

PROFILE

MARTIN KNOPF



MEDIATOR, PROJECT MANAGER, EXPERT FOR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

After graduating from the commercial academy, I wanted to explore the many facets of human existence, inspired by a voluntary activity in an asylum hostel, which is why I decided to study cultural and social anthropology, as well as religious studies. After three years of interesting courses and a study trip to Togo and Benin, the longing for an activity that "creates" something grew again and so I changed my major and studied civil engineering with a focus on handling large international construction projects. Always a jack-of-all-trades, I wanted to gain professional experience while still studying. So I started working for a construction company, first as an unskilled worker, and later advanced to construction technician. In construction, I was then allowed to make it to group leader, which is why I not only have experience in leading project teams, but also employees. After about 10 years on the construction side, I switched to project management on the client side. Now working as a project controller, accompanying monitoring and in project development, I contribute my knowledge from execution to the success of large complex construction projects. However, what is hardly mentioned in my studies and rarely trained in practice is an essential competence that is important not only for a project manager but for successful cooperation in general - the competence of efficient conflict management.

Already in my first professional stations, still as a supervisor in an asylum home and as a youth coach of a rowing team, I had to realise that big conflicts often arise from small misunderstandings that build up over time and emotions. The construction industry in particular, with its prevailing pressure of money and time, is rich in potential for conflict. Solving these was the reason for my training as a conflict manager and mediator.

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Today I know that conflicts are also an expression of different views that need to be explored. If this succeeds by mutual agreement, not only is the conflict over, but there is room for something new - be it a better relationship or a creative solution.

The solution is not to deny one's own interests, but to become aware of them. Often the positions taken in conflicts are confused with the underlying interests. However, the goal is to negotiate the best outcome for both sides in a mutual balance of interests. If this is not possible, at least be appreciative in your dealings.

I support companies and teams in perceiving conflicts as opportunities and in working out solutions that are tough on the issue but respectful in their dealings.

Together we forge consensus.

KEY FOCUS AREAS

- ✦ Conflict management
- ✦ Mediation
- ✦ Negotiation in the construction industry
- ✦ Project Management
- ✦ Personal development for young project managers/leaders
- ✦ Intercultural communication

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