FELIX

A large majority of people claim to have been negatively affected at work by conflict.
This is what our study on the dynamics of conflict management in the workplace reveals.

Before getting to the heart of the matter, let's define conflict in the workplace.
It is the result of a disagreement between 2 or more people within the same structure.
These differences can originate from a variety of sources, such as disagreements over objectives, working methods or personality incompatibilities.

If you're wondering why we're tackling this subject, let me give you a few figures.
Firstly, a study carried out by Dares, which looked at the distribution of establishments according to the type of conflict, on establishments with more than 10 employees in the non-agricultural private sector.
Nearly 40% experience little or no conflict.
Frequent conflicts, whether short or long, remain a minority.

Our own study, carried out largely on our class of work-study students, reveals a different picture, however.
In fact, almost 90% of those surveyed claimed to have encountered conflicts impacting on their productivity at work.
This discrepancy can be explained in part by the hierarchical nature of the work-study relationship, which can lead to more tension.
However, this is not the subject of our study.
Of course, this result must be treated with caution.

These various studies highlight several important points.
Firstly, the presence of conflict within companies is undeniable.
What's more, they show that conflict can have significant repercussions on employees' mental health.
So the need to know how to manage conflict is obvious.

I'll now let my colleagues explain our vision of conflict management in the workplace.

HICHAM

Hello everyone, as my colleague said, we're going to talk about conflict and, more specifically, conflict at work. As we've seen, it affects a large number of people, so it's a subject where the documentation is pretty rich!

Before I start, I'd like to make one thing clear. During our work, we won't be talking about the legal dimension of the conflict.
In fact, in France it's common to talk about the conflicts that can arise between company directors and trade unions, for example.
However, this is not at all within the scope of our study.

First of all, what is a conflict? It is important to understand and analyse the terms we are going to use to better understand our study.
From a semantic point of view, conflict is defined as strong opposition, profound divergence or sharp disagreement. this is 4 the semantics part but

Let's leave the semantics for a moment and look at this from a more literary point of view. To do this, we're going to talk about Mary Parker Follett.
 Mary Parker Follett was an organisational theorist who did a lot of work on conflict.

Conflict, according to Mary Parker Follett, is defined as an inherent element of human interaction.
Indeed, diversity is a characteristic of humanity, and diversity underlies conflict.
at this respect, Conflict is therefore defined as an inevitable event for human beings.

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To some extent, contrary to the traditional denotation of conflict, Mary Parker Follett sees conflict as an opportunity for progress. She even goes so far as to propose the concept of 'constructive conflict', where disagreeing parties can work together creatively to find innovative solutions.

It is therefore natural to raise the question of methods for resolving these same conflicts.

These methods have been theorised at length by various theorists, who have even gone so far as to model conflicts and their management. One of the best-known models is that of Kenneth W. Thomas and Ralph H. Kilmann (TKI). It proposes a two-axis approach to conflict resolution in order to better understand conflict. It then proposes 5 methods for resolving conflicts and suggests placing them on their two axes.

In this respect, the question we are going to ask ourselves is the following:
Issue: How should we deal with conflict in the workplace?

To do this, we are going to study the question from 3 different angles:

Firstly, we will study the proactive culture of conflict management in companies.
Secondly, we will look at the effectiveness of reactive conflict management in companies.
Finally, we will discuss a balanced approach to conflict management in the workplace.

MAXIME :

<u>**Version française :**</u>

Si d'une part la gestion proactive des conflits présente comme limite le fait d'instaurer des sensibilisations formelles et parfois mal comprises par les collaborateurs d'une entreprise et d'autre part la gestion réactive impose parfois une confrontation plus ou moins directe entre deux antagonistes, il est important de penser à une gestion équilibrée du conflit. En effet, les équipes étant à géométrie variable, il est essentiel de proposer un plan de gestion des conflits adaptées à chaque situation. Il semble par exemple évident qu'une équipe composée de personnes ayant des opinions convergentes, notamment dans le cas où une mission particulière se dégagerait d'une entreprise ou d'une société, ne sera pas du tout le même que dans une équipe où la variété d'origines politiques et religieuses, de cultures ou encore d'âge serait très large.

Il pourrait ainsi s'agir d'anticiper dans un premier temps ce qui pourrait marcher, et de repenser la politique mise en place dans le cas où les stratégies adoptées ne permettent pas une gestion efficace des conflits.

Il pourrait aussi s'agir d'analyser les caractéristiques de chacun des conflits potentiels et ayant eu lieu : Quelles sont leurs origines ? Quels sont les enjeux pour chacun des partis ? Quels sont les impacts des conflits sur la qualité et l'efficacité des résultats ? C'est alors que Math Mazra, Jean-Michel Sahut et Lubica Hikkerova sépare, dans un article de 2020 paru dans La Revue de l'Entreprenariat, les conflits en deux types : d'une part les conflits affectifs, qui proviennent des émotions de chacun des camps, cela peut provenir des frustrations et des relations entre les membres de l'équipe ; d'autres parts les conflits cognitifs qui proviennent eux d'une divergence d'idée au sein de l'équipe propre aux tâches de l'entreprise. Dans le premier cas, les conflits affectifs sont défavorables aux actions de l'équipe : ils ralentissent les prises de décisions, enlisent une vision clairvoyante des problématiques rencontrées dans le milieu professionnel et peuvent même détériorer à terme les relations avec les clients. Dans le deuxième cas, les conflits cognitifs permettent par l'opposition régulière des idées au sein du groupe d'apporter un regard multilatéral à de nombreuses problématiques, et parfois repenser des situations auparavant considérées comme acquises. Du conflit résulte alors une pensée constructive, qui permettra alors à l'équipe de mieux cibler les tenants et les aboutissants de leurs actions et de leurs objectifs.

Pour conclure, si on a dans un premier temps vu que la gestion proactive des conflits permettait de théoriquement anticiper les conflits au sein d'un groupe et dans un deuxième temps qu'une gestion réactive permettait pour sa part de gérer les conflits de manière informelle mais souvent de manière plus efficace, la gestion optimale des conflits au sein d'une équipe semble en fait aussi variable que la composition socio-culturelle de celle-ci. En réalité, chaque équipe est la projection d'une part de notre société, et trouver une gestion adaptée du conflit est un reflet d'une bonne compréhension de la diversité d'idées et de situations que présente cette société dont nous sommes tantôt les associés, tantôt les rivaux.

While proactive conflict management is limited by the fact that it requires formal awareness campaigns that are sometimes poorly understood by the company's employees, and reactive management sometimes requires a more or less direct confrontation between two antagonists, it is important to think about balanced conflict management. Indeed, as teams have variable geometry, it is essential to propose a conflict management plan adapted to each situation. It seems obvious, for example, that a team made up of people with convergent opinions, particularly if a particular mission emerges for a company or organisation, will not be at all the same as a team with a wide variety of political and religious backgrounds, cultures or ages.

It might therefore be a case of first anticipating what might work, and then rethinking the policy in place if the strategies adopted do not enable conflicts to be managed effectively.

It could also involve analysing the characteristics of each of the potential and actual conflicts: What are their origins? What is at stake for each party? What impact do conflicts have on the quality and effectiveness of results? In a 2020 article published in La Revue de l'Entreprenariat, Math Mazra, Jean-Michel Sahut and Lubica Hikkerova separate conflicts into two types: on the one hand, affective conflicts, which come from the emotions of each side, and can arise from frustrations and relationships between team members; on the other hand, cognitive conflicts, which themselves come from a divergence of ideas within the team specific to the company's tasks. In the first case, affective conflicts are negative on the team's actions: they slow down decision-making, obstruct a clear-sighted vision of the problems encountered in the workplace and can even damage customer relations in the long term. In the second case, cognitive conflicts make it possible, through the regular clash of ideas within the group, to bring a multilateral perspective to many issues, and sometimes to rethink situations previously taken for granted. The result of this conflict is constructive thinking, which will enable the team to better target the ins and outs of their actions and objectives.

To conclude, while we have seen that proactive conflict management theoretically makes it possible to anticipate conflicts within a group, and that reactive management makes it possible to manage conflicts informally but often more effectively, the optimal management of conflicts within a team seems in fact to vary as much as the socio-cultural composition of the team. In reality, each team is the projection of a part of our society, and finding a suitable way of managing conflict is a reflection of a good understanding of the diversity of ideas and situations presented by this society of which we are sometimes partners, sometimes rivals.