

Example of conflict resolution research paper

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



Conflict is an unavoidable part of the employment relationship. In the workplace, people from diverse backgrounds, values, opinions and expectations work together and since employees are under constant pressure to meet goals and targets, sometimes a small issue can evolve into a big conflict. Workplace conflicts if ignored can cost a company dearly because employees are nowadays more aware of their legal rights and hence if workplace conflicts are not managed effectively then employees might seek a resolution through formal means like litigation. In order to avoid litigation and adverse consequences deriving out of litigation, proper conflict resolution process should be in place in the organizations. There are many conflict resolutions tools but in this paper, I have highlighted upon two tools - negotiation and mediation, their advantages and disadvantages along with a strategy for their proper implementation.

Negotiation involves a discussion in which both the parties involved try to reach an agreement on issues wherein lies a degree of differences in values, interests, goals and beliefs. The role of the negotiator is to be credible to the opposing side, find some shared interests, and learn the position of the opposing party and share information which will help the opposite party to settle into an agreement. Negotiation can be compared with mediation in which a third party is involved to solve dispute between the two grieving parties. If a workplace conflict starts because of the perception of majority of the employees in a team about the manager being partial towards a particular employee and not being fair to others, then it is the job of the manager, the conflicting employees and HR manager to negotiate and clarify each other's position and then come into an agreement to solve the matter.

One key element of successful negotiation is the conflicting parties involved need to be willing to come to an agreement. If they show a positive attitude towards negotiation the negotiation process will be a smooth one with both the parties settling into a desired agreement. But in case the parties involved are not willing to solve the dispute through negotiation, then the process of negotiation is doomed to fail from the very start. Further, they need to agree on some common interest and beliefs to get leverage during negotiation. The number of shared interests determines whether negotiation would result in an agreement.

In the scenario in which employees working in the same team feel that the manager or the supervisor is partial to one particular employee in terms of giving better career opportunities, promotion and salary then jealousies, dissent and conflicts are bound to rise. Now in such case there would be a huge conflict if the supposed favorite employee of the manager gets promotion over other employees who were in line of promotion and were more experienced and qualified than her. Usually in most of the companies conflict resolution is solved by the management. HR manager is informed and he can give his opinion on the matter. But if HR's opinion is not liked by the grieving party then he might take help of a mediator to resolve the case. Mediation is provided by an impartial third party who both the conflicting parties can rely on. The role of the mediator is to facilitate communication between the disputants and help them come into an agreement. Mediation encourages communication, mutual compromise and reduces stress and personality conflicts by making each party listen to the viewpoints of the other. Mediators can be trained and accredited employees who in addition to

their regular jobs act as internal mediators or mediators can come from an external mediation provider (Podro and Suff, 2013).

The process of mediation is a voluntary, confidential, fast, impartial, solution focused and inexpensive way to resolve conflicts. Mediation helps rejuvenate working relations by quickly solving the conflicts effectively and by boosting the morale of the employees. Mediation leads to an increase in productivity, profits and performance and also helps in employee retention. But the disadvantage of mediation process is not always mediation succeeds in making agreement between the two grieving parties. Though mediation is an inexpensive process compared to litigation, still the fees of mediator vary between \$600 and \$1, 000 per day. During mediation the other party may get to know of confidential facts if one is not careful enough.

Mediation is the best substitute for litigation. Mediation can improve productivity, performance and employee retention. Litigation is expensive and time consuming. Employee retention is less likely in litigation because the opposite side attorney may come up with ways to seek compensation but mediation encourages communication between employees and hence the end result is more constructive than litigation. Further in terms of money, the cost of seeking help of a mediator can cost about few hundred dollars to few thousand dollars a day and since mediation takes less time to solve conflicts, the cost incurred during mediation is comparative very less than the amount spent in pursuing a lawsuit which takes years to solve a conflict. Further the hassle of pursuing lawsuit involves a lot of steps and procedures to follow for both the parties such as investigation, submitting paper works and attending hearings for years until the case gets solved whereas in

mediation there is no such hassle involved.

Whichever tool is used for solving conflict resolution, it will not be successful unless the tool is used strategically. Therefore, the negotiator or the mediator first needs to listen to the position of both the parties, making sure that he understands their perceptions clearly. The mediator needs to talk in an assertive manner asking for further information related to each party's viewpoints and then he needs to agree with the problem or else an acceptable solution cannot be reached. Then he needs to brainstorm possible solutions encouraging others to give inputs and then negotiate the most suitable solution.

In conclusion, in order to avoid litigation and adverse consequences issuing out litigation, proper conflict resolution process should be implemented. This paper has touched upon two conflict resolution tools - negotiation and mediation and their respective advantages and disadvantages. However, having conflict resolution tools is not enough to reach a solution, a proper strategy should be undertaken to put forward those tools which if used effectively can restore peace and harmony back to the workplace.

References

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