

Conflict Prevention Leadership



Conflict prevention leadership

"A good leader performs through his team's shared resources, ideas and abilities. A prerequisite for your team to be able to act in conflict prevention is that it is led by a person whose leadership is conflict prevention." - Emma Pihl

The nine building blocks of conflict-preventing leadership

- View and publish your views and those of others
- Clarify your intentions and communicate them
- Clarify roles and tasks
- Give and take sorted feedback (feedback)
- Bring out the collective talents of the team
- Regularly take a helicopter view
- Practice being confident in handling conflicts between others
- Encourage and stimulate employee creativity
- Daily routines for conflict prevention leadership

1) View and publish your and others' views

- All people have conscious and unconscious perceptions, opinions, beliefs and truths about various subjects. These affect the attitude and behavior of both individuals and groups.
- As a leader, therefore, be careful to pay attention and see which perceptions lie behind it your behavior and that of those around you.
 - Do this: Ask yourself or those around you what belief was the basis for it behavior you or they chose. It creates increased awareness and active choices.
- You can train yourself by asking:
 - *How do your and other people's perceptions sound in everyday life?*
 - *What assumptions have you woven into what you communicate? What preconceived notions are allowed to shine through in communication and with employees?*

1) View and publish your and others' opinions

- Communicated assumptions can either strengthen and develop, or cripple and weaken.
 - eg; "I think you can probably succeed in this task"
 - ex: "When you have succeeded in the task, you, me and the customer will be really satisfied".
- In the examples, an inherent expectation has been expressed where one paralyzes and the other strengthens.
- When you notice that you and your colleagues regularly throw out unfavorable assumptions, or ones that risk creating conflict, it's time to train yourself to disarm them.
 - Do this: Question perceptions and assumptions and lift them into the light.
 - "I hear you say X, what do you mean?"
 - "Are you really sure about that?"
 - "That was really an assumption, that as usual I would start the meeting late".

1) View and publish your and others' opinions

- Beware when someone communicates something as if it were the truth, even though it is their own opinion:
 - "It's just that Elisabeth on team eight doesn't really fit in there, she's far too suffocating and takes over in all discussions"
- Watch out when someone does not take responsibility for their opinion, but still creates a perception in others, as in;
 - "I heard that the management will go to the Riviera for their conference, I wonder how much they will work there..."
- Perceptions become unfavorable when doubt, questioning and shortcomings are built in;
 - "I'll try, but I don't think it will work".

1) View and publish your and others' opinions

- Perceptions are not inherently negative or positive - it depends on whether they have a negative or positive connotation influence.
- As a leader, you have a role where you are expected to strengthen, feed back and bring out the best in everyone individual.
- A leader's assumptions have greater and stronger effect, with the role - which should be used on one thoughtful way.

1) View and publish your and others' views

Exercise;

The exercise involves one of you telling something,

the listener(s) is attentive to the assumptions and perceptions that emerge

When this happens: ask questions that “punctuate” the assumption.

ex) "Cooking is boring" - "What do you think is boring about cooking?"

Don't be too questioning, it "kills" the conversation, instead be curious and interested and help the person telling the story to clarify for himself and the person listening.

The narrator can talk about anything, but a recent memory can be easiest.

suggestion) describe the journey home; how it was, who you met, how they act,

suggestion) describe a leisure activity; What it is about, what is difficult/easy/fun, etc

2) Clarify your intentions and communicate them

- As a leader, you have a mission to reach certain goals and perform certain tasks, often communicated from a higher level in the organization. Your assignments come from higher goals, decisions, strategy, etc. - and have one or more intentions. (intentions)
- It is important that a leader clarifies purpose and background and the desired result, by define the intention for their team.
 - This gives a common picture of what you are going to do.
 - A team with a common intention also becomes more cohesive.
- When a team talks about its intention, and gets the same picture - it works as a conflict prevention tool. It becomes easier to understand each other's behaviour
- Instead of starting from standard routines for meetings, reconciliations, evaluations, etc., it might be an idea to start from the intentions - and plan the operations' behaviors and activities based on them.
- To clarify the intention, it is good to have concrete and clear goals - SMART goals are very important effectively!

SMART goals

Making a good goal statement is not only difficult and necessary, it is a valuable quality for anyone!

Goals are not just an end station - They are both a planning tool and linked to emotions such as satisfaction and pride.

One way to help set good goals is to work according to the SMART model.

SMART stands for;

S - Specified

M - Measurable

A - Bounded

R - Realistic

T - Timed

3) Clarify roles and tasks

- The leader's task is to ensure that the team knows who is doing what.
 - If the leader does not, the team creates its own perceptions. When the responsibility is incorrect distributed, when roles and responsibilities do not match the skills - it often leads to conflicts.
- Another clarification concerns rules and approaches. Clear rules reduce the risk of conflicts which may otherwise arise around, for example, responsibilities and powers.
- When the 'rules' are unclear, so that the team has to believe, assume, interpret each other to understand them, responsibilities and roles become blurred and the risk of conflict increases. It is then useful to create a consensus around the rules, which both provides group security and increased team spirit.

3) Clarify roles and tasks

A practical four-field exercise to concretize the team's rules / norms

1) clear but unspoken. ex; "we offer customers coffee when they visit", "we speak English in internal meetings".

2) unclear and unspoken: The trickiest category. Ex what applies to working from home.

3) clear and pronounced. Such as written up, policies, agreements, etc. Ex) photo ban in certain departments.

4) Unclear and pronounced. Often things like "always been like that", things you talk about but you don't really have a clue of how they work. ex; Certain roles within a company may offer representation, but how much, how expensive?

	Clear	Unclear
Unspoken	1	2
Pronounced	3	4

4) Give and take sorted feedback (feedback)

- Feedback is a way to prevent conflicts and the cornerstone of development
- Although most people know that feedback provides an opportunity to develop, many are afraid of it and have one resistance to both giving and receiving feedback.
- 'Bad' feedback (unsorted and unspecific) can create conflict. “You are bad at...”
- Good feedback is a tool that you can use both professionally and privately
- Most employee surveys conducted in Sweden show that employees generally want more confirmation and feedback

4) Give and take sorted feedback (feedback)

When you are thinking about taking on a conflict yourself, for example as part of the relationship with one or more people in a group, it may be worth considering and thinking about possible risks and what you have to gain:

När man tar tag i en konflikt eller talar om att man har en annan uppfattning än gruppen riskerar man:

- **Avståndstagande.**
- **Fientlighet.**
- **Att hamna utanför.**
- **Att ha fel.**
- **Köra fast.**
- **Skapa negativa exempel för framtiden.**
- **Att det blir för jobbigt.**
- **Att det tar mycket tid och energi.**
- **Bryta relationer.**

När man tar tag i en konflikt eller talar om att man har en annan uppfattning än gruppen kan man vinna:

- **Närhet.**
- **Tillit.**
- **Respekt och förståelse.**
- **Uppskattning.**
- **En bättre fungerande arbetsplats.**
- **Positiva exempel.**
- **Att andra inser att du har rätt.**
- **Tid och energi.**
- **Bättre relationer.**

5) Bring out the collective talents of the team

- Exercise:
 - Write down two things you often find annoying in others. (You will not need to show this to anyone)

5) Bring out the collective talents of the team

- A leader needs to highlight the employees' talents, and make them complement each other. This requires insight into individuals' unique talents and strengths.
- It can also become problematic when a person becomes too strong in their talent estimate.
 - It is a danger, and cause of conflicts, as it is behavior that others are easily irritated by.
- The basic idea is that no talents in themselves are positive or negative, but it is about how they used and managed.
- A person who has the talent to have his voice heard, and becomes too strong in his talent, then gets the talent review to be heard *too* much and come off as burdus or take up too much space.
 - The talent then needs to be balanced with compensation, in this case to only speak when it has something important to say.
 - Now the individual goes too far, and in this case becomes completely silent at meetings, etc., becomes bland and seems to have no opinions at all - a kind of "talent allergy" develops.
- Some people can find their true talents by identifying their potential talent allergy - this is often what bothers others. Those who resent those who arrive late often have a talent for punctuality themselves.

5) Bring out the collective talents of the team

- Exercise:
 - Write down two things you often find annoying in others. (You will not need to show this to anyone)
 - Use your two "talent allergies" to identify opposite talents - it makes sense that you possess these talents?

6) Regularly take a helicopter view.

- Try to look at yourself and your situation from a helicopter perspective from time to time.
 - ie, from an overall perspective. There you "zoom" out of active details and see a larger one picture.
- One method is to dissociate by mentally removing yourself from the picture. See yourself as in a movie in your head. Talk about what you see, but use your name instead of "I", sometimes he or she. Ask and answer questions such as “What is happening? What do X and X's team need? How is X perceived? What are X's results?”
(Where X is your name).
- Such "meta-perspectives" are also good for self-evaluation. If you succeed in "playing the movie" in your head and seeing yourself from the outside, you can look more objectively at your behaviors and see what can be changed.
- Anyone who regularly looks at themselves from a helicopter perspective will
 - increase their awareness
 - improve their balance at the "up level"
 - train in the alternation between being associated and dissociated
 - practice switching between past, present and future.

6) Regularly take a helicopter view.

Exercise

Take a helicopter perspective on your life right now, if you want - focus solely on your studies at YH. Play your inner movie and 'comment in third person'.

Maybe you want to answer the questions:

- What is X powered by?
- What motivates X to make an effort?
- What does X want to improve during the autumn?

Was it hard or fast - do it again! think of some new questions in advance, before you dissociate.

7) Practice being confident in handling conflicts with others

A strong and courageous leader dares to take on the team's conflicts - and deal with them

More tips in case of conflicts:

- Clarify that conflicts (often) concern opinions, interpretations, situations and actions - not persons
- Ensure that all information is presented (including experiences and interpretations, not just 'facts')
- Keep yourself neutral, if possible
- Try to put the ball with the parties? - "ex, I'll give you one hour to come up with a solution that works for both of you"
- make sure there are decent rules of the game - ie, moderate the conversation (relevant content, tone of voice, etc.)
- Don't be afraid of emotional expressions - but acknowledge and manage them.
- Change the theme if there is a lock - it's a good method, there are several ways to solve it
- Spread the word - make sure there is a balanced dialogue

8) Encourage and stimulate employee creativity

- Creativity can be a cause of conflict - but properly managed reduce the risk of conflict.
- Create the right climate for creativity to flourish
 - psychological security in the group
 - balanced conversations
 - get rid of behaviors such as judging, criticizing and complaining
 - foster willingness to experiment, acceptance of different ideas.
- Ask open questions during work meetings
- Once a solution is found, search for more "good" solutions, it encourages creativity.
- If it is difficult to find time for creative processes - try to create such, even if they are few and short.

9) Daily routines for conflict prevention leadership

- Sort activities/meetings so that all participants know what applies
 - eg why and who is there, agenda, is it a discussion opportunity or an information opportunity? Be clear - avoid misunderstandings, growing frustration and conflict
- Value employees' time - for example, be careful about meeting times (end times in particular)
- Manage your own stress - tunnel vision and other symptoms can cause you to miss out on dealing with sources of conflict or even create them yourself
- Let the employees get to know each other, better.
 - Invite yourself, to coffee breaks, etc. - if the leader is open, it will spread.
 - Better familiarity among the team reduces the risk of conflicts resulting from attribution errors and stereotypes.
- Talk about conflict prevention actions.

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