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There was a major conflict occurring between employees and they had formed two opposing groups. Each side did not get along with the other and they had banded together in an “us vs. them” mentality. Furthermore, the employees involved were resistant to solving any issues and the supervisor, along with other management staff, was well aware of the problem, but chose not to intervene.

When I was promoted to department supervisor, one of my goals was to make the department more cohesive. There were a variety of approaches that I could have taken, but I wanted to know more about my own conflict style, so I received approval to attend a conflict management seminar. I learned that, due to the fact that I look for ways to solve problems in which an optimum result is provided for everyone, my style is that of a “collaborator”. This means that I need to pay close attention to realizing that conflict can be resolved without damaging relationships and, as a manager, it is my responsibility to identify and help resolve employee conflicts.

One of the most important areas that needed improvement within the team was communication. I immediately implemented weekly staff meetings, along with weekly individual meetings. This way, not only did the entire staff hear the same information in a consistent manner, but I also hoped it would give them a sense of togetherness as we had an honest discussion about the pain points in our department. The individual meetings were equally significant, since it not only gave employees an opportunity to privately talk with me about their concerns and goals, but it allowed me time to review what needed improvement, as well as provide positive feedback and realistic suggestions for how they could help decrease the problems.

Some of the conflict was a result of certain tasks that had always been performed by only a handful of staff. There was a perception of power because of this and it had not changed in many years. I took this as an opportunity to cross-train all of the employees in the different job responsibilities. This helped with leveling out the playing field and was also useful for when workers were out due to illness or vacation. When I met with the department, their overall reaction was positive, even from those who had exclusively done these tasks.

Finally, in an effort to clarify rules and procedures, we created a departmental handbook that everyone had a hand in providing feedback on and creating. This helped tremendously since most procedures were never written down and each person had their own way of performing tasks. In many instances, staff had no clue that some co-workers were duplicating and even triplicating certain steps. Each member of the team then signed an agreement to follow these processes while also respecting other employees. Overall, this streamlined the workflow and made many tasks easier, which made them a happier team.

**Questions**

1. What was/were the reason/reasons of conflict within the team in the case study?
2. Was the supervisor successful in resolving the conflict? Elaborate on the conflict management style of the supervisor.
3. What are the usual rules for handling interpersonal conflict at work?
4. What steps would you have taken if you were the supervisor of the team?

**Case Study Solution**

**Answer 1)**-The reason for the conflict between the employees of the organization was: -The communication gap between the staff during work hours and doing project. The way of thinking that we contributed more to the project without taking leaves and breaks during the project. The way of thinking we are superior and have more knowledge than other staff members.

**Answer 2)**-Yes, the supervisor was able to resolve the conflict. The methods he approached to resolve the conflict were: -The first step he did was he wants to know about his conflict style for that he attended a conflict management style where he got to know that his style is of collaborator which means he can search for a solution that meets each other needs. Now he got to know that the major conflict reason was communication, so he started creating meeting weekly in groups and individual which helped to know the importance of togetherness and the personal individual meeting also helped him to know about the individual goals and concerns which helped him to give positive feedbacks and suggestion which will reduce their problems.

**Answer 3)**-Communication: - Think of this as being the one to offer the olive branch. Once you have acknowledged that there is a conflict, be the one to open up the lines of communication. Reach out to the other person or people and set up a meeting to discuss the conflict.

Acknowledgment of the conflict: - The longer you bury your head in the sand and pretend there is no conflict, the worse it will become. Once you have acknowledged the conflict, take a look at it objectively. Be open and honest with yourself about what part of the conflict you may have contributed to.

**Answer 4)** -Reducing communication gap - Start by having an informal one-on-one with each team member involved in the conflict. Reassure the employees that the discussion is confidential. Ask each party the same questions to remain impartial. Ask the team for the ideas: - When a conflict affects the whole team, provided it's not sensitive or confidential, you can ask for everyone's perspective. Talking things out helps you and your team to consider different assumptions, beliefs, and decision-making approaches. This can also be a part of creating a "psychologically safe " environment, where people feel comfortable sharing ideas and concerns, thus preventing future conflicts. Always draw a plan: - Ask the team to detail agreed-on actions for reconciliation. And get each to commit to this strategy. You can draw up a timetable for actions, ticking them off as and when they are achieved. Hold all relevant parties accountable.