
No negative outcomes
7%
0%
5%
10%
15%
20%
25%

Impact of Covid / Working Remotely

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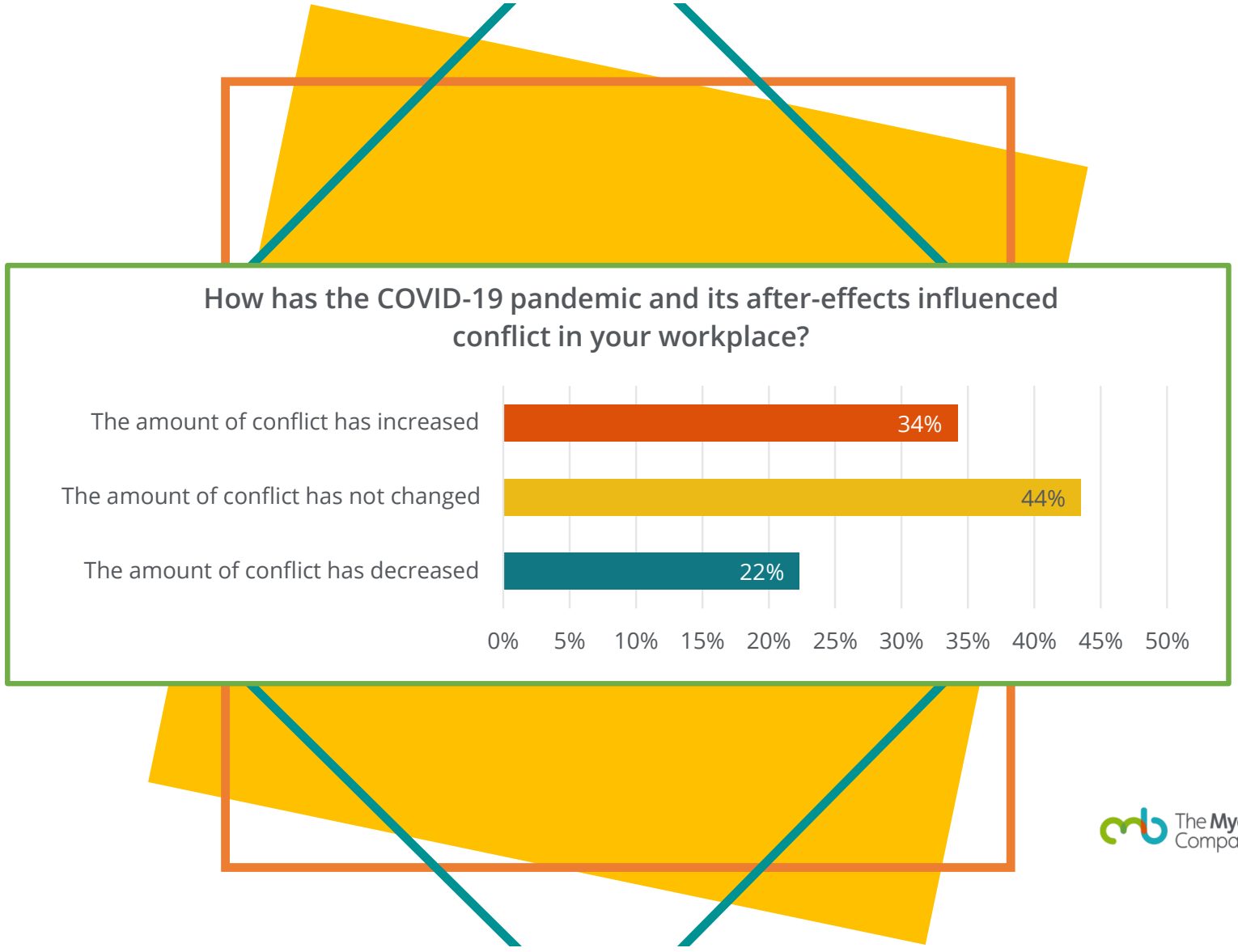

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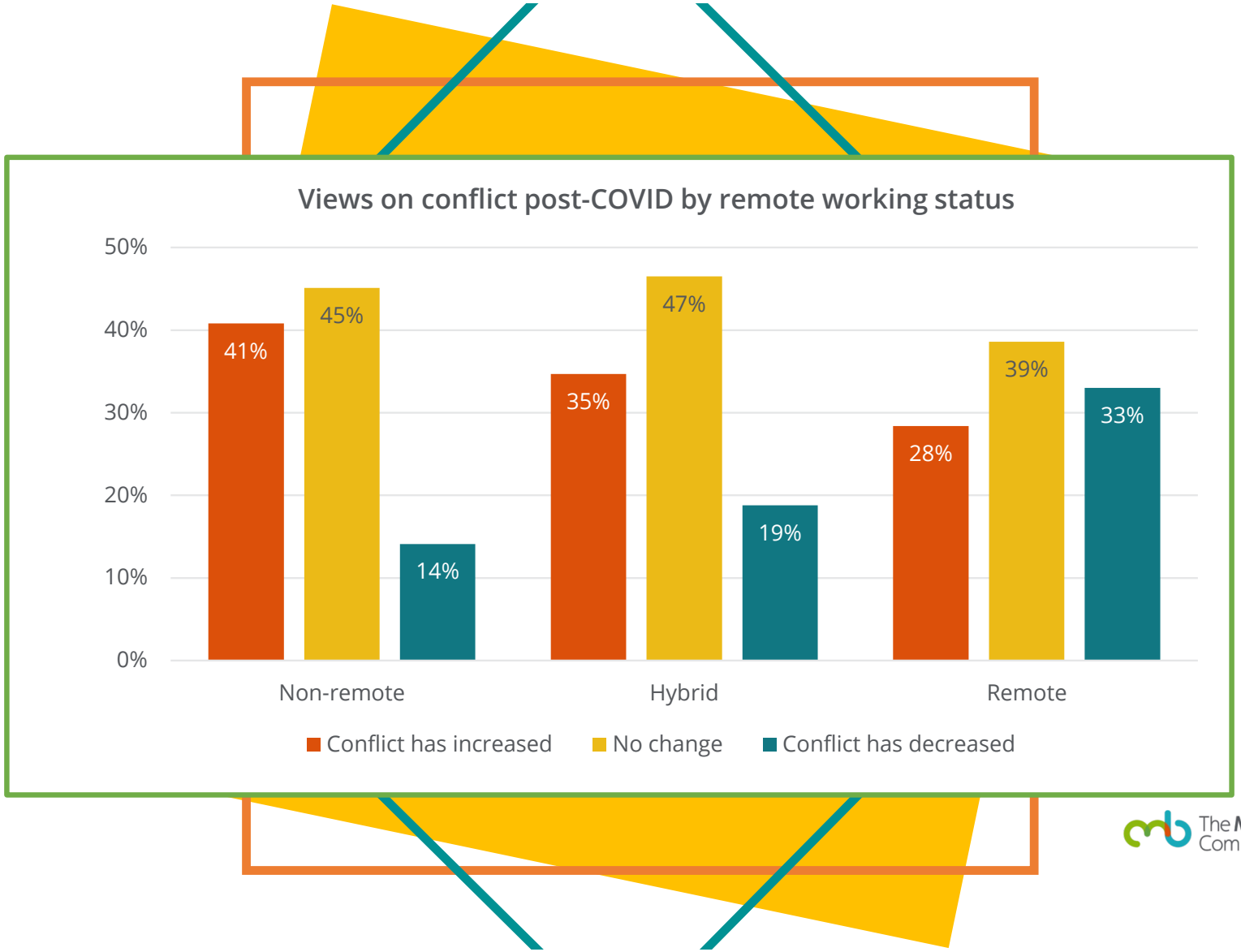

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Cause	Percent of each group mentioning cause		
	Non-remote workers	Hybrid workers	Remote workers
Poor communication	56%	47%	36%
Inadequate resources	13%	30%	24%
Lack of transparency, openness, and honesty	18%	32%	17%
Poor line management	7%	24%	9%
None - there is no conflict in my workplace	10%	2%	12%

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Respondent's remote working status	Who handles conflict most effectively?				
	Remote workers	Hybrid workers	Non-remote workers	No difference	I'm not sure
Remote worker	10%	10%	3%	58%	19%
Hybrid worker	2%	21%	10%	40%	28%
Non-remote worker	7%	8%	17%	38%	30%
Total group	**6%**	**14%**	**10%**	**45%**	**25%**

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Impact of Managers

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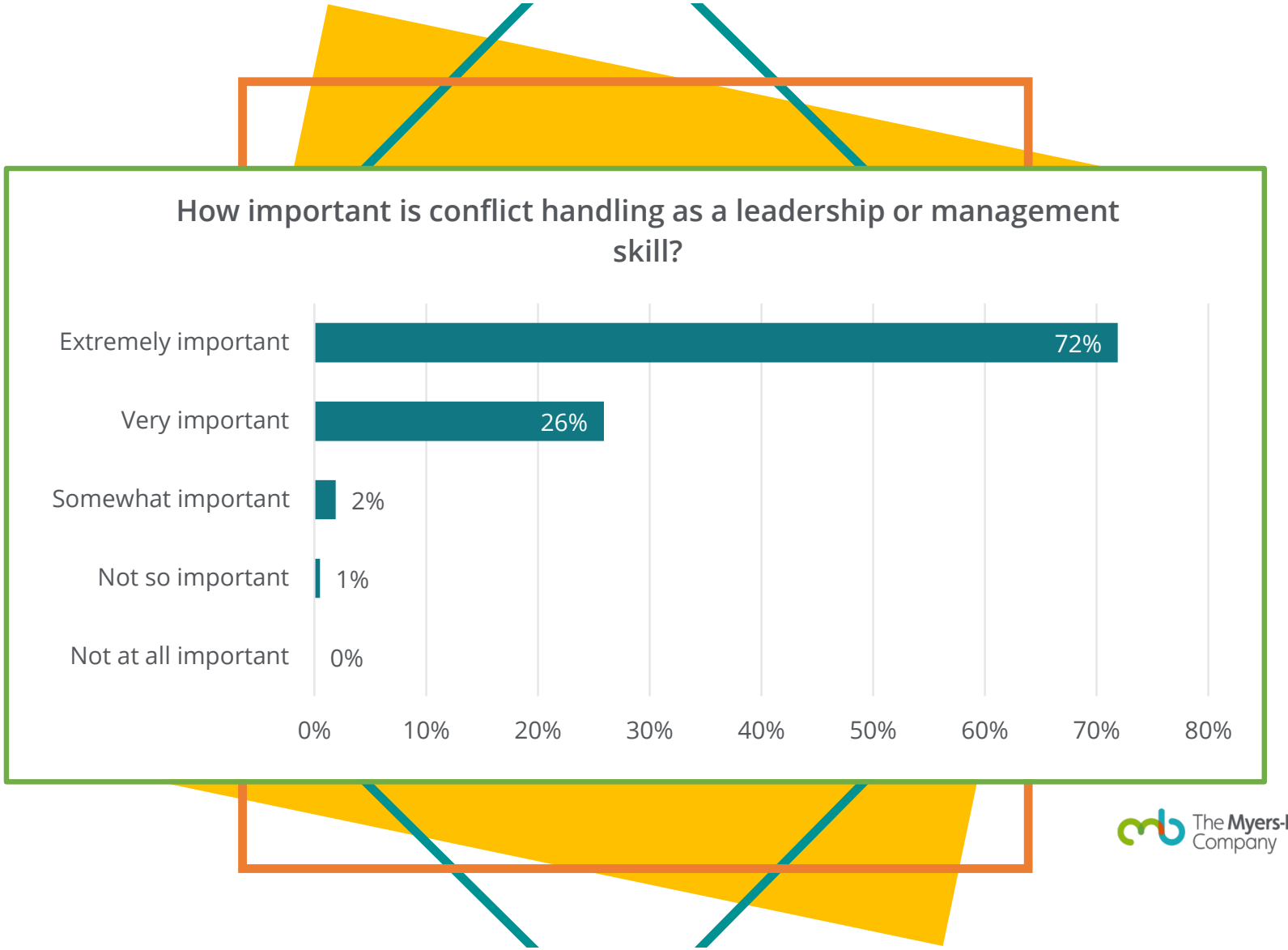

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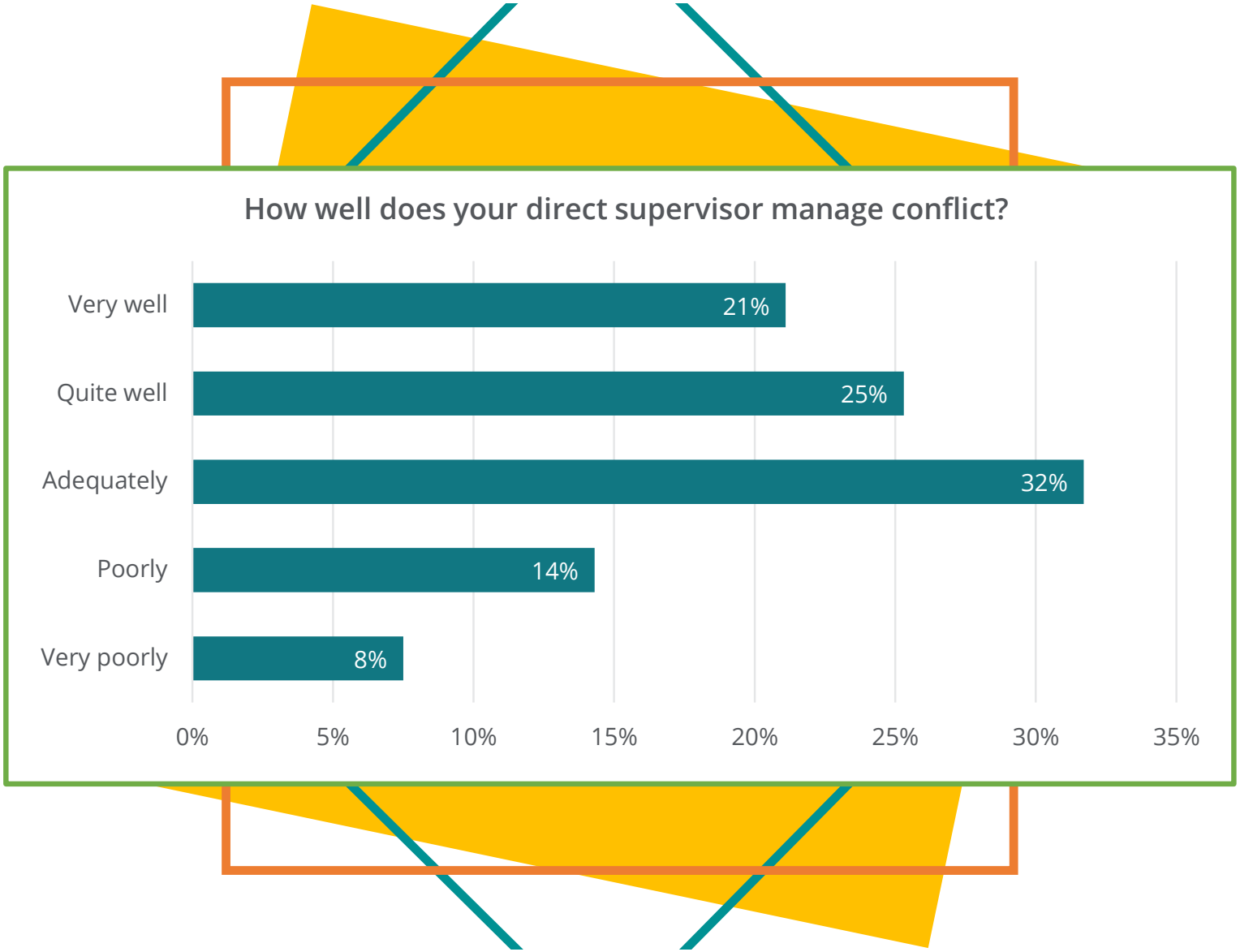
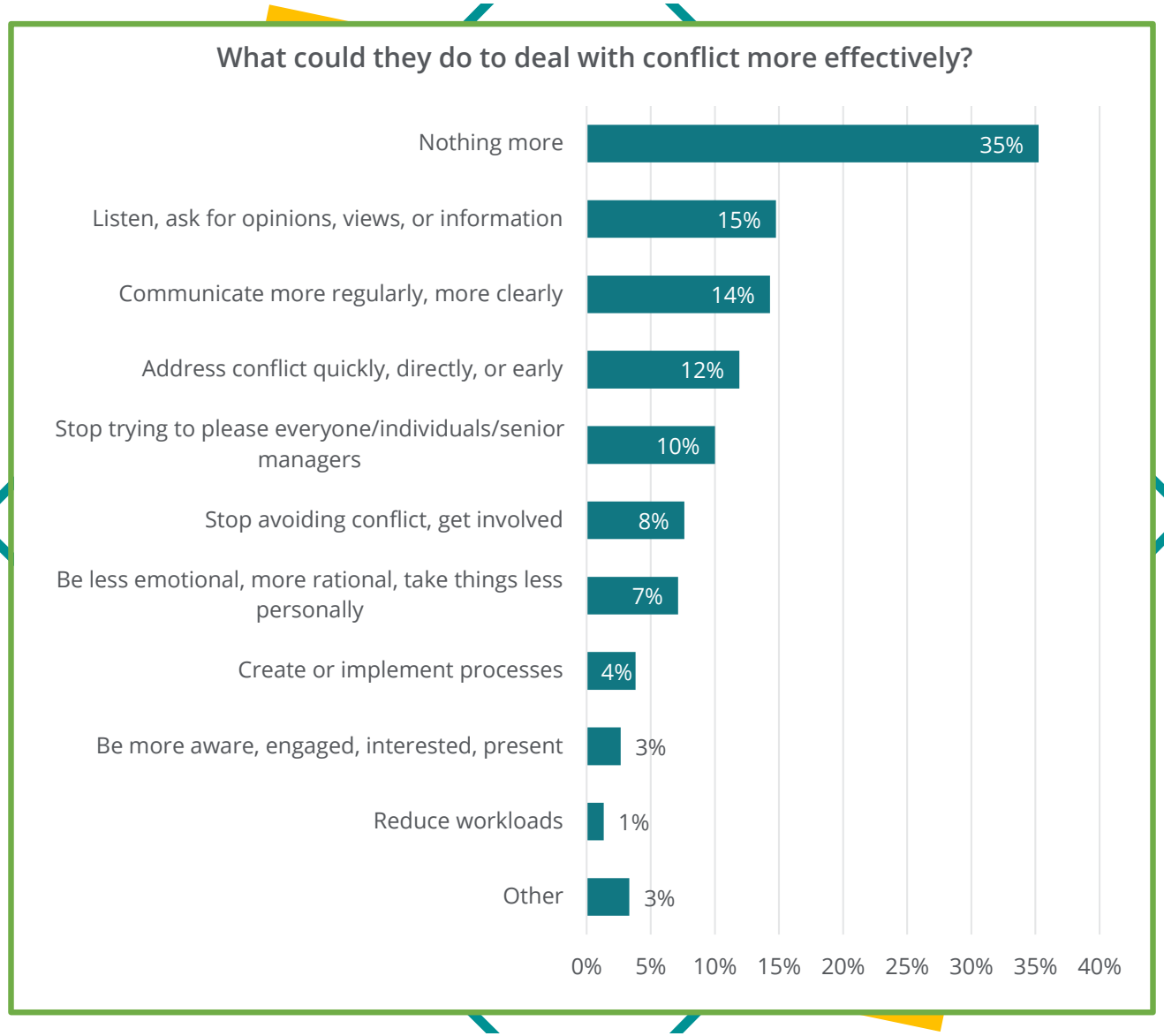

How well does your direct supervisor manage conflict?
Very well
21%
Quite well
25%
Adequately
32%
Poorly
14%
Very poorly
8%
0%
5%
10%
15%
20%
25%
30%
35%


What could they do to deal with conflict more effectively?
Nothing more
35%
Listen, ask for opinions, views, or information
15%
Communicate more regularly, more clearly
14%
Address conflict quickly, directly, or early
12%
Stop trying to please everyone/individuals/senior managers
10%
Stop avoiding conflict, get involved
8%
Be less emotional, more rational, take things less personally
7%
Create or implement processes
4%
Be more aware, engaged, interested, present
3%
Reduce workloads
1%
Other
3%
0%
5%
10%
15%
20%
25%
30%
35%
40%

Job

Satisfaction

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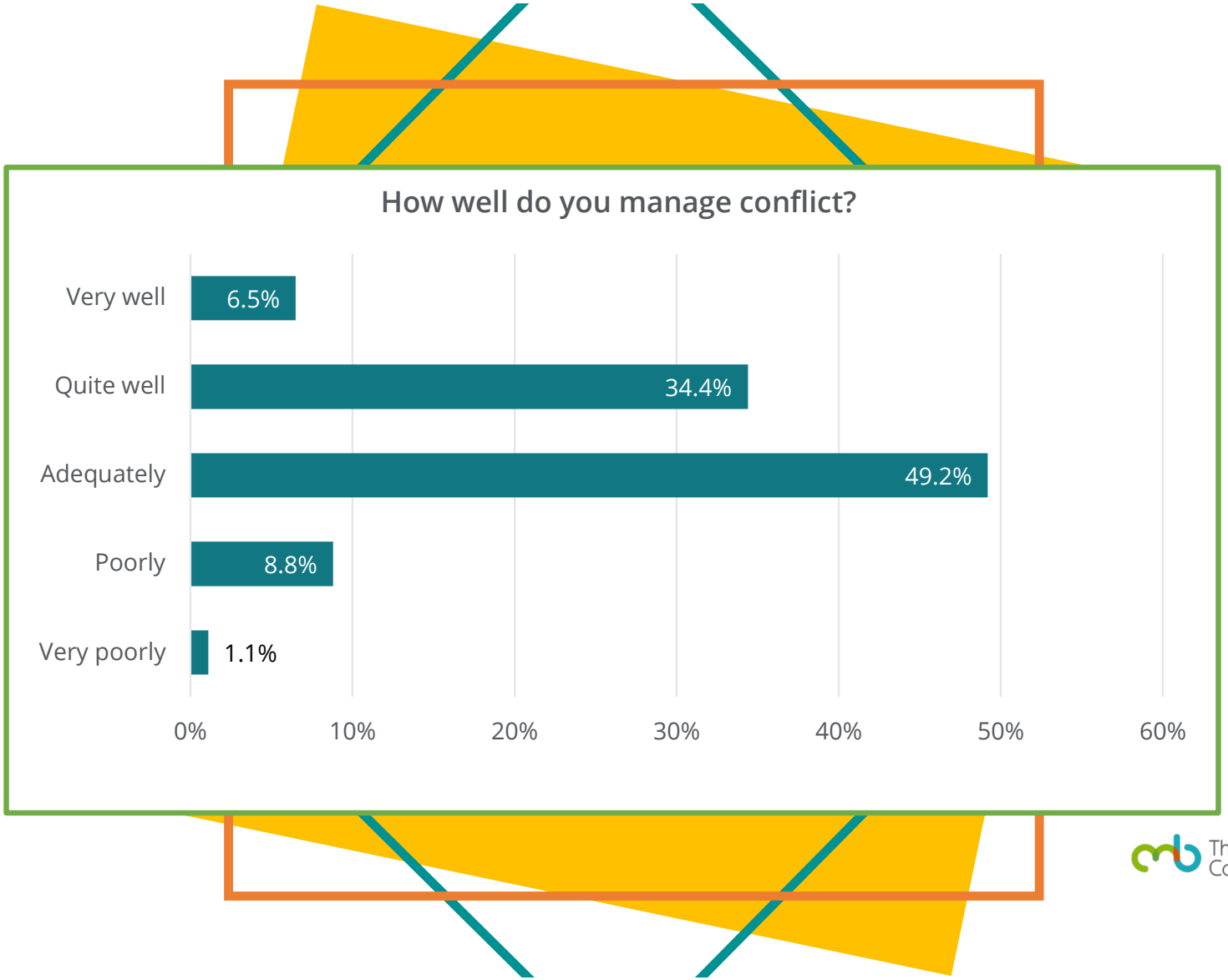

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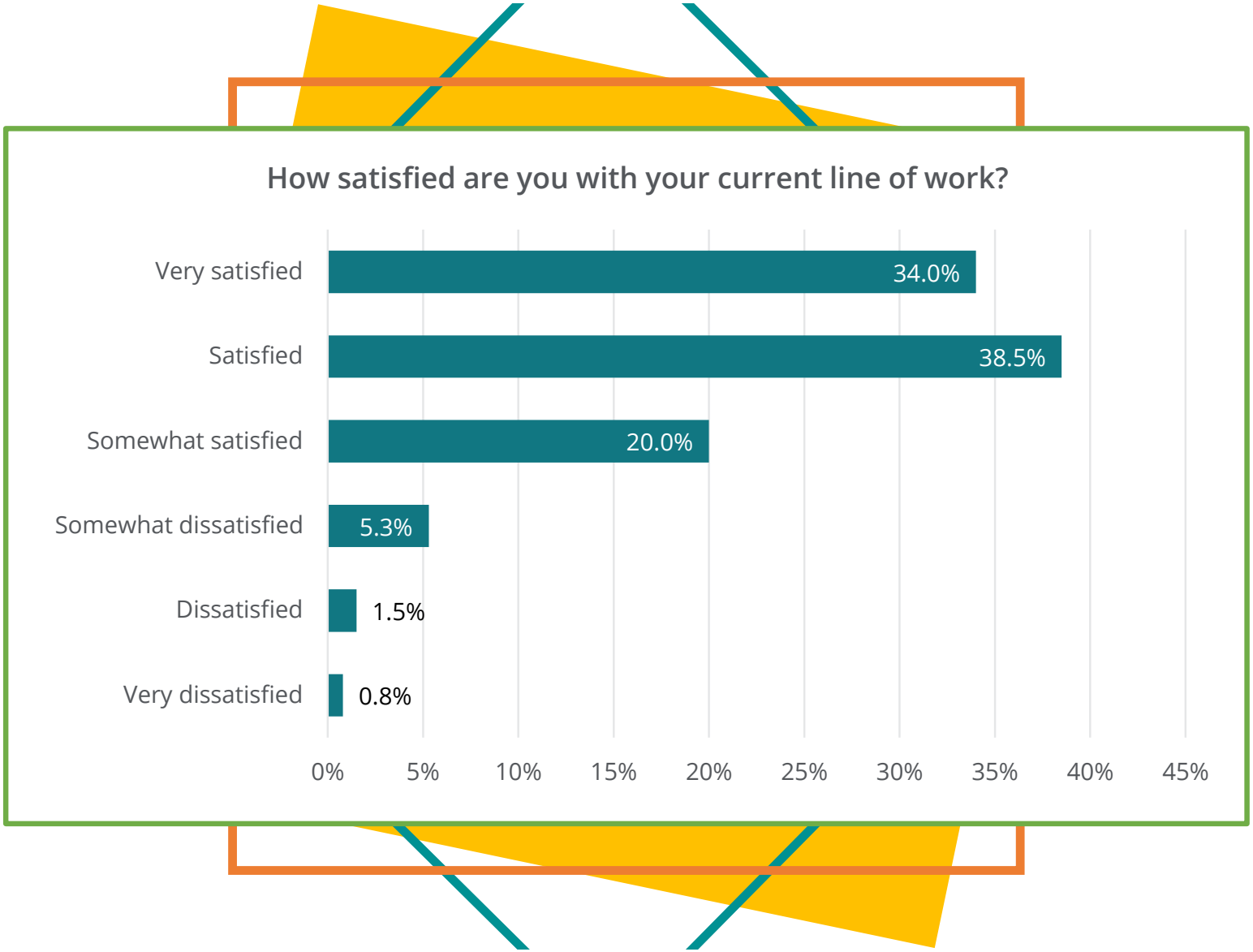
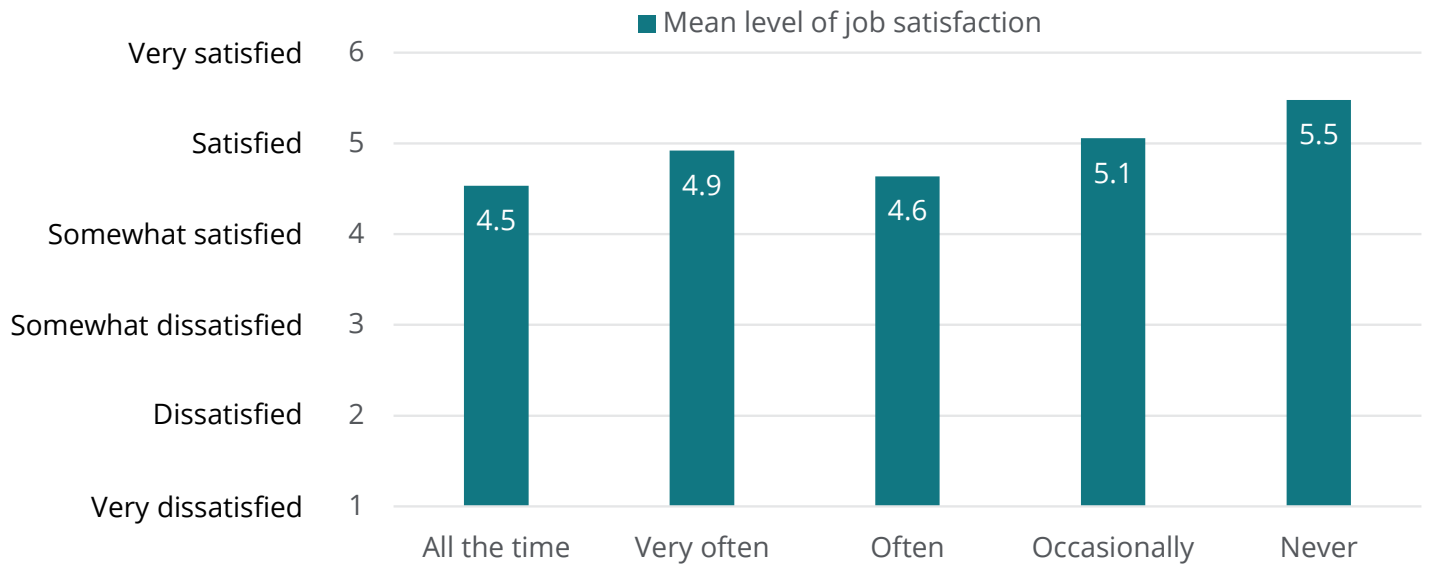

How satisfied are you with your current line of work?
Very satisfied
34.0%
Satisfied
38.5%
Somewhat satisfied
20.0%
Somewhat dissatisfied
5.3%
Dissatisfied
1.5%
Very dissatisfied
0.8%
0%
5%
10%
15%
20%
25%
30%
35%
40%
45%

Job satisfaction and frequency of dealing with conflict



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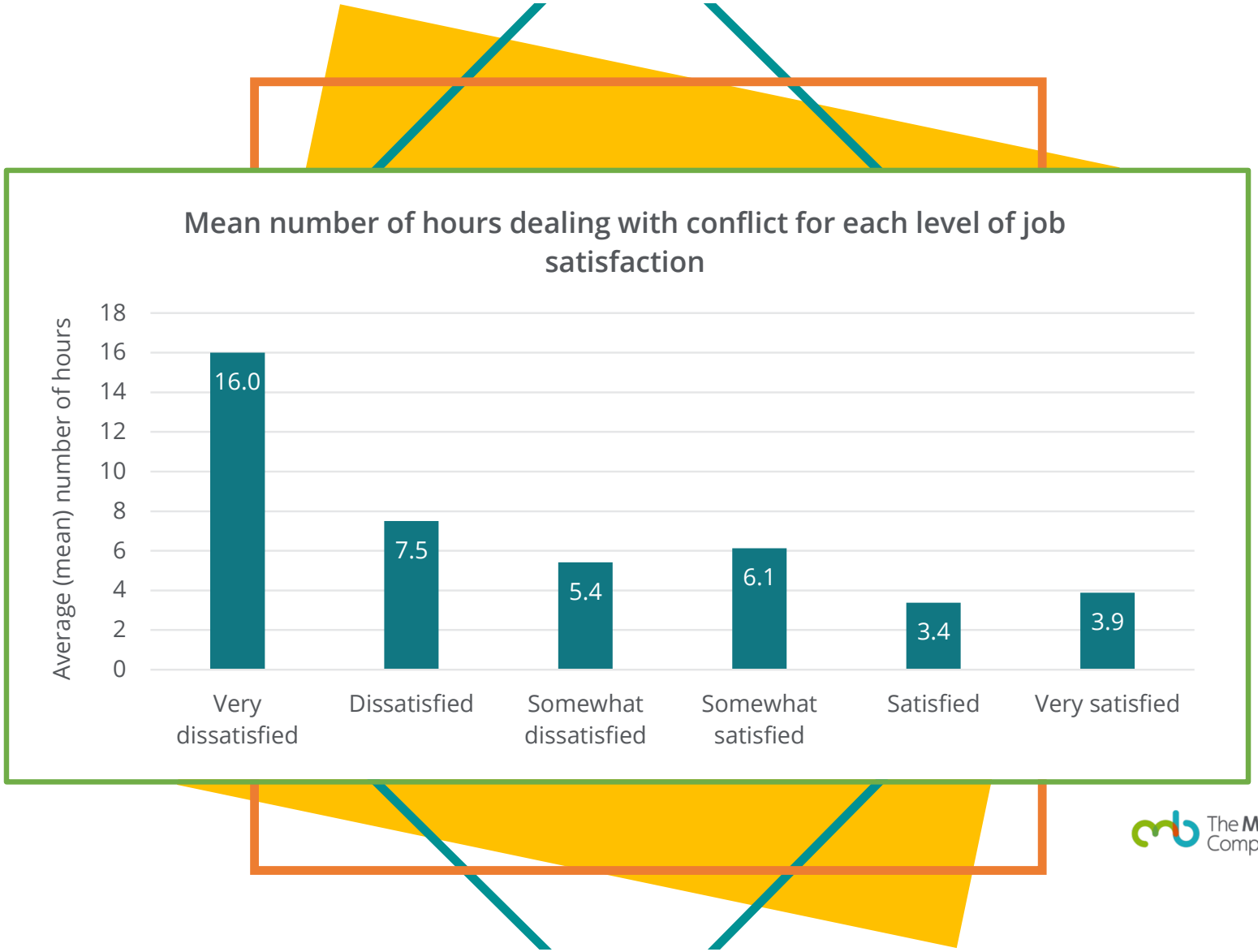

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A CONFLICT MODEL

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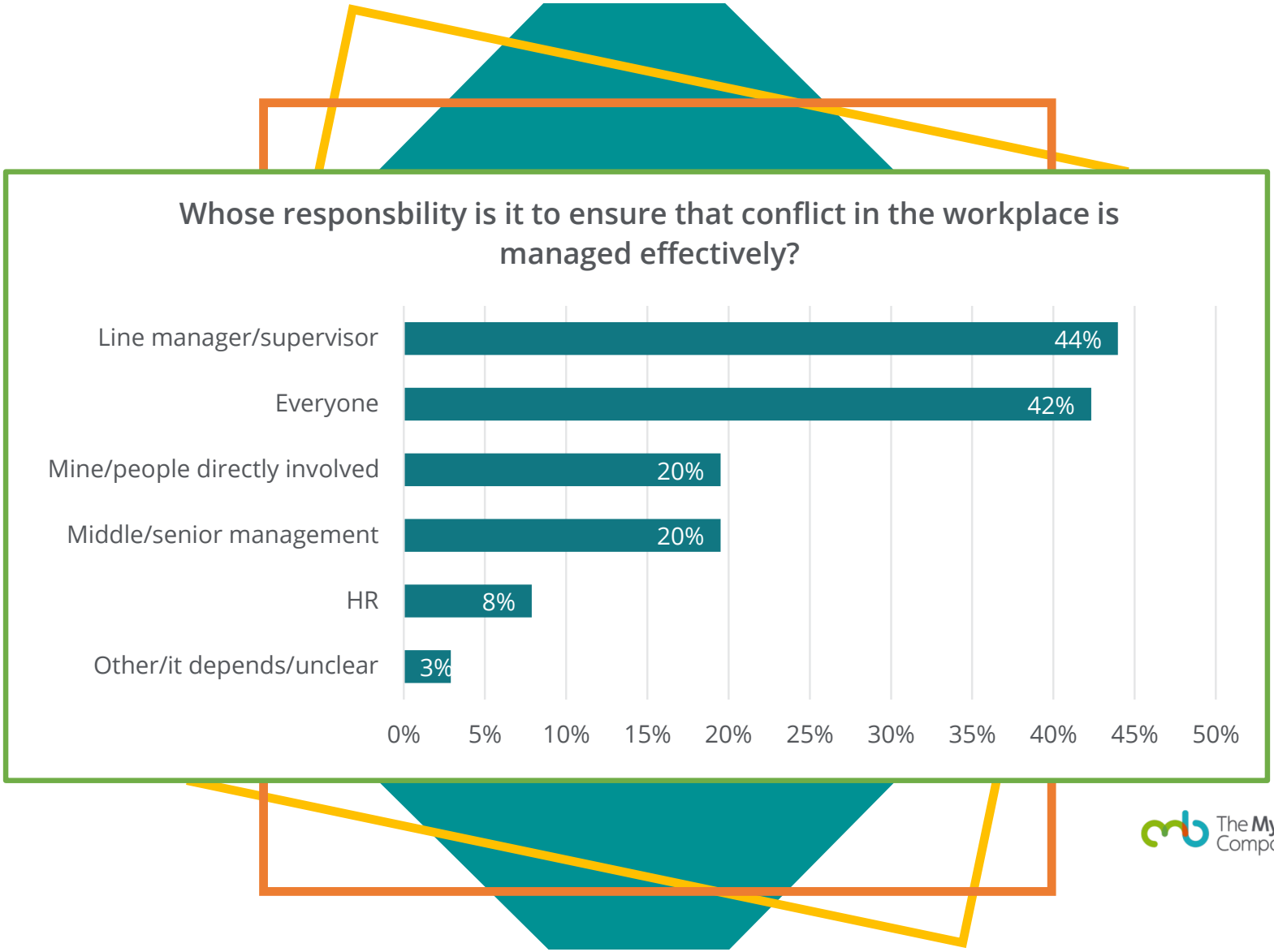

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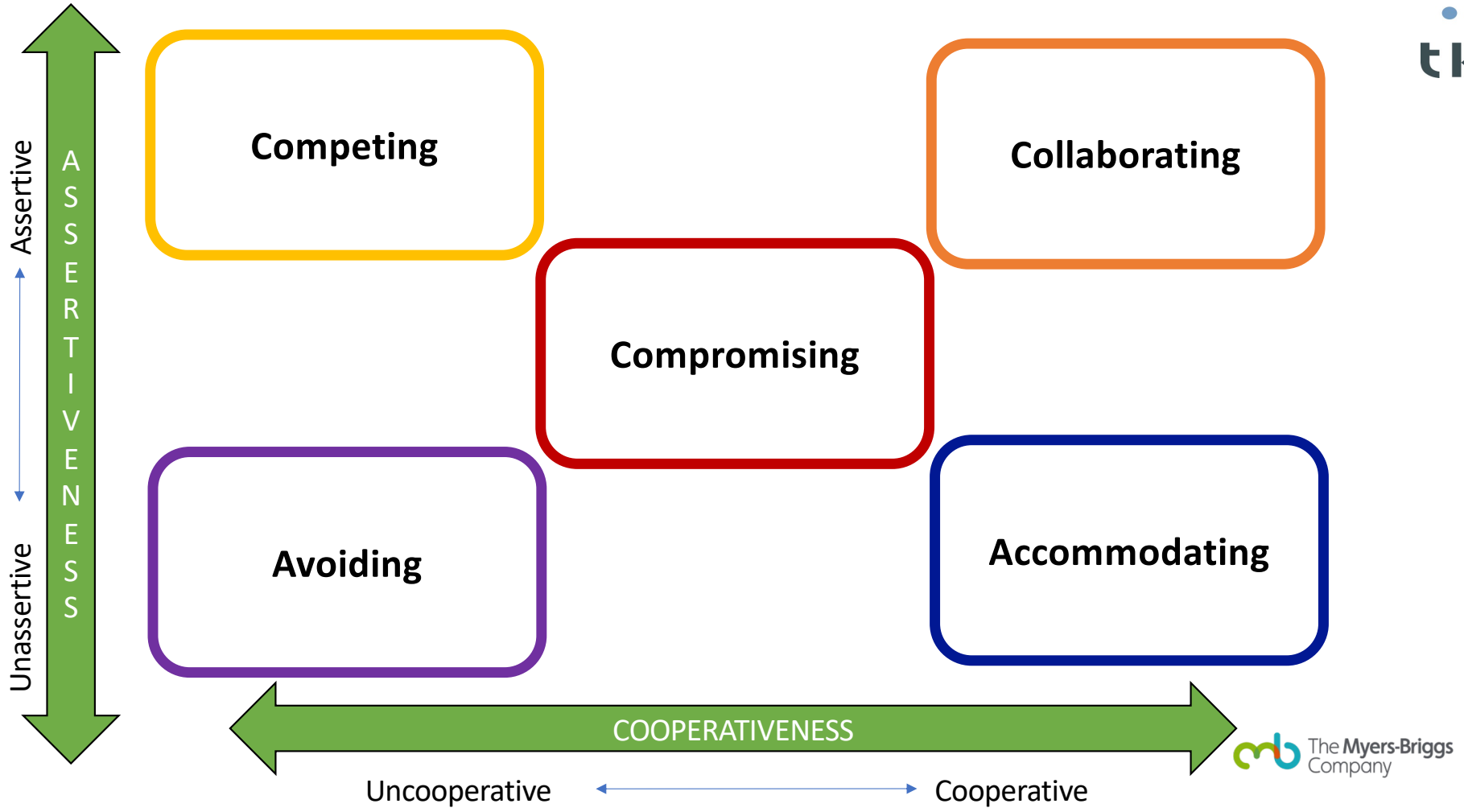
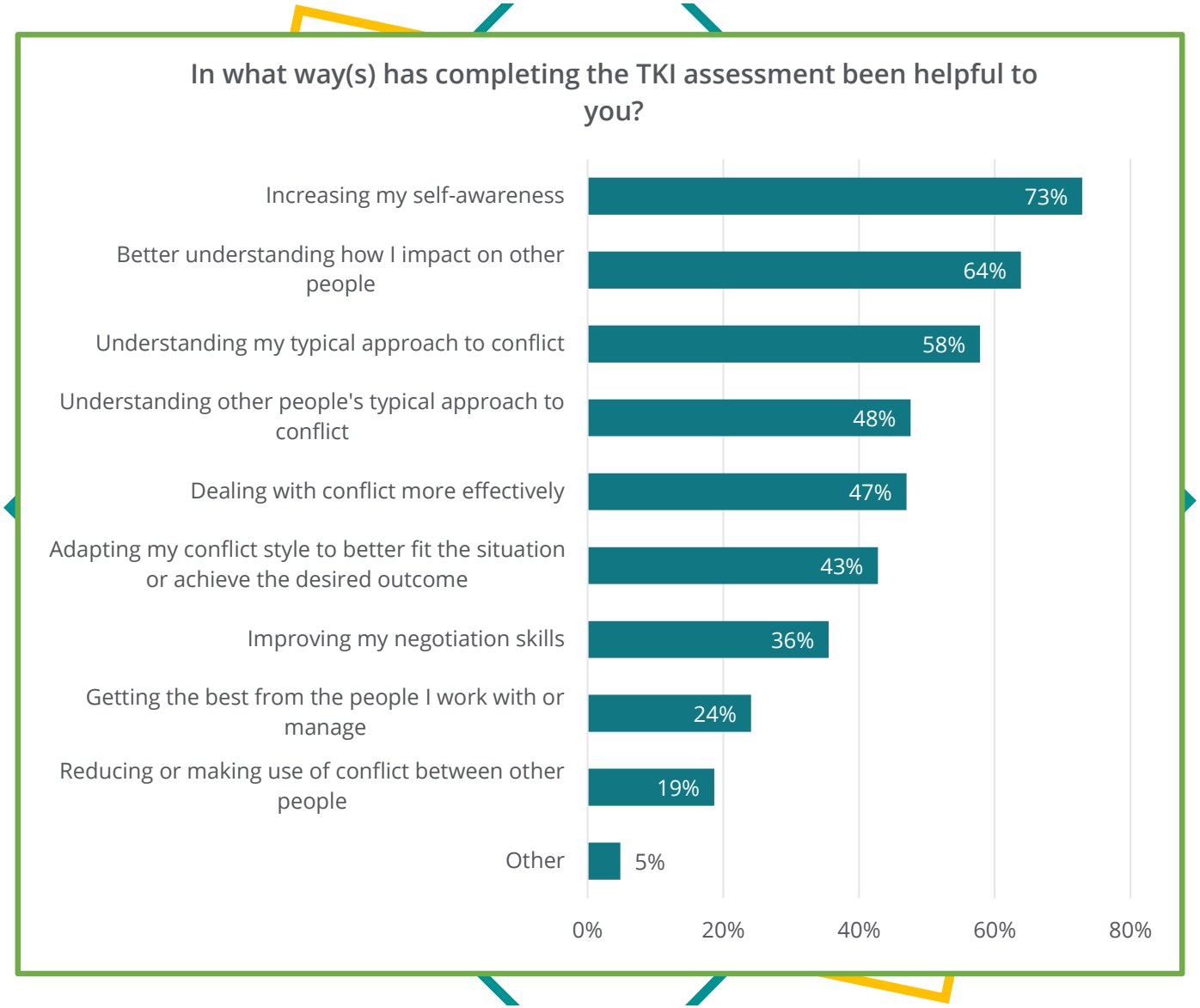


Source: TKI Conflict Workshop Facilitator's Guide PPT, RM-4


In what way(s) has completing the TKI assessment been helpful to you?
Increasing my self-awareness
73%
Better understanding how I impact on other people
64%
Understanding my typical approach to conflict
58%
Understanding other people's typical approach to conflict
48%
Dealing with conflict more effectively
47%
Adapting my conflict style to better fit the situation or achieve the desired outcome
43%
Improving my negotiation skills
36%
Getting the best from the people I work with or manage
24%
Reducing or making use of conflict between other people
19%
Other
5%
0%
20%
40%
60%
80%

COMPETING

Assertive and Uncooperative

Try to satisfy your own concerns at the other person's expense

COLLABORATING

Assertive and Cooperative

Try to find a win-win solution that completely satisfies both people's concerns

COMPROMISING

Intermediate in both Assertiveness and Cooperativeness

Try to find an acceptable settlement that only partially satisfies both people's concerns

AVOIDING

Unassertive and Uncooperative

Sidestep the conflict without trying to satisfy either person's concerns

ACCOMMODATING

Unassertive and Cooperative

Attempt to satisfy the other person's concerns at the expense of your own

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Conflict and Coffee

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The Situation

- You are the supervisor of a department. Your staff has organized a committee to discuss the location of the office coffeemaker and its effect on their productivity.
- The coffeemaker is located just outside your office and on a different floor than the staff work area. The committee feels that the time it takes them to visit the coffeemaker slows down their workflow.
- A representative from the committee comes to you with a proposal to move the coffeemaker from its current location to a location that is central to the staff work area.
- The committee needs your approval to submit a work order for the move.

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Your Response

"I don't agree that the location of the coffeemaker affects productivity."

COMPETING

Assertive and Uncooperative

Try to satisfy your own concerns at the other person's expense

POLL

- Competing
- Collaborating
- Compromising
- Avoiding
- Accommodating

Your Response

"I don't have time to discuss the coffeemaker right now."

AVOIDING

Unassertive and Uncooperative

Sidestep the conflict without trying to satisfy either person's concerns

POLL

- Competing
- Collaborating
- Compromising
- Avoiding
- Accommodating

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Your Response

"Let's see if we can work together to find the best place for the coffeemaker that meets the needs of the team, the executive team, and the clients who visit our office."

COLLABORATING

Assertive and Cooperative

Try to find a win-win solution that completely satisfies both people's concerns

POLL

- Competing
- Collaborating
- Compromising
- Avoiding
- Accommodating

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Your Response

"I can see that this is important to the team. I like it where it is, but let's move it."

ACCOMMODATING

Unassertive and Cooperative

Attempt to satisfy the other person's concerns at the expense of your own

POLL

- Competing
- Collaborating
- Compromising
- Avoiding
- Accommodating

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Your Response

"I'm not sure the new location would work best for the individuals who work near my office. Maybe we could move it to a location halfway between the two workspaces?"

COMPROMISING

Intermediate in both Assertiveness and Cooperativeness

Try to find an acceptable settlement that only partially satisfies both people's concerns

POLL

- Competing
- Collaborating
- Compromising
- Avoiding
- Accommodating

The Conflict Pie

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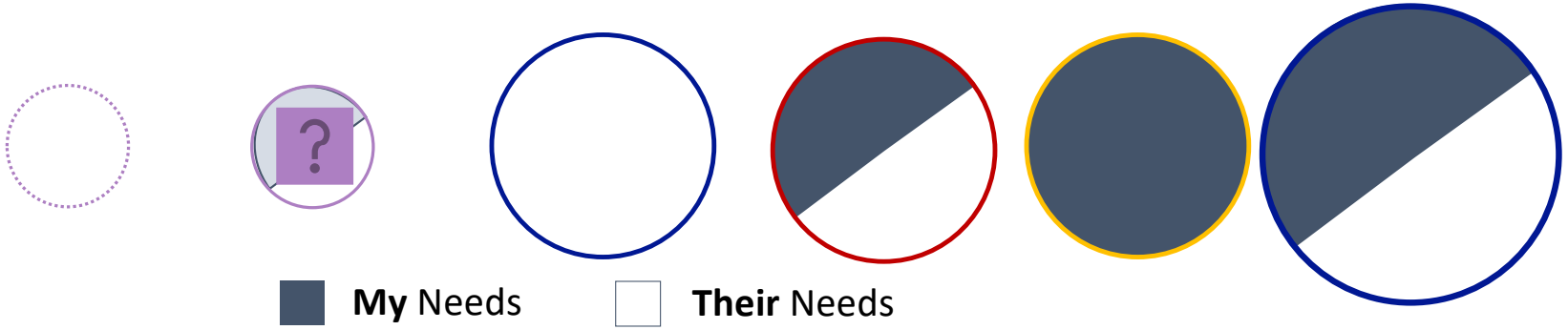
Whose needs get met and to what extent

	Ineffective Avoiding	Effective Avoiding	Accommodating	Compromising	Competing	Collaborating
My needs met?	No	Not yet	No	Partially	Yes	Yes
Their needs met?	No	Not yet	Yes	Partially	No	Yes
Pie						

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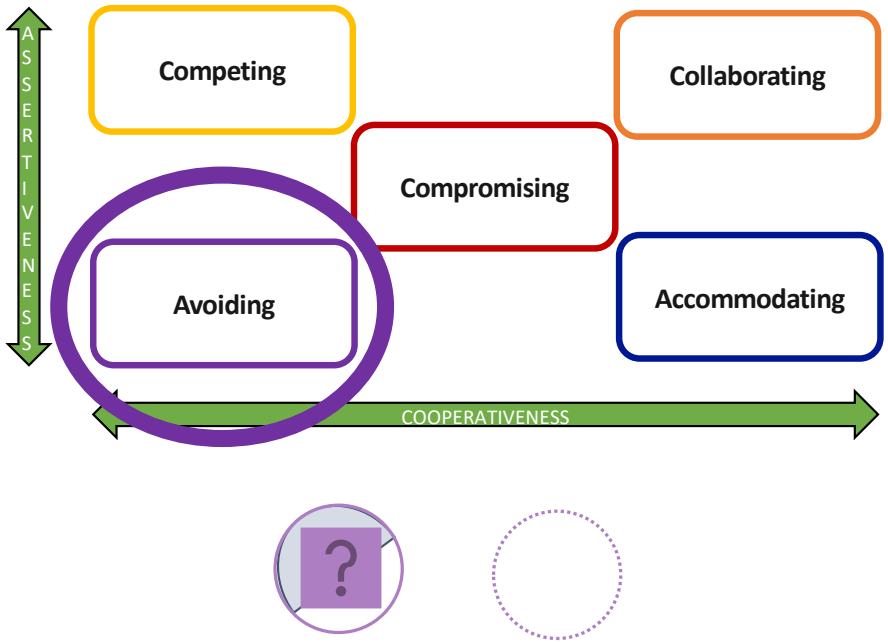
Effective and Ineffective Avoiding

Effective Avoiding

Purposely leave a conflict situation:

- To collect more information
- To wait for tempers to calm down, or
- Because you conclude that what you first thought was a vital issue isn't that important after all



Ineffective Avoiding

- The topic is very important to both you and the other people involved but you aren't comfortable with confronting them
- Sacrifice your own needs and their needs

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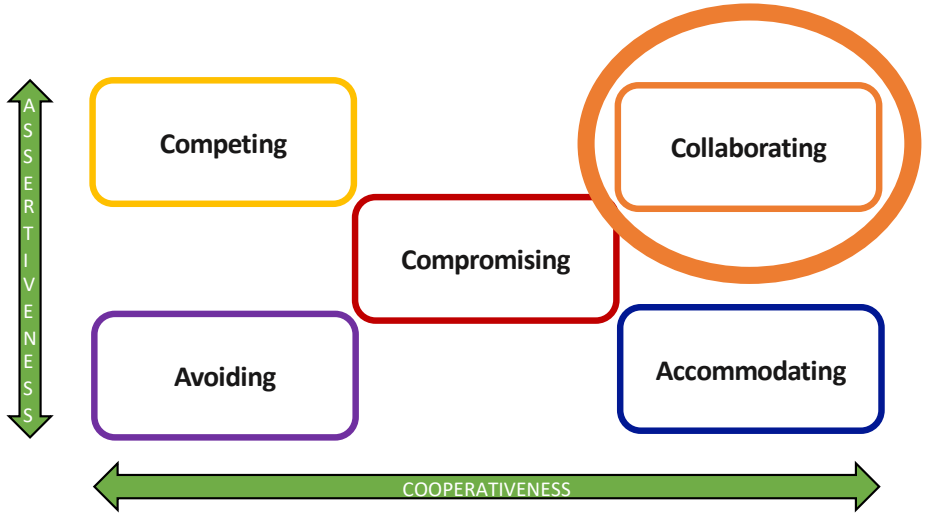
(CPP Author Insights: Celebrating 40 Years with the TKI Assessment, p. 4)

Collaborating



There are more conditions that determine whether the collaborating mode will achieve its potential than with any other mode

- Positive stress level
- Sufficient time available
- Compatibility between people involved
- High trust level
- High level of interpersonal skills

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(CPP Author Insights: Celebrating 40 Years with the TKI Assessment, p. 4)

Competing, Accommodating, and Compromising

Competing

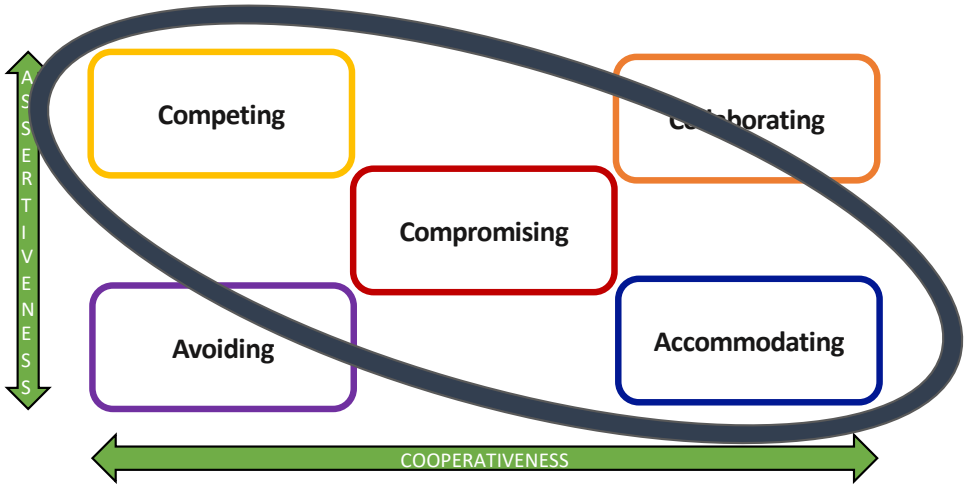
I get my needs met, but you don't get your needs met

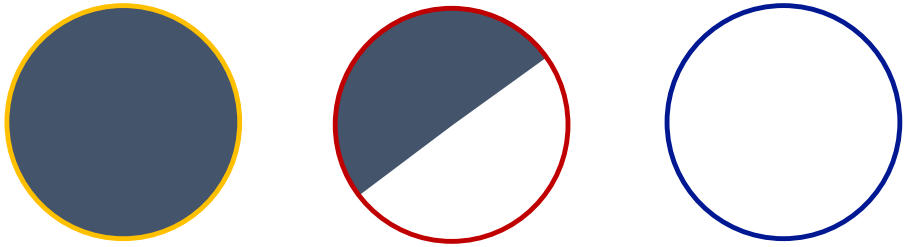
Accommodating

You get your needs met, but I don't get my needs met

Compromising

We each get some of what we want, but not all





(CPP Author Insights: Celebrating 40 Years with the TKI Assessment, p. 5-6)

Commonality:

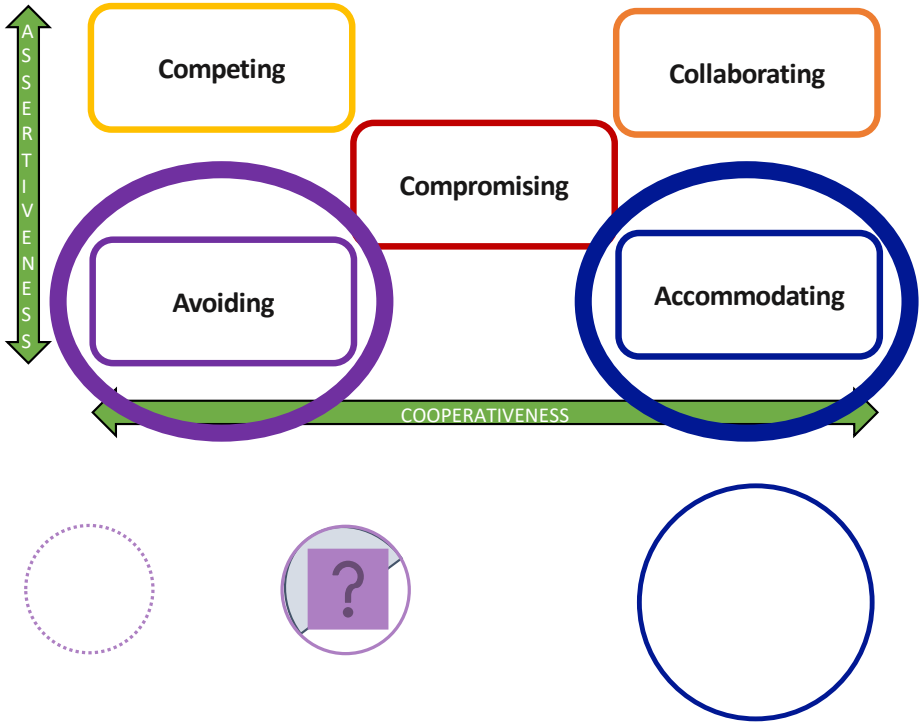
- Zero-sum, win-lose nature
- The more you get, the less I get (and vice versa) since the size of the pie is fixed

Watch for this combination on participant reports: potential to only be able to see life in terms of win-lose, zero-sum terms.

Accommodating and Avoiding

Avoiding

Behave in a way that prevents both people from getting their needs met



Accommodating

Behave in a way that results in the other person gets their needs met and you not getting your needs met

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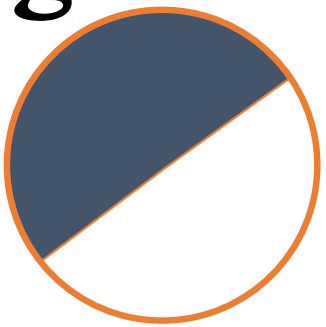
(CPP Author Insights: Celebrating 40 Years with the TKI Assessment, p. 6)

Compromising and Collaborating

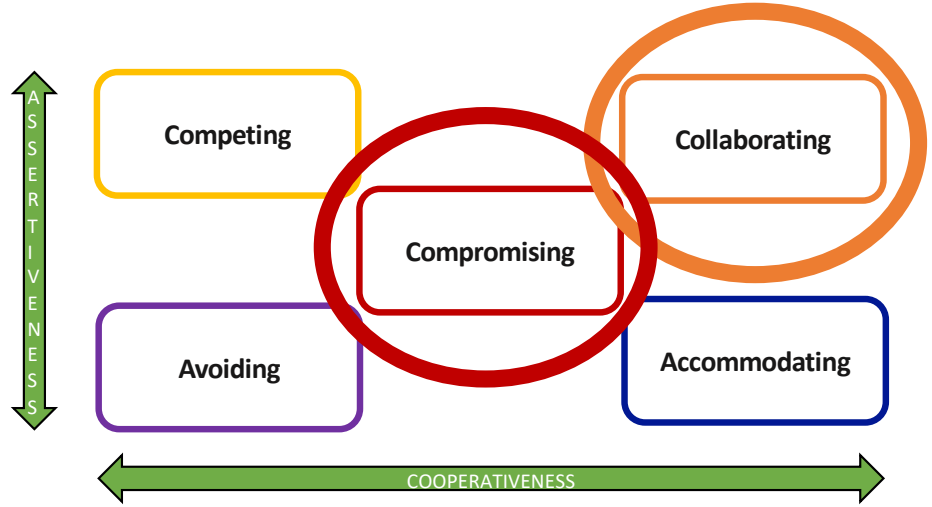


Collaborating

Both people get their needs met

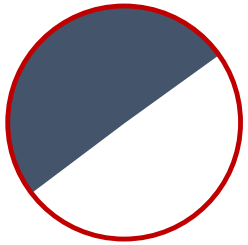
How???

Make the conflict more complex in order to expand the size of the pie



Compromising

Each person gets their needs met partially but not fully



(CPP Author Insights: Celebrating 40 Years with the TKI Assessment, p. 7)

Conflict and Teams

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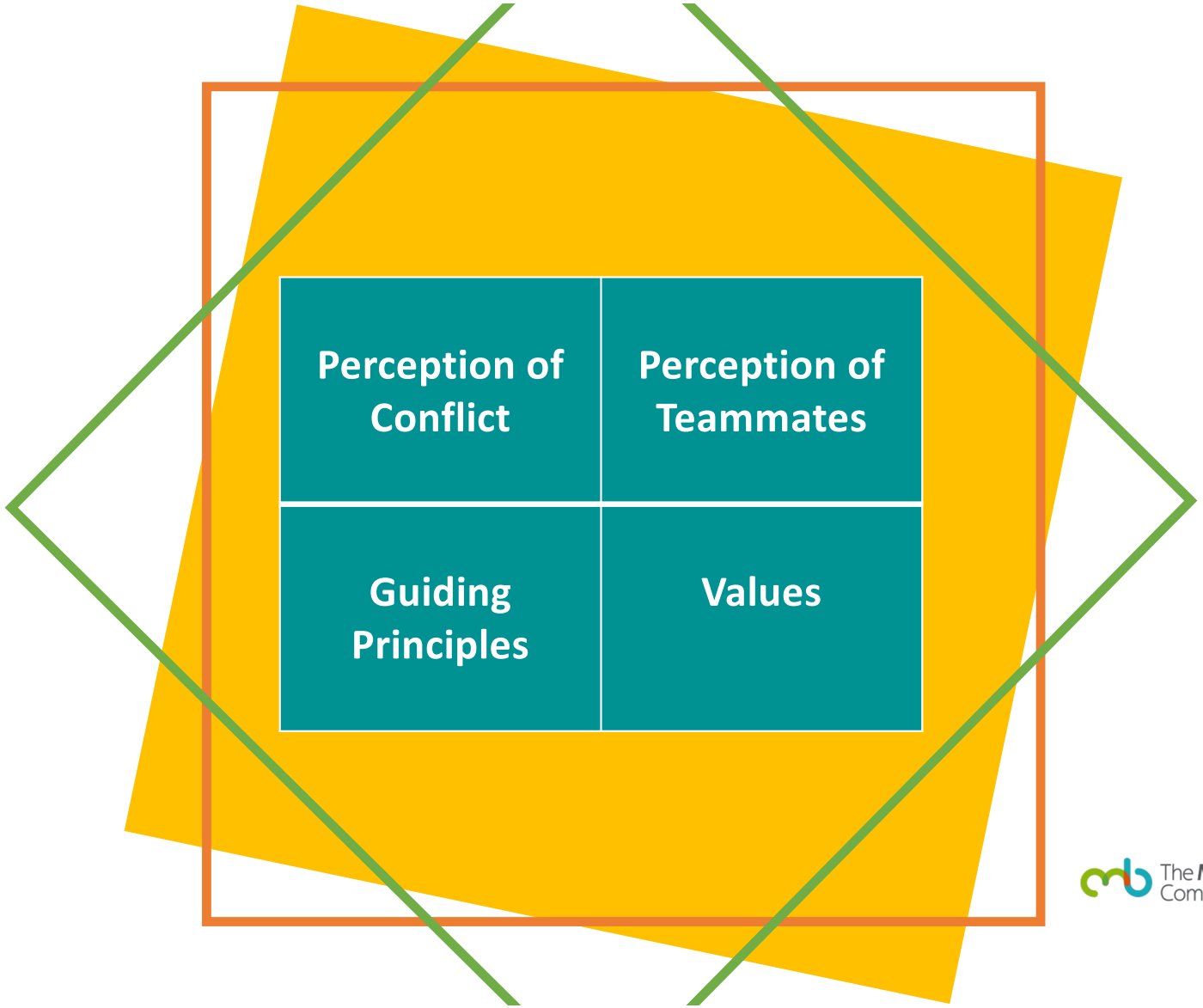
Each conflict style has its own:



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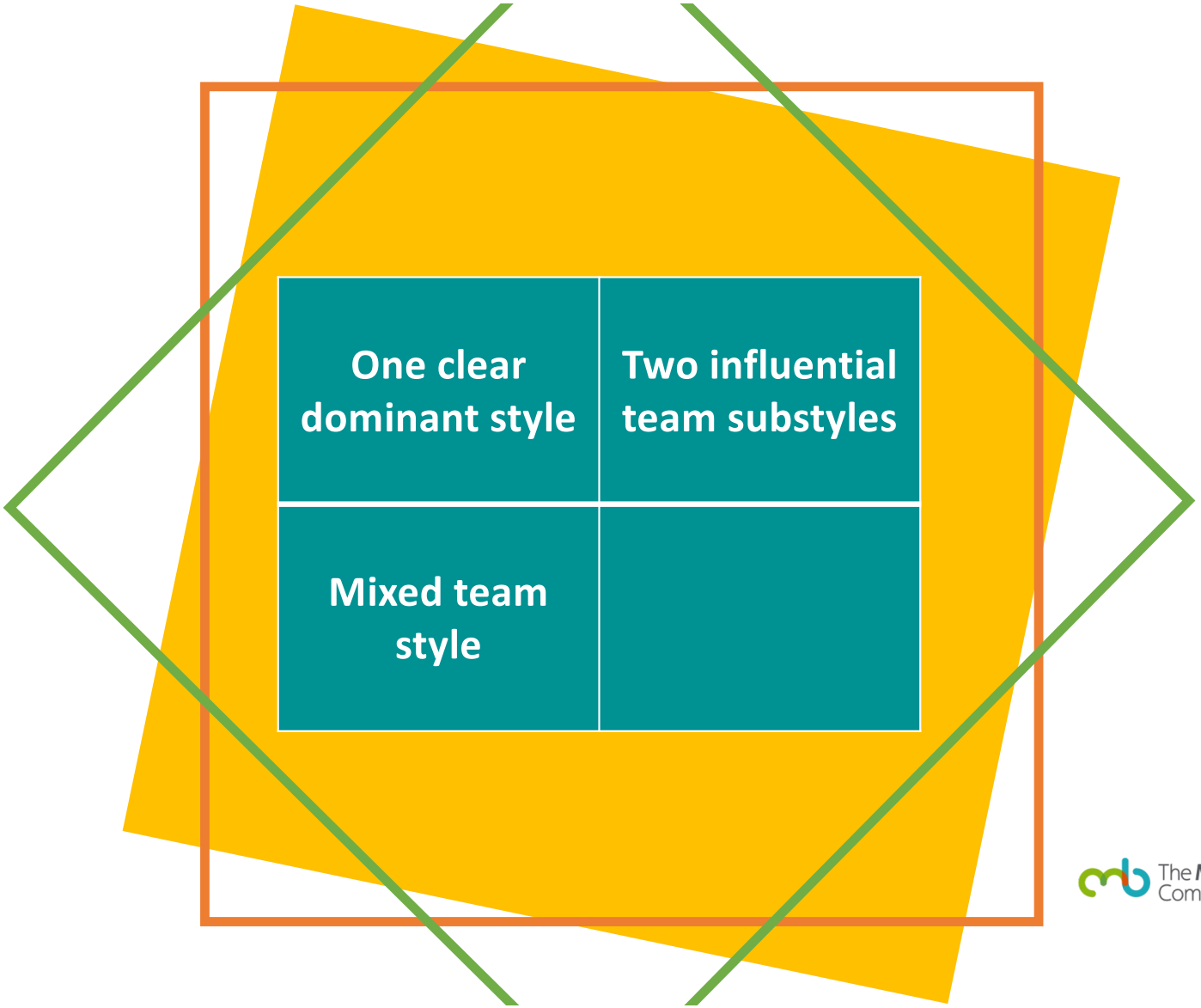
Each team has its own dominant conflict style:



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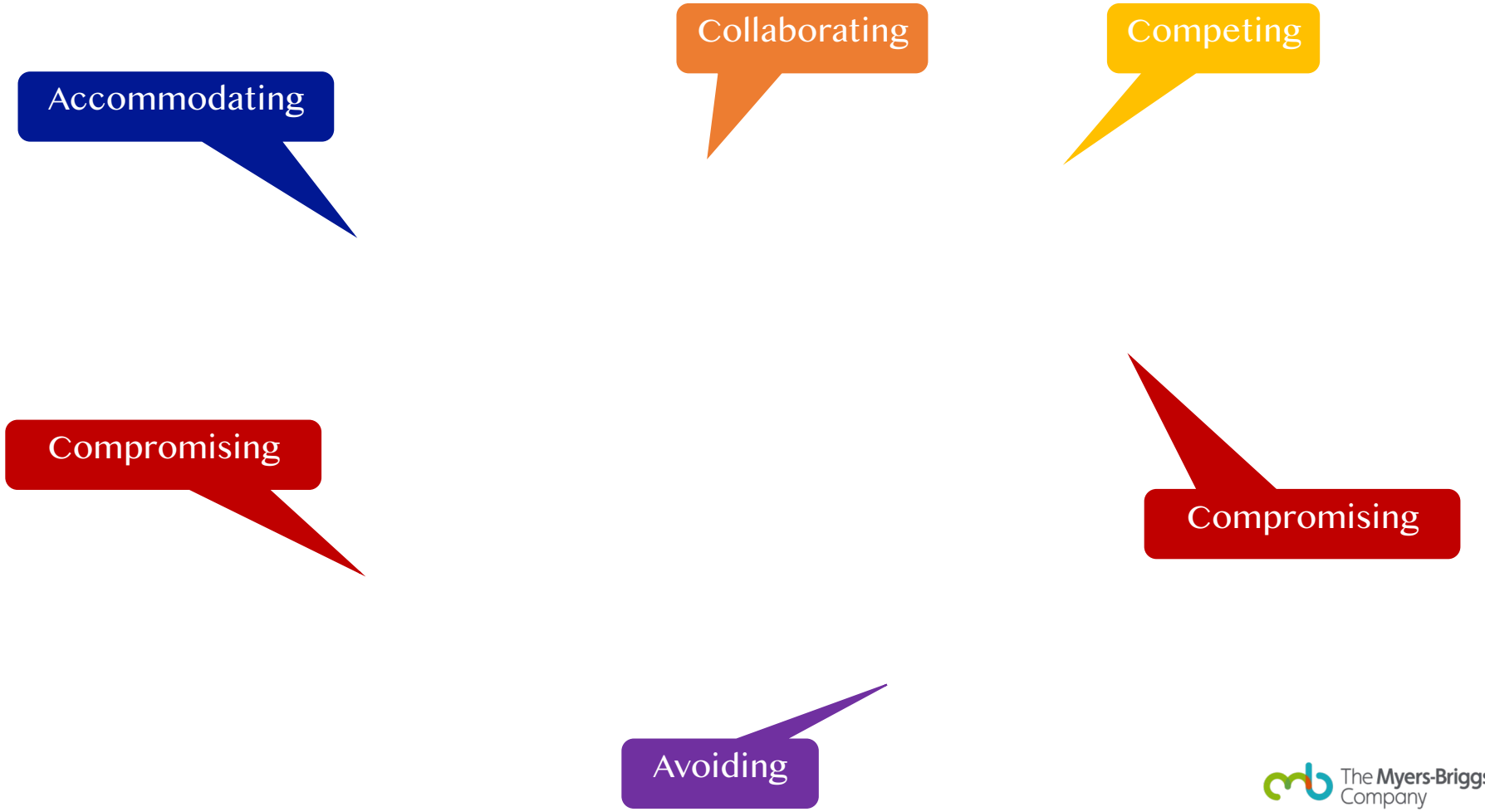
Accommodating
Collaborating
Competing
Compromising
Compromising
Avoiding
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RECOMMENDATIONS

Dealing with conflict takes time. This is expensive for organizations and can have a negative effect on individuals, so any actions that can be taken to better understand conflict, manage it more effectively, or resolve it more efficiently are likely to pay dividends.

In particular, It may be useful to review the three most common causes of conflict:

- Poor communication,
- Lack of role clarity, and
- Heavy workloads.

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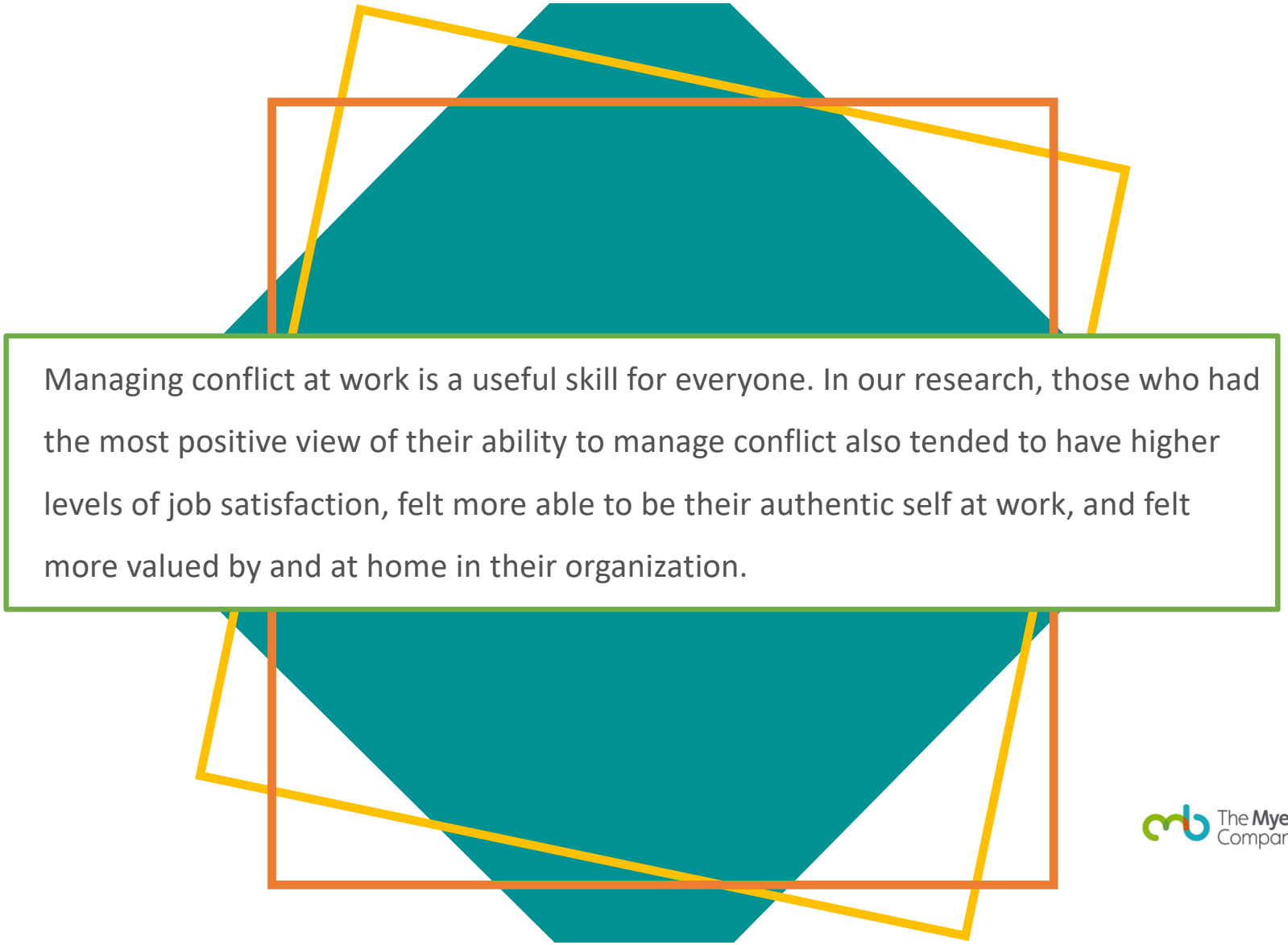

Managing conflict at work is a useful skill for everyone. In our research, those who had the most positive view of their ability to manage conflict also tended to have higher levels of job satisfaction, felt more able to be their authentic self at work, and felt more valued by and at home in their organization.

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Training in how to handle conflict may be useful for all workers. Resolving any issues around lack or role clarity or team dysfunction should also have a positive effect on individuals' views of how well they can manage conflict.

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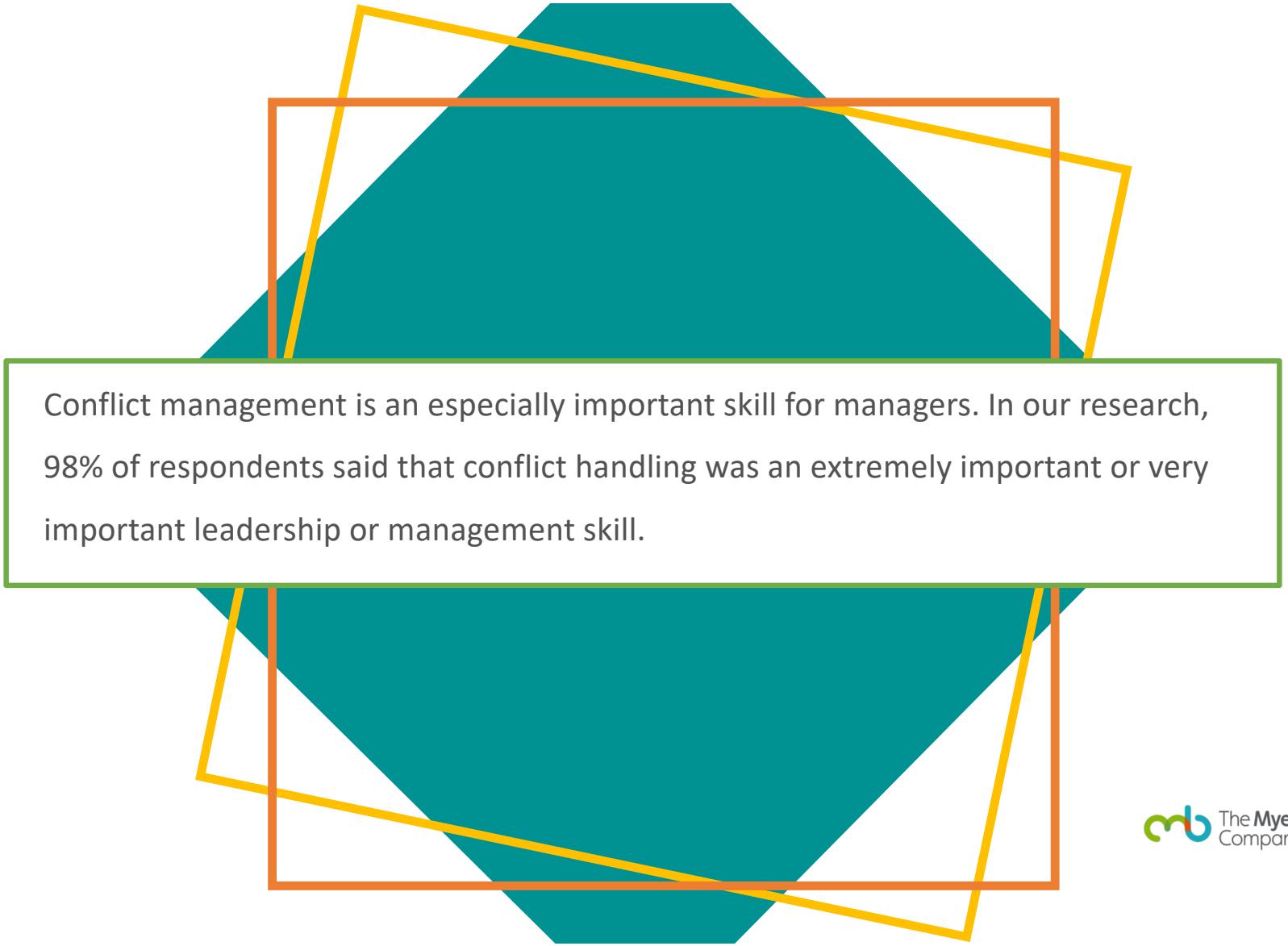

Conflict management is an especially important skill for managers. In our research, 98% of respondents said that conflict handling was an extremely important or very important leadership or management skill.

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Though conflict is often seen negatively, it can result in very positive outcomes.

However, those who see conflict in a more negative way are likely to feel less satisfied with their job and to feel that they handle conflict less well, while also feeling personally responsible for dealing with it. For these individuals, it will be important to point out some of the positive outcomes of conflict and what it can achieve.

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The most frequently mentioned outcomes of conflict were concerned with changes in relationships:

Positive (building relationships and increasing collaboration and cooperation), and

Negative (poorer relationships, loss of trust, breakdown of relationships, lack of co-operation and collaboration).

This points out the importance of understanding other people's approaches to conflict as a key aspect of any conflict training.

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Thank You!

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