**Conflict Management for Leadership In-Person Training Script**

Welcome to conflict management training for leadership. As a team lead or manager, there will be times when you may witness a conflict building and should step in before it reaches a critical point. This training is designed to give you the skills to recognize if there is a conflict and some strategies to use to help defuse them.

We have been learning how to manage conflicts since grade school. The two ways most of us have mastered by now are avoidance and accommodation. While these strategies for dealing with conflict are generally successful they do not work long term. Before we jump into the other strategies for dealing with conflict let's tackle our first learning objectives for this session: identifying if there is a conflict and inferring what it is.

I am going to read you a couple of scenarios that you may experience in your own daily work life. While I do so think about if there is a conflict presented and what it might be. I will be asking for volunteers to share their thoughts after each scenario.

You have just received a promotion to the team lead on a new team. One of your new co-workers tells you that Joe, also a new co-worker, applied for the team lead position. Joe welcomed you warmly to the team and offered to answer any questions you have while settling into the team.

No conflict presented.

Kim, a transfer from another department, tends to eat lunch in her cubicle. The rest of the team gathers to eat lunch together in the break room.

There may or may not be a conflict. More information is needed.

Graham is working on a project with a co-worker, Josh. Josh wants to create an ordered list of tasks to be completed with set deadlines. Graham went along with this plan on the last project but found he had trouble with staying on the set tasks. Graham believes that he works best when he can be flexible and complete tasks in any order before the final deadline.

Yes, there is definitely a potential conflict here. It seems that Graham accommodated Josh on the first project and now wants to change the team dynamic.

Ok, now that we can identify and infer what the conflict is, how do we deal with it. This is where our second learning objective comes into play: identify and explain which conflict management strategy could be used for the identified conflict. Let’s review the five conflict management strategies developed by Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann.

**Forcing the Solution**

This strategy involves one person making the decision of this is the solution to the problem and everyone has to deal with it. The benefit of this strategy is that it provides a quick resolution, the downside is that it tends to negatively affect relationships. Due to the downside, this strategy is only used as a last resort.

**Avoiding the Conflict**

This is a strategy that most of us are familiar with. Instead of confronting the issue the person just refuses to acknowledge it. This strategy tends to work well in the short term or when the issue itself is trivial. It does not work well long term or in most team dynamics. The only benefit of using this strategy is to buy time to better prepare for confronting the conflict. Two downsides to avoiding the conflict are that it can affect your relationship with others that are involved and it can possibly be taken as a form of consent.

**Accommodating Others**

This strategy is another that most of us are familiar with. When someone does not speak up to voice their needs or thoughts on an issue they are accommodating the others involved. Repetitive use of this strategy tends to lead to the person accommodating getting frustrated and the people being accommodated feeling they are always right. This strategy should only be used when the issues are trivial or minor. A major disadvantage of using this strategy is that it can be difficult in the future to get the same people that have used it to transition to a compromising or collaborating strategy.

**Compromising to Create a Solution**

This strategy involves everyone involved working together to create a workable solution where everyone got something they wanted but had to give up something else that they wanted. This strategy is useful when deciding important issues and time is a factor. A downside to using this strategy is that since people had to give up something it can strain relationships and will need to be monitored to make sure the agreed-upon solution is being adhered to.

**Collaborating to Find a Solution**

While most conflict managers would say this is the best strategy it is also the hardest strategy to achieve as it requires all parties to fully cooperate at all times, be open about all of their needs, and care about meeting the needs of the other people involved. This strategy takes the longest to work through but has the best results as it can help build long term relationships.

Let’s revisit one of our scenarios from earlier along with two new ones. While I read them aloud think about which conflict management strategy would best resolve the conflict. I will be asking for volunteers to share their thoughts after each scenario.

Graham is working on a project with a co-worker, Josh. Josh wants to create an ordered list of tasks to be completed with set deadlines. Graham went along with this plan on the last project but found he had trouble staying on the set tasks. Graham believes that he works best when he can be flexible and complete tasks in any order before the final deadline. When Graham ask Josh if they could just work with the final deadline Josh said no that he couldn't function without the deadlines and the ordered task list.

Based on this scenario, it seems the best strategy would be to compromise to create a solution since there is a deadline for the project that needs to be met. A reasonable compromise would be for Graham and Josh to work together to create groupings of the tasks that have to be completed before a soft deadline. Then Graham can work on any of the tasks in that set while Josh works from the first task down.

Mary has noticed that any time she works with fellow co-worker Gary on a project that he tells her what tasks she will be working on and which tasks he will be working on. Mary has tried in the past to suggest a different breakdown on the tasks and has been ignored.

Based on this scenario, being that Mary has attempted to collaborate and Gary ignored her attempt, the best strategy for dealing with this would be a Forced Solution where Gary is made to sit and work with Mary on the task list. A conversation into why Gary ignored a teammate’s request would also be suggested.

Shelly, a team lead, has noticed that her fellow teammates tend to be aggravated and combative when they gather to review the daily schedule of tasks and she assigns who is doing what for the day. When Shelly talks to Karin, a team lead on days Shelly is not working, Karin says she allows the team to discuss who wants to do what before assigning tasks for the day and has not noticed the negative feelings on those days.

Based on this scenario, it seems the best strategy would be a collaboration between Shelly and her teammates.

Now that you have identified that there is a conflict and the best strategy to deal with it, how do you go about defusing the conflict? Here are some guidelines to help.

1. Address the issue privately.
2. Bring everyone together and allow each person to have a set amount of time to share their concerns without interruptions. Have a minute or two break between each person to allow time for thinking to occur.
3. Use active listening techniques when addressing the conflict by repeat back your understanding of the issues.
4. Suggest everyone use “I” statements to address any emotions or reactions to the issue.
5. Follow up with a close-out conversation, email, or call that thanks everyone for participating and summarizes the solution agreed upon.

This concludes the conflict management for leadership training. By now you should be able to when presented with a scenario identifying if there is a conflict and inferring what it is along with being able to identify and explain which conflict management strategy could be used for the identified conflict. Are there any questions?

Source:

<https://thedigitalprojectmanager.com/10-effective-conflict-resolution-strategies/>

https://www.hrpersonality.com/resources/conflict-management-techniques

https://smallbusiness.chron.com/5-conflict-management-strategies-16131.html

https://theparticipationcompany.com/2016/06/5-conflict-resolution-strategies/