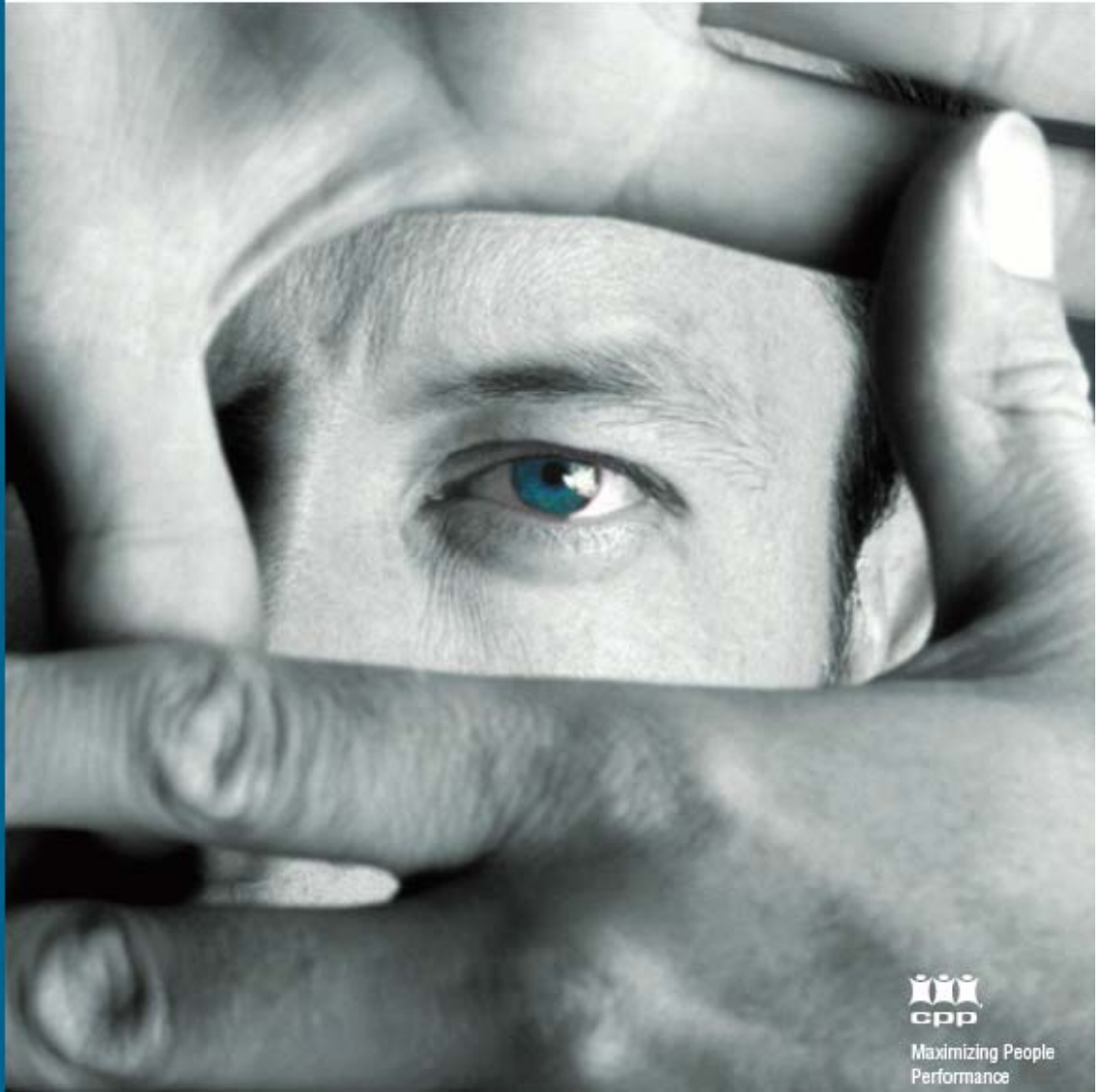


# WORKPLACE CONFLICT AND HOW BUSINESSES CAN HARNESS IT TO THRIVE



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## FOREWORD

by Jeff Hayes, CEO, CPP, Inc.

In our culture, we reflexively tend to think of the term “conflict” in the negative. When we discuss conflict in the business world, we speak of it (often unwittingly) as a diminishing force on productivity, an ill that only compounds the difficulties of a job, and an element that needs expunging if companies are to achieve their goals. Normally seen as the byproduct of a “squeaky wheel” rather than a natural derivative of business itself, conflict is a force that causes short-term anxieties, and many view “fixing” ongoing conflict as synonymous with “eliminating” it.

CPP, Inc. commissioned this research in partnership with OPP, Ltd. in Europe and Fellipelli in Brazil, to shed light on the nature of workplace conflict – defined for the purposes of this study as any workplace disagreement that disrupts the flow of work. Studying workers in nine countries, our goal was to examine how different cultures view conflict; the ways they react to it, its short- and long-term impact on individual and company performance; and what (if any) correlations can be drawn between reactions and results both positive and negative.

The study confirmed our long-held assertion that the aforementioned perceptions of conflict can be too dogmatic and that understanding conflict requires a more nuanced approach. Indeed, ineffectively managed conflict is costing businesses millions of dollars per year. Yet conflict has a bounty of positive potential, which if harnessed correctly, can stimulate progress in ways harmony often cannot. Ultimately, we found it would be prudent for members of the workforce to rethink conflict’s role in the workplace and the many assumptions made pertaining to it.



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