

# Conflict resolution policies at the workplace assignment

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And then, we searched the website of Australian Fair Work to find more official regulations about the conflicts. The information provides us good insights on improving our current policies. In the analysis part, we made a comprehensive analysis on the weakness of our policies. To consolidate our argument, we also referred to Gibbs Categories as a reasonable direction for our training reformation. In the following part, we proposed our recommendation from the policy perspective and the training perspective.

The strategy can be summarized as further developing the current conflict resolution as well as providing more contents regarding communication skills in the internal training. After taking all these measures, we believe not only the conflict in our case, but also the majority of the future conflicts can be solved in a timely and reasonable manner.

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Nowadays, communication plays a crucial role in modern companies.

Without effective communication, misunderstanding may add up and conflicts can erupt. A successful business will always attempt to take effective measures to control conflicts to a low level. In our case, Melissa and Rachel has a big disagreement on the way of work. To avoid the further negative impacts on the workplace communication climate, we, the administration team of Cape Tissue, propose this report on the basis of this case, current policies as well as a wide range of external resources about the communication and conflicts. It is sincerely hoped that this report can provide useful insights to the policy maker of Cape Tissue Ltd.

Background CAPE Tissue Training and Consulting Ltd is a multinational company which has business in five different countries. As a Tasmania-owned company, it revises professional services regarding domestic and international training, consulting and international manufacturing. CAPE Tissue is committed to providing services and products which are of the highest quality. All the services are especially designed to satisfy customers' need. CAPE -nose also contributes to add value to corporate clients with respect to financial sustainability and quality of life. Currently, I work at CAPS Tissue as an Administration Manager.

As a team of five members, we are in charge of supporting all functions regarding administration, accounting finance and implicate of the organization (Cape Tissue Ltd 2014). Issues Concerned parties are Melissa, the senior administrative officer and Rachel. One day, we heard them yelling at each other in the office. There were also other noise of falling chairs and breaking things. To investigate reasons for the quarrel, we separated them and made investigations individually. They all tell different stories and claim that it is impossible to work together any more for having different ideas for their work.

For example, Rachel disagreed with Melissa way of filling forms and thus refused to follow her guide. At the same time, Melissa grumbled that Rachel never went to work on time. In respond to this, Rachel said this was because Melissa constantly criticized her. This prejudice was unacceptable. What is worse, they are trying to get the other staffs to take sides. Policies There are several policies issued by Cape Tissue Training & Professional Development

Ltd regarding the situation mentioned above. They are Conflict Resolution Policy, Equal Opportunity in the Workplace.

**Conflict Resolution Policy:** This is designed to maintain a friendly environment in the work place. By providing reasonable and considerate mechanism where conflicts and complaints can be reviewed and solved effectively, this policy may contribute to mutual understanding between employees and thus improve productivity of staffs. It also provides the managers a chance to reconsider the reasonableness of the corporate compliance. By categorizing situations of conflicts or complaints into two groups, the informal and formal conflict and complaint resolution process, this policy works as a guidance in conflict solving.

In the informal conflict resolution, reviewing the conflicts start from the lower management level. Provided the nonsense is not reached, complaints will be passed on to the next higher level. All the process does not require a formal documentation. On the other hand, in a formal conflict resolution process, there is a regulated time limit for the response to the complaint. Even process is recorded in documentations. As long as a solution has been accepted by the related employee, a copy of the signed reply will be sent by management to HER Department for inclusion in the employees' personal file (Cape Tissue Ltd 2014).

**Equal Opportunity in the Workplace Policy** Cape Tissue Training & Professional Development Ltd always engages in providing equal employment opportunity to the public. Its current employees are also treated on the basis of equality. In this policy, contents relevant to harassment occupies a large

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proportion. Firstly, it defines the harassment as scaring and embarrassing behaviors occurred between two persons, namely staffs and staffs or students and students. In these situations, the policy recommends the injured party reminds the other party of his misconduct and asks him to stop.

However, in some cases, the disagreement is so big that it cannot be solved by former steps. Then, it is time for concerned parties would to lodge their complaints following the Conflict Resolution Policy of the corporate (Cape Tissue Ltd 2014). Fair Work Australian Fair Work provides a wide range of rules and suggestions regarding fair work in Australia. Among them, the most relevant content is Managing Performance and Warning, which is contained in the session for Employee Entitlements. At the beginning, Australian Fair Work explains reasons for managing performance.

For a successful business, one of its goals is to maintain its competitive advantage in a market. Staff performance of high quality is always essential for achieving this objective. There are many advantages from having an effective performance management, such as the high productivity, job security and loyalty. Conversely, poor performing employees may have a negative impact on the existence of an organization. Customers may be unsatisfied and thus lose confidence in the products. Turnover is high and the workplace is no longer productive. These harmful behaviors from staffs are called underperformed.

Examples for the underperformed includes: Slacking off, finishing job poorly or even not doing job at all; Not following the rules and regulations of a corporate; Unacceptable behaviors at work; Negative behaviors at work.

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Some behaviors can be regarded as serious misconduct. A case for them is deliberately not fulfilling work duties. Although underperformed is widely existing, it is quite hard to be eliminated. A feasible solution for this is to control it to an acceptably low level. Effective communication is the key to this problem.

On the website of Australian Fair Work, several precautions are listed: Make the position expectation clear at the beginning of an employment; Addressing an issue in a timely manner; Encouraging employees having a talk with their supervisors if concerns arise. When underperformed occurs, it is suggested to hold a private meeting where the concerned employee and managers can have a talk about the situation. Employer should inquire the employee whether he needs a support person. In this meeting, each party should be clear about the issues and an agreed resolution should be reached.

It includes specific steps for improvement. Furthermore, contents of the meeting should be documented. Australian Fair Work also suggests that having a corporate policy helps to deal with underperformed. By making clear of the corresponding requirements for positions, both managers and employees are better informed. This is a good preventative measurement against underperformed (Fair Work Ombudsman 2015). Analysis Our case describes a situation where conflicts arise between an employee, Rachel, and her supervisor, Melissa.

Due to disagreement on the way of organizing work, Rachel refuses to follow Melissa direction. At the same time, Melissa complains that Rachel is always

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late for the work. She is not highly engaged in her job and has an attitude problem. According to the information obtained, we are of the opinion that both people should be responsible for this conflict. However, Melissa is ought to bear the main responsibility. From Earache's perspective, it is hard to judge whether Melissa has given an effective instruction in completing the forms. More evidence is needed in confirming this point.

Earache's another argument is that Melissa is very picky towards her job. Consequently, she does not want to work and always being late. In our opinion, however, Earache's thought can be quite biased. It is possible that Melissa requirements are in accordance with relevant rules ND regulations of the Cape Tissue Training & Professional Development Ltd rather than prejudice. Even though there is a prejudice against Rachel, being late is not a reasonable response. According to the information from Australian Fair Work, Earache's reaction is a kind of underperformed, which is prohibited by any company.

It is a waste of company resource and may cause negative impacts on company's performance. Furthermore, the Conflict Resolution policy of Cape Tissue provides various solutions to employees. Unfortunately, neither Rachel nor Melissa has followed this policy. As a result, he conflict is solved properly and gradually evolves into a real fight. As for Melissa, she fails in following the Cape Tissue Equal Opportunity in the Workplace Policy. She does not take effective measures when harassment arises. As a senior administrative officer, Melissa is assumed to be more experienced in administrating staffs.

However, she does not perform in a professional manner in dealing with Earache's underperformance. Instead of holding an informal meeting with Rachel to discuss the possible solutions (Fair Work Ombudsman 2015), her behaviors make Rachel misunderstand her, which only worsens the situation. It should also be noted that proper ways of communication contribute a positive interpersonal relationship in the workplace. In our case, it is quite likely that Melissa's poor communication skill has implied Rachel in a wrong way.

It gives Rachel an impression that Melissa dislikes her and makes troubles for her on purpose. To solve this problem, we introduce Gibbs Categories (Gibbs 1965), which isolates six defense-arousing communication and six contrasting behaviors. To be specific, they are Evaluation VS. Description, Control VS. Problem Orientation, Strategy VS. Spontaneity, Neutrality VS. Empathy, and Certainty VS. Professionalism. In terms of Evaluation VS. Description, it is suggested to use "I" language rather than "You" language. This is because most of people dislike judgmental statements and "I" language is lack of respect.

As for Control VS. Problem Orientation, controlling messages can mislead the receiver that the sender wants to impose something without considering other's opinion. By contrast, in problem orientation, communicators account for needs from both sides, which increases the odds of reaching agreements. In addition, we should treat others genuinely. Do not try to manipulate other staffs while pretend to be friendly to supervisors or boss. Keep humble and



promote equality in the workplace. To staffs' suffering, you should show empathy instead of being indifferent.

Last but not the least, managers should be open to various opinions, especially when the external solutions seem more reasonable. If Melissa can take care in all of the above aspects, the odds of having a conflict will decline for sure. Recommendations On the basis of above analysis and the fact we have, it is recommended that Cape Tissue should amend its current policy and increase training to its staffs. In terms of its policies, more details should be added into the Conflict Resolution policy. For example, it remains unclear that under what situation we should choose the informal conflict resolution and complaint procedures.

The current illustration is a little confusing. Furthermore, we recommend Cape Tissue to add some contents regarding underperformed into the Conflict Resolution Policy. Australian Fair Work provides a lot of useful information about this. The modification is to tell employees that disagreement is not a reasonable excuse for a poor performance in the work. Although there may be a conflict between an employee and his/her supervisor, the staff is required to bear the consequence of underperformed by himself. In addition, it is necessary for staffs, namely the new recruits, to know their individual position expectancy.

Everyone should know his duty in the company. Regarding the training, from the reactions of concerned staffs in this conflict, We can see that neither Melissa nor Rachel is familiar with corresponding policies issued by Cape Tissue. The HER department should increase contents of training. In addition

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to the expertise, the trainer is ought to ensure that staffs eve sufficient knowledge about policies of Cape Tissue. They should also introduce some tips, such as useful communication skills and how to develop a positive workplace environment.