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Author: Conflict not always negative

By Wayne Pollard, Daily Record

The job: Howard M. Guttman is the principal of Guttman Development Strategies, a management consulting firm that specializes in executive management and organization development work.

The firm, based in the Ledgewood section of Roxbury, provides coaching, management training and strategic planning. The firm, which he started 14 years ago, has coached thousands of executives and has helped senior executive teams become "high-performing teams."

Guttman has 24 people on staff. "I didn't expect to get as big as I did."

Author: "When Goliaths Clash: Managing Executive Conflict to Build a More Dynamic Organization" (Amacom 2003).

On conflict: People mistakenly believe that all conflict is bad. "You can't possibly have an organization that is striving for greatness and not have conflict. You're always going to have conflict."

"In large global organizations ... unless you're adept at conflict management, you're going to fail."

Why Goliaths clash: "Conflict is a symptom." For most senior executives in corporate America, conflict is the result of "confusion around accountability and roles."

Born: Jan. 17, 1951, in Newark. Attended high school in Union.

Parents: Father is deceased. Mother, 76, is "very active in community work." She taught Guttman to "be a survivor" and to persevere. Oldest of three children, has a sister and a brother.



John Bell / Daily Record
Howard M. Guttman, of Guttman Development Strategies, Roxbury, is author of 'When Goliaths Clash: Managing Executive Conflict to Build a More Dynamic Organization.'

Education: Undergraduate degree in history from Fairleigh Dickinson University. "I loved history. ... You learn great lessons to apply to the future."

Master's from Graduate School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University.

Career: Before starting his firm, was corporate director of human resources in Johnson & Johnson's consumer sector.

When he left to start his firm, people told him, "You're crazy to leave Johnson & Johnson."

Before that, he was an organization development consultant at ADP.

First job out of college was at the New Jersey Historical Society in Newark, where he set up educational programs on New Jersey history for teachers and students throughout the state.

Family: Married to Jacqueline for 21 years. She was his friend's blind date. "I basically sold my friend on backing off and letting me go for her." Now, she is his firm's chief operating officer. Has three children: Michelle, Chuck and Melissa.

Home: Has lived on a mountaintop in Ledgewood for 14 years. "I love the privacy and the serenity." Also has a home on Long Beach Island. "We split our time."

Hobbies: Weightlifting, kayaking, biking, and collecting and watching old classic movies.

Sports: Ran track and wrestled in high school and got a black belt in karate in college.

Wheels: Black Porsche Carrera convertible and a '64 white Mustang convertible that is "very rare."

Favorite food: Seafood.

Favorite restaurant: La Strada in Randolph.

On the screen: Favorite classic movie is "Casablanca."

On the page: "I read a lot." Primarily reads sports biographies and history, especially books on World War II.

Also likes horror and science fiction books by authors such as Dean Koontz and Stephen King.

Keys to success: "Having an unwavering intention and commitment to a goal" and "staying focused."

Advice to businesses: "Beyond just saying it, take the time to develop your people to be excellent conflict managers so that you rapidly force closure and ... still have people feel whole in the organization."

People would be surprised to know: Although he is an extrovert, he really values his time alone. "There are times when I like to just chill out. I like to hang by myself a lot."

Proudest moments: "Through thick and thin, the entire family sticks together and I'm proud of that. ... We always stay together."

Also proud of the release of his book and the first time that his firm earned more than \$1 million.