

# The importance of teamwork and team- building



## **Introduction**

We experience conflict in every aspect and everyday of our lives, conflict is present between our family, friends and workplace. At the workplace, conflict can be between two individuals or a group, sometimes we allow conflict to prevail if personal matters are allowed into the work environment. In today's organizations, people work in teams that have either a leader or a self-driven team member to lead. While these teams provide support mechanism in the office environment and are used to improve productivity and results, they are also a source of competition. It is this team building scenario that is envisioned to promote the productivity of the employees, and at the same time the organization.

In any team there is a difference of opinions, this is beneficial as it provides the building blocks to ideas for their team and organization as a whole. At the same time these opinions do raise the emotions and feelings of the team players. There arises conflict within the group that either improves the team's performance or the breaks down of the team and consequently hampering the achievement of the organizations goal.

Handling and solving conflict in a group may be easy, but it is the personal conflict that is difficult to deal with. While we may appreciate the fact that we cannot avoid conflict in a team, we cannot hide the fact that personal issues also play a part in team conflicts. They are more intimate and cause embarrassment to the whole group, lobbying and malicious intent are carried out with the purpose of destroying the opponent. It is this fact that makes conflict to be destructive, it not only destroys the individual, the team as well

is affected because of the already existing relationship they held, but the organization as well is put in jeopardy.

This paper seeks to address the nature of team conflicts in the work place, the types of conflict and describe how each manifests itself in the team. Describe the reason why team players struggle with conflict. Find and discuss the ways management can manage and solve team conflict.

## **Hypothesis**

The interactions of small teams in any organization have been of interest to social researchers and managers for a long time. The effects of the team on the productivity of an organization cannot be ignored. It is for this reason a team conflict, resolution and management is of importance to the study.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of this paper are to

Describe the team development and the sources and types of team conflict.

Describe the different types of conflict resolution techniques.

The building of effective teams.

The role of leadership in conflict resolution and management.

## **Rationale**

As organizations restructure work teams, there will be need to restructure also the training provided especially in regard to conflict management.

Conflict emanates from organizational diversity in several facets such as power and values held by different people. Indeed, conflict doesn't necessary

<https://assignbuster.com/the-importance-of-teamwork-and-team-building/>

need to arise from immediate disagreement in values and aspects held by the employees. Sometimes conflict arises from totally diverse aspects of the organization. It is therefore imperative to note that conflict is a term that is used to refer to differing in opinion within the organization, most of which is constructive.

## **Team Development**

This research shows that though many managers are aware of the existence of team conflict and have gone further to have training in conflict resolution. They rarely assign a high priority to solving issues that arise from these conflicts; this is a clear indication that team members should be trained in conflict resolution in order to solve team conflicts on their own.

## **Sources of team Conflict**

Having seen that differences are a cause of conflict, we need to discuss other causes of team conflict in details. Team members have different values, this value system determines how they perceive, present and associate with others.

The values of the team also affect their attitude, attitude is important in defining who they are, and how they handle situations as a group or as individuals Hill (2007).

The goals and expectations of the team members is an important factor in team conflict. Where there are different goals either in career and professional aspirations create conflict in the group. An ambitious team member can be a threat to the rest of the team, while one who has low ambitions can be viewed as a drag in the team.

<https://assignbuster.com/the-importance-of-teamwork-and-team-building/>

The roles and responsibilities of the team members is also a source of conflict, a team member who is assigned a role that threatens others in the team can cause conflict. A situation where a member of the team is made in charge of the team, or a particular assignment, and members feel that he or she is not suited for the position causes conflict in the group brought about by dissatisfaction Wilheir (2009).

Limited resources in the office can cause conflict in a team. A situation where some members of a team have to share desks, office or computers can be a great source of conflict. When a member of a team is assigned a good corner of the office, while another has to make do with his close proximity to the copier room, where they feel the allocation of the resources was unfair this does cause conflict Maravelas (2005).

Personalities of the team members are another major factor in team conflict. Who they are, their temperament determines their conduct and way of thinking in the work place. It cannot be denied that personalities influence how we react to situations, to difficult assignments, to challenges from team members or other colleagues. This causes conflict especially where they let personal issues to interfere with work.

Interdependency in the team causes conflict in that while they depend on each other to complete a certain assignment, situations arise where one is not able to fulfill his role, or they do not complete in good time Dudley (1994). This inconvenience especially where declines are to be met implies that another member of the team has to perform his duty, or they have to call for a postponement. This is not acceptable since the team receives a bad

reputation in the organization and burdens whoever has to take up his work to handle extra load. Interdependency is good since duties are shared that would otherwise been done by one, but it causes conflict when one arm fails to meet his duty.

Increased interaction is a source of conflict in that the more team members are in contact with each other the more they become familiar and get too personal with each other. The higher the frequency at which members interact creates a close contact and close relations between them Hill (2007). The fact that they work together and are in the same team implies that they have a common interests, it is this closeness that breeds familiarity. Familiarity causes boundaries to be broken in the work place, these boundaries may have been crucial in the establishment of work ethics. Compromise in the work place can occur due to the familiarity. It is this compromise that can cause conflict.

## **Types of Conflict**

The different types of conflict are based on the causes of team conflict.

Cognitive conflict is a conflict aimed at issues, ideas, principles or processes Cynthia (2009). Consequently, where the conflict is a result of one or more members of the team being against proposed ideas principles or processes in the team or organization. Cognitive conflict is conflict focused on ideas either by an individual or a group; it is not against individuals but issues.

Affective conflict is aimed at persons, emotions or values. This type of conflict takes a more personal approach, as members of the team or a member aim at another, their emotions or values.

Conflict can also be classified as internal conflict, where a member of the team may be experiencing internal conflicts that are or are not directed to the team Dudley (1994). Internal conflicts have been known to reduce the output of an individual. The other type is individual conflict with one other member of the team; this is where a team member is against another. An individual can also be in conflict with the entire team, several members of the team can be in conflict with each other, there is also conflict between teams or the team is in conflict with a non-member of the team.

## **Conflict Resolution Techniques**

Team conflict resolution can be divided into five steps. According to Wilheir (2009), First of all, as a team member, you and all the members of your team will have to learn to communicate effectively and understand this entire process of mediation. Good communication skills prevent team conflict, we at times fail to communicate, and there are moments where an individual says one thing while his body language speaks of another. This failure to communicate creates a misunderstanding with the listener. There are instances where instead of criticizing the behavior or actions we are critiquing the person Thomas (2005). The other half of good communication is listening keenly; a good listener is a good communicator. Rushing and jumping into conclusion, completing the others sentences is not a mark of good listening. Wrong decisions have been made in the process of rushing to obtain information, in the process one loses a vital piece of data causing misunderstanding and hence conflict with the communicator.

Second is the introduction of a rating system, where whenever a team member uses his new conflict resolution skill he or she is rewarded. This

<https://assignbuster.com/the-importance-of-teamwork-and-team-building/>

could prove effective if the team member is also recognized for other skills they have used in the team Deutsch (2006).

The provision of an environment for team building is vital in finding conflict resolutions. This environment should involve the members of the team in finding ways of solving their conflicts, and by mutually agreeing on expectations and procedures in resolving their conflicts, and then will they be fully involved in conflict resolution Mayer (2000). It is in this set up that members are able to set up boundaries for themselves and the group and they can effectively watch over their behavior as expected in the team.

With the above requirements met, then is it possible for the team to talk about a collective effort in conflict resolution. These strategies can help them solve their own conflicts without the assistance of management.

Having comfortably dealt with conflict within the team, then can the team members be put under a training program to develop their skills in team conflict resolution?

## **Effective Team building**

Once a team has acquired skills in conflict resolution, it is important to manage this team. The management of such a team involves conflict resolution awareness where they have an overview of the resolutions Mayer (2000). The team is also stimulated by examples and scenarios which they practice with colleagues, this exercise is meant to make them need to change and learn.



A follow up with conflict resolution training is vital in the maintenance of the skills and knowledge acquired. These workshops are meant to do a follow up and teach the team members skills when dealing with situations of conflict Kinder (2009).

From the team it is important to select mediators, and provide them with further training. The role of these mediators is to provide future support to the team.

Reinforcement workshops should be carried out periodically, these informal sessions are supposed to provide a continuum of the concepts and continue improving the team's awareness and ability to manage team conflict. These programs are to be incorporated into the organization's calendar, this further provides reinforcement.

## **Role of Leadership in Conflict Resolution and Management**

Having equipped the team players with the skills necessary to resolve and manage conflict, there is a need to involve management in conflict resolution and management. A lot of emphasis has been laid on the team member, leaving out the leader, who could also be involved in the conflict Maravelas (2005).

A leader in the organization is supposed to build accountability and create employee empowerment. However the same leader is also disconnected from the employee, there exists a bridge between upper management and the worker. The implication of this has been that workers will not answer questions raised about management; if a survey is carried out they will opt to answer questionnaires discreetly.

<https://assignbuster.com/the-importance-of-teamwork-and-team-building/>

Hence is often beneficial to both sides if a third party was involved, this kind of environment is not conducive for conflict resolution Cynthia (2009).

A leader should be in a position to maximize on constructive conflict, as he has power to empower his employees, a leader should navigate a way round conflict for the benefit of the organization Mayer (2000). This is in consideration that this kind of conflict is the prelude to innovation, creativity and hence success in the organization.

Just as the team members needed guidelines for conflict resolution and management so does the leader. In resolving conflict the first step a leader should undertake is, the gathering of all departmental heads, and call for a management session on conflict Maravelas (2005). This session is meant to find the conditions in each department, provide a conducive environment for them to present their views and reports on the departments.

A leader should moderate the meeting and give the departmental heads and the employees a chance to present issues. Moderation of the meeting is necessary as arguments will arise as they try to figure out the facts. It is important that they get the correct details and this is achieved by asking questions.

Having gathered facts, then a good leader is required to present questions to the participants. This is meant to give the heads and employees a chance to give their recommendations and solutions. The role of the leader is a facilitator, they may have solutions but they are not required at this point Deutsch (2006).

Having acquired the necessary background, then does the management take the necessary action of finding solutions and presenting them to everyone?

The process of finding solutions may involve the need for external help like management training on conflict resolution and management Kinder (2009).

It is when they are equipped with these facts do are they able to solve problems that may be presented to them. When such an initiative comes from above, the result is that the employees become cooperative and that the running of the organization is smooth.

The responsibility of the leader is to oversee the provision of resources, provide financing for conflict resolution training for the teams. The role of the leader is mediation between the teams, facilitating follow up workshops and giving the workers time to attend them Hill (2007). Negotiating between the teams, coordinating the various team. They also use of problem solving techniques to resolve conflict. Encourage team building games.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this paper has provided insights into team conflict resolution.

It has been seen that in any organization interests and goals change, therefore communication is vital in maintaining harmony. There must be more effective upward and downward communication, with communication between team members being improved. There should be more tea building efforts with the facilitation of trainings and follow up workshops. With teams being properly trained in relations then the organization will be able to achieve increased production.

Listening, acknowledging, responding and understanding each others differences is paramount. Overall, it's clear that conflict is part of the organizational work. As long as differences exist, then there always is a conflict of interest.

## **Work Cited**

Cynthia, P. Managing Team Conflict. Management Consulting. 2009 Retrieved 30th

April 2010 <http://www.chumans.com/human-systems-resources/managing-team-conflict.html>

Deutsch, N. (2006). The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: 2nd ed. Theory and Practice.

Jossey-Bass.

Dudley, W. (1994). The Eight Essential Steps to Conflict Resolution. Tarcher publishers.

Fazzi, C. (2005). Conflict Resolution in a Dysfunctional Team Environment. Dispute

Resolution Journal, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 31 - 47..

Hill, S. (2007). The Importance of Communication in The Work Place. Journal of

Management, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 44 - 61..

<https://assignbuster.com/the-importance-of-teamwork-and-team-building/>

Kinder, H. (2009). *Conflict Management, Fourth Edition: Resolve Disagreement at Work*

(Crisp Fifty-Minute). 4th ed. New York: Crisp-Publication.

Maravelas, A. (2005). *How To Reduce Workplace Conflict And Stress: How Leaders*

*And Their Employees Can Protect Their Sanity And Productivity From Tension And Turf Wars*. Berlin: Career Press Publishers.

Mayer, B. (2000). *The Dynamics of Conflict Resolution: A Practitioner's Guide*. 1st ed.

Jossey-Bass.

Thomas, C. J. (2005). *Building and Maintaining Relationships*. *Journal of Management*,

vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 19 - 32.

Wilheir, S. (2009). *Team Conflict Resolution Methods: Managing Conflict in the Office*.

*Journal of management*. Retrieved 30th April 2010. [http://searchwarp.com/swa463349-Team-Conflict-Resolution-Methods-Managing-Conflict-In-](http://searchwarp.com/swa463349-Team-Conflict-Resolution-Methods-Managing-Conflict-In-The-Office.htm)

[The-Office.htm](http://searchwarp.com/swa463349-Team-Conflict-Resolution-Methods-Managing-Conflict-In-The-Office.htm)

[The-Office.htm](http://searchwarp.com/swa463349-Team-Conflict-Resolution-Methods-Managing-Conflict-In-The-Office.htm)