



9.0 When things go astray

Sometimes issues can simmer below the surface, and if you're not careful they

will boil over. How can you prevent things from going wrong?

Handling conflict

9.0 When things go astray—handling conflict

Issues or conflicts arise in every relationship—and every partnership. When partners find themselves confused by unforeseen circumstances or in conflict with each other, take time out to diagnose and address the problem. When partners have a concern, the sooner it is addressed the better.

Partnerships that are not working and cannot be healed waste the scarce resources of all partners. Partnerships also accomplish their objectives—events are held, programs succeed—and the best result is to document the results, shake hands and say “we’ll partner again sometime.” Knowing when to end a partnership may be as important as knowing when to enter one.

9.1

What to do

	Done
1. Use this kit as a framework for finding what the real source of conflict is—and then use the kit to address the issue.	
2. If the differences are irreconcilable—or if the partnership has reached an end—work together one more time to create a friendly dissolution.	



Goal

Come out of it a winner by either resolving the conflict or parting friends.

Foundation

Differences will arise in partnering relationships. If the differences become issues or conflicts, pay attention. Small problems not addressed become large problems.

9.2.0 When things go astray questions to ask

9.2.1 Diagnosing the problem and addressing it

Make sure you go through the whole list of questions below—more than one issue may be causing the conflict. Once both partners agree on where the conflict lies, use the questions in that section to frame your discussion on what action is required.

1. Has either partner found that there are issues (e.g. concerns regarding intrusion on their mandate, time commitment) which they did not adequately consider before entering the partnership?
Go to section 3.0 and review the questions there.
2. Does the conflict lie in assumptions we made about each other than have turned out not to be true? **Review the questions in sections 4.0 and 5.0.**
3. Does the conflict stem from differences regarding the overall strategy and purpose of the partnership? **Review the questions in 5.0.**
4. Did we overlook required details or get them wrong in the agreement? **Review section 6.0.**
5. Does one partner feel the other is not being a "good partner"? **Review section 7.0.**
6. Does the conflict lie in evaluating our progress and outcomes? **Review section 8.0.**

9.2.2 Is it time to end the partnership?

1. If the identified conflict cannot be resolved, how can the partnership best be dissolved?
 - Should one partner take over the event or program?
 - Should the initiative be ended?
 - If there are outstanding commitments, how will they be met?
 - If the partnership has assets, how will they be shared?
 - How can this be done so that all parties maintain the respect for each other that originally caused them to become partners?

9.2.0 **When things go astray** questions to ask

2. If the partnership has accomplished its objectives, how can we best establish a base for the future while ending the current partnership?
 - Have we adequately communicated the partnership's success to the broader community?
 - As the partnership comes to an end, can we summarize what we have achieved?
 - Have we documented the success of the partnership so that our experience is useful to others?
 - Have we identified opportunities or conditions where we might consider partnering in the future?