

## How to Reduce Conflict in Marketing Relationships

ELMAR Contribution by J. Scott Armstrong

May 8, 2003

---

Conflicts often arise in marketing, such as among buyers and sellers, manufacturers and retailers, production and marketing departments, firms and regulators, and competing firms. Accurate predictions how other parties will respond to alternative strategies increases the likelihood of a favorable resolution. Fortunately, we now know much about how to make accurate forecasts of the decisions that various parties will make in conflicts. Methods and sources are provided on the new [conflictforecasting.com](http://www.conflictforecasting.com) pages (<http://www.conflictforecasting.com>) maintained by Kesten Green of Victoria University in New Zealand. Unfortunately, the knowledge is seldom used; practitioners rely on unaided judgment, a procedure that has been found to be no more accurate than chance.

The site includes ten disguised descriptions of actual conflicts that can be use for teaching exercises. They can also serve as a standardized set of cases by which to test new procedures for conflict resolution. Some examples:

**Artists Protest:** Members of a rich nation's artists' union occupied a major gallery and demanded generous financial support from their government. What will be the final resolution of the artists' sit-in?

**Distribution Channel:** An appliance manufacturer proposed to a supermarket chain a novel arrangement for retailing their wares. Will the management of the supermarket chain agree to the plan?

**Journal Negotiations:** Editors have asked their journal's publisher for better terms and have received an unfavorable response. What agreement will the parties come to?

**Panalba Drug Policy:** The FDA has started moves to ban a profitable Upjohn's drug. How will the Upjohn's board decide to respond?

Please let us know if you have relevant full-text papers, conflict situations, or other sources that could be added to the site.