Managing conflict

Managing Conflict Managing Conflict The usual workplace consists of diversity. There are many people from different backgrounds and orientations functioning together to get the work done (Gountanis, n. d.). The diversity of individuals within a group is the catalyst for high growth, synergy of solutions and a variety of ideas. Thus conflict is inevitable in the workplace. Individuals as they come together in a working team bring with them their opinions, attitudes and values that differ from others. These are precursors of conflict but can be managed to not have a negative consequence resulting to disagreements (Townsley & Armstrong, 2011). It is important therefore, to resolve conflicts quickly and openly.

There are several kinds of conflicts that can be manifested in teams. There would be arguing and discussing about issues that matter to the organization like cost cutting, making the work force more productive or how to counteract a competitor. These are essential discussions that would mostly be beneficial to the group or organization. These predispose good exchange of ideas and opinions that would most probably lead to workable, if not excellent solutions. These kinds of conflict are task-led and should be encouraged.

However, if teams display an open dislike for one another or are engaged in a ' word war,' then, this would be more of a destructive kind. The team would be experiencing an interpersonal conflict defined with animosity and heated exchanges. These conflicts would ultimately affect the whole team as it makes the atmosphere for work tension-filled (Team Building, 2009).

As a team leader, managers are often in the position to handle conflicts within his or her team. It is therefore needed that the leader is strong and can take charge of the situation. He or she must have the strategies to allow

the team to communicate effectively, create rapport, resolve conflict and lead and motivate the whole team. He must also fully understand the diversity of the group by appreciating the various viewpoints, experiences, skills and opinions.

Conflict should first be handled on an informal basis between the individuals involved. This will allow time for resolution or self-correction by the individuals. If the conflict remains unsettled, a mediator can be brought in to help resolve the situation. If resolution is still not achieved the dispute should be openly discussed in a team meeting. A formal disciplinary process needs to occur, if resolution is not achieved after being addressed at the team level (Rayeski & Bryant, 1994).

Conclusion

Individuals must be able to clearly communicate their ideas, to listen and agree to disagree. It is a difficult environment with people having different opinions but these is the ground work for most teams. Thus, it is essential that teams appreciate the diversity found within. Conflict can be managed within a group and hopefully the team is prepared to respond in a manner that is beneficial and constructive. As differences in opinions are forerunner of innovation and growth of each individual and the team as a whole.

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