

Project management conflict resolution case study analysis assignment

[Business](#), [Management](#)



Maggie agreed reluctantly-with the stipulation that it be made clear she was not working for Jesse. The General Manager consented; Maggie and Jesse were to share the project leadership. Within a month Of this development, Maggie was angry when she felt that Jesse was representing himself to others as the leader of the entire project and giving the impression that Maggie was working for him. She called for a meeting with the General Manager to see if he could clarify the issue again and resolve the conflict between them.

Maggie said to the General Manager, “ Right after the joint leadership arrangement was reached; Jesse called a meeting of the project team without even consulting me about the time or content. He just told me when it was being held and said I should join them. At the meeting Jesse reviewed everyone’s duties line by line, including mine, treating me as just another team member working for him. He sends out letters and signs himself as project director, which obviously implies to others that I am working for him. ” Jesse replied: “ Maggie is all hung up with feelings of power and titles.

Just because I sign myself as project director doesn’t mean she is working for me. I don’t see anything to get excited about. What difference does it make? She is too sensitive about everything. I call a meeting and right way she thinks I’m trying to run everything. Maggie has other things to do- other projects to run-so she doesn’t pay too much attention to this one. She mostly lets things slide. But when take the initiative to set up a meeting, she starts jumping up and down about how I am trying to make her work for me. How is the General Manager going to resolve this conflict? The issues: * Personality

clashes * Lack of respect * Authority * Egos * Disagreements about the right way to manage. Problems: Major -?? project delay, Client dissatisfaction, Miscommunication, Effectiveness Minor - Confusion, Rumors, Low morale

Tying theory to the issue Conflict is defined as a disagreement of persons or groups of persons considering a situation as inconsistent with their own interests (Building 1963, Robbins 1974, Putnam ; Wilson 1 982, Rocker ; Willow 1985).

A conflict can oppose somebody to himself or herself (internal conflict), to other persons, groups of persons or to institutions (Thomas 1992). Several definitions synthesis made in organization theories (Putnam ; Poole 1987), psychology (Thomas 1 992) or information systems (Bark et cool. 2001) considers three properties of interpersonal conflicts: interdependence, interference and disagreement. By itself, each property cannot be considered as a sufficient condition. Interpersonal conflicts are more dependent of their overlapping. Interdependence exists when each party reaches a specific goal, at least because of the actions of the other party. In essence, interdependence is a structural condition for conflicts in a professional context because of respective consequences of the way the other party acts. ; Interference is a behavioral condition for conflict and occurs when one or several parties oppose the other party's attainment of its interests, objectives, Or goals. Interference thus represents the central behavioral node Of any conflict (Bark et cool. 2001 p. 198). Disagreement is a cognitive condition for conflict and corresponds to divergence of interpretations toward values, objectives, needs, methods, etc.

Disagreement refers to disputant behaviors and is considered as the central process associated to conflict (Wall & Cloister 1995). In the above context, these causes can be task (or process) oriented versus affective (or relational) oriented (Deutsche 1969). Conflicts about tasks are issue oriented and arising from differences between activities to be performed, whereas affective conflicts refer to personalized disagreements or individual disaffection.

The first ones can be considered as differences of points of view rarely assorted of negative emotions while the second ones can raise frictions and tensions which can affect team performance (John & Manning 2001). The 4 different conflict types drawn from task and affective orientations are: | Conflict types Key Authors Task Oriented | Conflicts about the definition and the execution of tasks that users must fulfill Robe teal. , 2002 ; Markus & - rains, 2000 | Conflicts about the new professional skills required | Obsess teal. 1999 ; Markus & Tania, 2000; | Affectionately | Value conflicts | Obsess et al. 999; | Conflicts due to a loss of power Markus, 1983 ; Conflicts about task definition and execution are caused by the way organizational processes have to be adapted or transformed to fit with IT process requirements (for examples: how invoices and orders must be established, new data codification, signature validation process). These conflicts can be “ internally initiated” when users compare the way they achieve their tasks and perceive organizational inconsistencies (Obsess 1999). They can also be “ externally initiated” because of the process constraints imposed by information technology to be implemented.

Value conflicts are psychologically based. They refer to ideology by which some people share beliefs and make sense of their worlds (Trice & Buyer 1993). Firm subunits may have their own subculture varying in their ideological content (Stewart & Goosing 2006). In IS, value conflicts may arise on inconsistency between cultural principles of users or group of users and the perceived underlying strategic objectives assigned to IT implementation (Lieder & Kay. Roth 2006). Power conflicts concern the way individual autonomous and capabilities of influence are likely to be distributed among employees.

Analysis and Solution: In this case, there are several issues between Maggie and Jesse. First and foremost, Maggie feels that Jesse is incompetent, thus her perceptions of his capabilities are skewed and has little respect for Jesse. On the other hand, Jesse feels that Maggie seems to have an issue with titles and placement of authority. There appears to be a clear lack of teamwork and trust. There is also the appearance of self-promotion and miscommunication. This conflict did not originate from conflicting goals, but is related to the individuals involved.

It is due to personality clashes between the individuals and some of the reasons are: * Lack of respect for each other * Power conflict * Value conflicts * Working styles * Incorrect perceptions formed due to lack of personal interaction. Personal dislike. The General Manager needs to meet with them and explain to them how the personal conflict between them is affecting the project and the team as a whole. The goal here is to get them to at least communicate with each other to get everything out in the open.

Confidentiality is key here, but it is also important that they are really listening and hearing each other.

Remind them that what is discussed in the room does not leave the room.

During the meeting: * Inquire as to what (are) the issue(s)? Get it all out on the table - let them vent. * What are their perspectives? * Work with them to develop criteria for solutions to their conflict. * Ask them their ideas on how to move forward with resolving the issue based on the criteria agreed to, that may help to resolve the conflict. * What alternatives can they come up with to work together effectively? Can they come to consensus on any of the alternatives? Ask them to think about what they can do to get past the issue, or put it aside, in order to move forward with working together. What alternatives exist? This should happen overnight - let them sleep on it. * Provide feedback on their working styles as it is hindering team spirit. * Set up off-site sessions to get the team together to improve bonding and overcome personal biases. * Emphasize on the need to separate personal prejudices from the task at hand. The General Managers role here will be to get them talking to each other about their ideas to resolve the conflict and, ideally, coming to a consensus on how to resolve it.

It is important to remember that the manager cannot resolve it for them; they need to do so themselves. He is just facilitating the discussion for them. Help them work toward coming to consensus on resolving the conflict by asking questions, probing for details, etc. If one comes up with an idea, see how that idea might be tweaked so that it is acceptable to the other individual. How can the other add to the idea so that it might work for his/her

also? Remember also that sometimes consensus cannot be reached and the conflict is not able to be resolved, but you still need these individuals to work together.

How might they do so? What do they need to work together professionally and cordially toward the successful conclusion of the project? Once a consensus has been reached - or there is agreement on how to work together in spite of the conflict between them - review what was agreed and get their commitment that they will continue to work on the resolution of the conflict (as we know it won't go away immediately!) and abide by the plan they developed to resolve it. The General Manager should also: Clearly define the responsibilities and set guidelines for both. Make the dependencies between Jesse and Maggie clear and ensure that their goals are aligned to take care of the dependencies. * Take a commitment that key decisions are taken jointly. * Create a communication plan, escalation mechanism and set up ground rules. * Ensure that both Jesse and Maggie promote project interest over self interest. * Take steps to build mutual trust, as it is key to minimizing unhealthy conflict Advantages: It is important that the team members involved in a personal conflict take ownership of their issues and work constructively to resolve them.

This will ensure that the project is not in jeopardy and all the stakeholders have confidence in the team leadership. Once the power conflict is resolved, a collaborative and consultative environment can be created which is conducive to productivity and efficiency. In such an environment, projects are one time and on budget. Disadvantages: A possible disadvantage is that

to maintain a balance of power and effective collaboration wherein there is no perception of subterfuge, substantial time commitment is required. Also, even with the time commitment, there no absolute guarantee that the feeling of distrust will eliminated entirely.