

Author- Tim Segaller  
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### **BA and Unite encouraged to keep talking by conflict resolution specialists**

A leading conflict resolution consultancy is encouraging BA and Unite to re-engage in constructive dialogue to find an end to the long-running dispute over pay and staff perks, following the Unite Union's rejection of BA's latest offer.

We regret the fact that the two sides in this difficult dispute have not yet been able to come to a mutually satisfying agreement, says David Liddle, Founder and Director of Total Conflict Management (TCM), the UK's foremost provider of business, employment and workplace mediation services.

We urge both sides to take this opportunity to sit down together and engage in open dialogue in order to find long-lasting solutions. Our long experience of resolving conflict in organisations has shown that having such robust conversations may be difficult, but is more likely to carve out a path to a settlement that really works.

This is undoubtedly a very difficult situation for both sides with so many complicated and contentious issues on the table. The dispute has been costly, not only financially with an estimated financial loss of £150m so far for BA but also in terms of the relationships between management and workers, which is inevitably suffering. So it is in everyone's best interests to start talking again.

TCM is also encouraging BA and Unite to see this difficult situation not as a threat, but as an opportunity to seize the initiative in building strong, sustainable relationships in the workplace.

TCM's wide experience of resolving complex disputes within businesses - through its unique and proven FAIR mediation model shows that the key to healthy, robust working relationships is to nip conflict in the bud. In practice, this is about businesses engaging in open dialogue and honest debate with their workforce so that their employees feel they have a real stake in the life of the organisation.

TCM would be delighted to assist BA and Unite find a way through this dispute and to help them embed the principles of conflict prevention and alternative dispute resolution (ADR) into the systems, processes and culture of their organizations.

TCM strongly encourage all organisations to consider the benefits of this approach. There are significant financial savings to be made through reduced employment tribunals and grievance procedures (which cost the UK an estimated £33 billion per year, according to the CBI). There are other key benefits in the reduction in staff absenteeism, the increase in productivity and long-term operational planning, and a growing working culture of respect, trust and responsibility.