

Introduction to conflict management commerce essay



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Conflict is a disagreement, contest or dispute between people who differ in their ideas, needs, goals, values or beliefs. Conflict management refers to the ways and procedures that people follow in handling grievances. It is a process that involves plans to avoid conflict as much as possible, and handling the disputes when they occur, as smoothly and within the shortest time possible. Conflict management appreciates that not all conflicts can be resolved, but they should be managed to a productive level such that they do not escalate to a level affecting performance and production. Individual skills of managing conflict are usually derived from the influential observations that one makes when growing up with reference to how conflicts were managed by parents or guardians. Unresolved conflicts usually lead to aggressive behavior. It imperative therefore for individuals and teams to evaluate whether they harbor good conflict management styles, or not; and make conscious efforts to reform their skills incase of the latter. More often than not conflict results from miscommunication between people regarding matters of opinion, beliefs and values. To address this root cause, it is necessary for people to acquire various skills related to self awareness about different modes of conflict, communication skills and an official platform for management of conflicts (Smith 2000). Organizations and individuals differ in how they deal with such resultant disputes, which are bound to occur in every environment; some choose to fight them while others flee from them. There are several causes of conflict at the workplace. To name but a few, are due to personality or style differences, leadership and personnel differences probably on matters of ethical behavior, substance abuse by members of the organization, family or background problems, difference in interests and values due to intercultural variations, <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-to-conflict-management-commerce-essay/>

scarcity of resources hence limiting creativity and poor performance. So what is the exact formula for dealing with conflicts in organizations? The answer lies in management of conflict mostly through experience and sometimes by embracing innovations or new ways of doing business

The workplace comprises people who hail from different cultures, hence intercultural differences. Cultural differences are a major cause of conflict in the workplace. Culture encompasses language, modes of dressing, and differences in nationality, race and ethnicity. It also arises from divisions in the society along the lines of socioeconomic class, ability and disability, gender, and political and religious inclinations, among others. Culture defines the natural way of life of people (Trompenaars, 2008). It is therefore necessary for both employers and employees in an organization to appreciate the dynamic aspect of culture and that it is unavoidable.

Differences in culture are usually intertwined with conflict, many a times at the workplace, because culture influences human relationship. It is inevitable to deal with cultural conflicts at the workplace because there are people from different backgrounds who make up the employees, employers, customers, suppliers and stakeholders, and they all play important roles in every organization.

Individuals and organizations all differ in the way that they handle cultural differences. For example with regard to ability and disability at the workplace, conflicts may arise from a hearing impaired employee who works with non-impaired workmates. The conflict may arise from the lack of acceptance, alienation and discrimination from the non-impaired personnel and the management (Cohen, 2006). This is because most people are usually

unsure of how to deal with people with disabilities and they often choose to withdraw from them hence affecting the sense of teamwork at the workplace. The management deals with such a situation through ensuring that all the personnel undertakes a sensitivity training program to learn how best to deal with workmates with certain disabilities hence promoting harmony and cohesion at the workplace. Another example is that of a certain private university of Japan where conflict arose between the Japanese teachers, natives, and the English teaching translators, foreigners. The root cause of this conflict was the cultural differences between the two groups (Everett & Yoshitaka 2002). The management decided to research on how best to deal with the disputes because they were affecting performance. They resulted to increasing the awareness of both groups on the importance of appreciating the diversity of interests and ensuring that individuals had skills to manage and resolve conflicts. The organization encourages people to deal with conflict as early as possible since its inevitable, to solve it at the lowest level, every party should participate and co-operate, and that there should be a variety of options for problem solving.

The workplace in every organization requires governance and procedures that follow ethical behavior. Ethical behavior refers to the guidelines or the code of behavior that should be followed at the workplace (Kellett & Peter 2007). These guidelines comprise ethics which centre on personal conduct and policies which regulate the actions of employers and employees towards each other. The codes of conduct are unique for every organization, and it is up to the management to design the most appropriate guidelines for the organization. Ethical behavior in an organization propels the whole unit to

greater heights through portraying a positive image to the public, hence setting certain standards for the organization. When fundamental principles are adhered to by all parties in the workplace, it promotes teamwork hence increased productivity and avoiding conflicts. Ethical behavior included traits such as honesty, respect, openness, tolerance and loyalty, among other virtues. These virtues are usually undermined through the practice of unethical behavior such as duplicating software at home which belongs to the organization, fraud and embezzlement of the organizations funds, making personal calls on the business phones and falsifying business registers or records, office romance, among others; though it is dependent on the code of ethics established by the organization.

Neglect of ethical behavior usually leads to negative performance of the organization, and a possible downturn to bankruptcy (Deutsch 2000). An example of an energy based company, Enron, can be used to portray how unethical behavior affects the workplace. The management of the company advised the employees to strive to reach the highest profit margins possible at whatever cost. This resulted to the company falsifying company records and the executives stealing funds from the customers, employees and other stakeholders. This was a complete deviation from ethical behavior. The company was declared bankrupt as a result. Other corporations have learnt from the downfall of this company and have put in place firm ethical codes of conduct. These entail providing a strong ethical foundation and an ethics committee that monitors all procedures in the firm. Another example of conflict arising from deviation from ethical behavior is the engagement in office romance by work colleagues. Open display of affection by some

employees may prompt discomfort in others hence leading to confrontations (Gebler, 2007). Various organizations therefore have banned office relationships to avoid such conflicts, hence focusing on the main organizational goals.

Creativity is increasing becoming a major factor influencing growth of organizations, and individuals. Creativity is the social and mental procedure to generate ideas and concepts through the display of deep understanding of situations, consciously or otherwise. It is the ability to utilize intellectual and social resources and to convert them into new and appropriate innovations. Organizations are increasingly seeking for innovative and creative individuals to form part of the workforce (Charlton, 2000). This is because creativity is viewed as the key quality that leads people to come up with solutions for problems faced within the workplace, and even for other challenges faced outside the work environment. The organizational environment is constantly dynamic, be it social, economic or political. This leaves organizations little or no choice but to follow suite and dedicate its resources creativity and innovation so as to meet change. Creativity requires setting up various strategies and policies that the innovative ideas floated by employees or employers alike. The management also needs to provide incentives for creative personnel in the organization.

Conflicts arise with regard to creativity when for example in large corporations, put up various rules and regulations that frustrate the efforts of employees to bring about certain changes. The management may put up bureaucratic obstacles which may limit use of organizational resources in the innovations. A good example is IBM the renowned computer maker, the <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-to-conflict-management-commerce-essay/>

decision to stick to manufacture of computer hardware like processors, hardisk and monitors at the expense of software is believed to have cost it the market dominance in computer business. Various corporations have engaged in open forums between employees and the management to nurture talent and innovative ideas in the organization (Algert & Watson 2002). This is often followed by setting aside resources to finance and support the innovative projects undertaken. Another example is whereby the management of various firms and individuals as well, are engaging in maximum training and conferencing. This is whereby the workers, who tend to show special qualities that are unique only to them, are separated from the rest of the employees and exposed to training on how to nurture these qualities and to channel them into the workplace, hence yielding positive performance and growth at the workplace.

Conflict management is not an exact science though a set of principals can help guide application in certain cases.

Conclusion

More often than not, conflict has been viewed as a negative force at the workplace, and in life generally. When individuals and organizations choose to walk away or ignore it, it creates disharmony and leads to people exuding negative energy hence poor performance. However, if conflict is properly managed, it can lead to positive achievements. This should begin with the identification of the root causes and proper measures put in place to manage and resolve conflicts. Conflict management is therefore a work in progress; management learns from experience but also seeks to embrace a level of

openness that breeds innovations and productive new ways of doing business.