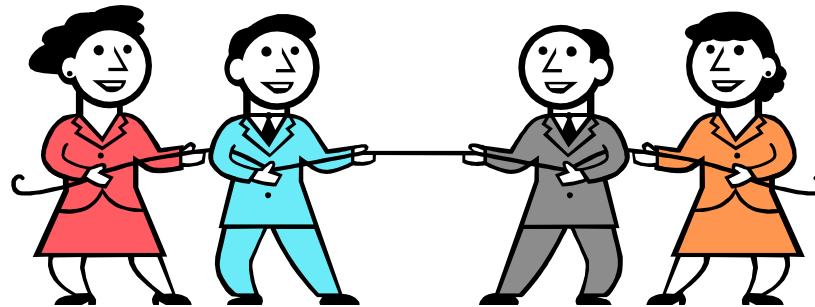


Conflict Management



Updated By Phil Andrews
02/02/2011

Key Awareness

- Conflict is natural. It will be with us forever. It is the essence of life. One's good idea is another's horrible idea



Some Principal Causes

- Differences in personalities
- Values and beliefs
- Titles
- Assignments
- Criticism
- Misunderstanding
- Frustration
- Evaluations



Some Principal Causes

- Competition
- Approach to solving
- Who will get the credit
- Poor communications
- Use of Power
- Regulations and adherence to them
- Work overload or unfair distribution of workload
- Unappreciation



Proper Steps

- Prevention
- Search for patterns of conflict
- Anticipate when and where conflict will occur
- Increase everyone's understanding
- Negotiate
- Take action





Prevention

- The right culture is the best preventative medicine for conflict
 - Style of Management
 - Decision Making
 - Reporting Structure
 - Personalities of key players
- Be alert to conflicts, frictions, politics, and antagonistic or competitive attitudes that can create a problem



Search For Patterns

- List all of the persistent problems/issues (= conflicts)
- Understand who is affected by the conflict
- Categorize the conflicts and their causes
- Identify origin of conflict. Understand why
- Seek patterns
- Determine if conflict can be avoided or prevented --- if so, how?
- Develop policies and procedures to help the situation

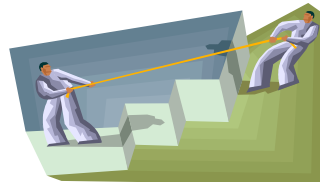


Anticipate

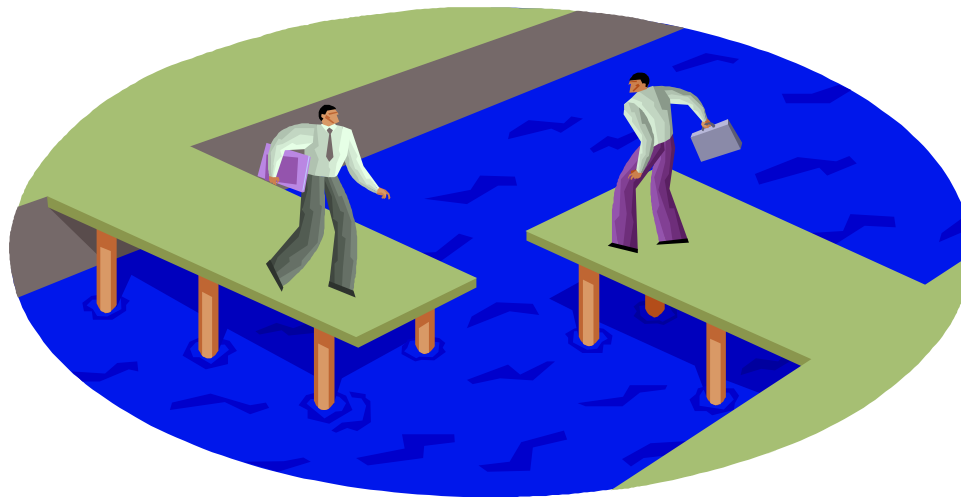
- Anticipate what will be the benefits and consequences of your actions before you implement any changes
- Seek feedback
- Monitor people's reactions
- Modify your decisions as needed
- Apply more preventative measures, such as Education & Training, improved communications, more meetings

Increase Understanding

- Hold special Conflict Management meetings/workshops
- Seek shared/joint solutions
- Tell people that they are on your radar screen
- Explain consequences
- Show them “The Path” to salvation
- Allow them to solve their problems by themselves



Learn To Build Bridges



Believe it or not, most people do not know
how to build bridges with others

Negotiate

- Intervene only when other invite you and seek your help
- Be a fair negotiator
- Offer new solutions that others have not even thought of
- Help them get “unstuck”
- Show them the win-win scenario



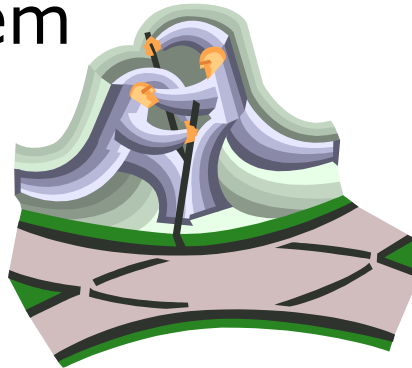


Make It Happen

- If someone needs to be removed from the job or position, it must be done
- If restructuring is required, get it done
- If new people need to enter the organization, get it done
- If major changes need to happen in processes, policies, and procedures, have them reengineered
- One way or another, remove conflict
- Evaluate results

Comment

- The theory that some conflict is healthy for the enterprise is nonsense. Conflict is never healthy. What is healthy is motivation and inspiration. Thus, if your troops are complacent and smug, you only have to blame yourself for that. Conflict will not awaken them, it will only aggravate them





5 ways to manage conflict

- Avoidance
- Competition (A)
- Accommodation (B)
- Compromise (C)
- Collaboration (D)

Conflict Continuum

- I win, you lose (competition—A)
 - I lose or give in (accommodate—B)
 - We both get something (compromise—C)
 - We both “win”(collaborate—D)
- A B C D





Competition

- Plus
 - The winner is clear
 - Winners usually experience gains
- Minus
 - Establishes the battleground for the next conflict
 - May cause worthy competitors to withdraw or leave the organization



Accommodation

- Plus
 - Curtails conflict situation
 - Enhances ego of the other
- Minus
 - Sometimes establishes a precedence
 - Does not fully engage participants



Compromise

- Plus
 - Shows good will
 - Establishes friendship
- Minus
 - No one gets what they want
 - May feel like a dead end



Collaboration

- Plus
 - Everyone “wins”
 - Creates good feelings
- Minus
 - Hard to achieve since no one knows how
 - Often confusing since players can “win” something they didn’t know they wanted



What This Means

- Managing conflict means you need to develop several styles and decide which is valuable at any given point of conflict



Tips for Managing Workplace Conflict

- Build good relationships before conflict occurs
- Do not let small problems escalate; deal with them as they arise
- Respect differences
- Listen to others' perspectives on the conflict situation
- Acknowledge feelings before focussing on facts



Tips for Managing Workplace Conflict

- Focus on solving problems, not changing people
- If you can't resolve the problem, turn to someone who can help
- Remember to adapt your style to the situation and persons involved
- Remind everyone that conflict is not the spiritual way of doing business



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