Conflict management in ob assignment

Business, Management

Assignment of organizational behavior: Ms. Harleen Kaur submitted by Parul Tandon MBA biotech sec-bubs understanding of conflict and conflict management what is conflict and conflict management? Conflict may be defined as a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals. Conflict on teams is inevitable; however, the results of conflict are not predetermined. The conflict might escalate and lead to nonproductive results, or conflict can be beneficially resolved and lead to quality final products. Therefore, learning to manage conflict is integral to a high-performance team.

Although very few people go looking for conflict, more often than not, conflict results because of miscommunication between people with regard to their needs, ideas, beliefs, goals, or values. Conflict management is the principle that all conflicts cannot necessarily be resolved, but learning how to manage conflicts can decrease the odds of nonproductive escalation. Conflict management involves acquiring skills related to conflict resolution, self-awareness about conflict modes, conflict communication skills, and establishing a structure for management of conflict in your environment.

Conflict is often needed. It: 1. Helps to raise and address problems. 2. Energizes work to be on the most appropriate issues. 3. Helps people " be real", for example, it motivates them to participate. 4. Helps people learn how to recognize and benefit from their differences. Conflict is not the same as discomfort. The conflict isn't the problem – it is when conflict is poorly managed that is the problem. Conflict is a problem when it: 1. Hampers productivity. 2. Lowers morale. 3. Causes more and continued conflicts. 4. Causes inappropriate behaviors. Types of Managerial Actions that Cause

Workplace Conflicts . Poor communications a. Employees experience continuing surprises, they aren't informed of new decisions, programs, etc. b. Employees don't understand reasons for decisions, they aren't involved in decision-making. c. As a result, employees trust the " rumor mill" more than management. 2. The alignment or the amount of resources is insufficient. There is: a. Disagreement about " who does what". b. Stress from working with inadequate resources. 3. " Personal chemistry", including conflicting values or actions among managers and employees, for example: a.

Strong personal natures don't match. b. We often don't like in others what we don't like in ourselves. 4. Leadership problems, including inconsistent, missing, too-strong or uninformed leadership (at any level in the organization), evidenced by: a. Avoiding conflict, " passing the buck" with little follow-through on decisions. b. Employees see the same continued issues in the workplace. c. Supervisors don't understand the jobs of their subordinates. Key Managerial Actions / Structures to Minimize Conflicts 1. Regularly review job descriptions. Get your employee's input to them.

Write down and date job descriptions. Ensure: a. Job roles don't conflict. b. No tasks " fall in a crack". 2. Intentionally build relationships with all subordinates. a. Meet at least once a month alone with them in office. b. Ask about accomplishments, challenges and issues. 3. Get regular, written status reports and include: a. Accomplishments. b. Currents issues and needs from management. c. Plans for the upcoming period. 4. Conduct basic training about: a. Interpersonal communications. b. Conflict management. c. Delegation. 5. Develop procedures for routine tasks and include the

employees' input. . Have employees write procedures when possible and appropriate. b. Get employees' review of the procedures. c. Distribute the procedures. d. Train employees about the procedures. 6. Regularly hold management meetings, for example, every month, to communicate new initiatives and status of current programs. 7. Consider an anonymous suggestion box in which employees can provide suggestions. How do people respond to conflict? Fight or flight? Physiologically we respond to conflict in one of two ways—we want to " get away from the conflict" or we are ready to " take on anyone who comes our way. Think for a moment about when you are in conflict. Do you want to leave or do you want to fight when a conflict presents itself? Neither physiological response is good or bad—it's personal response. What is important to learn, regardless of our initial physiological response to conflict, is that we should intentionally choose our response to conflict. Below are five conflict response modes that can be used in conflict. – 1 • Compromising| • Collaborating| 1 • Competing| • Avoiding| • Accommodating| Why learn more about conflict and conflict management?

Listening, oral communication, interpersonal communication, and teamwork rank near the top of skills that employers seek in their new hires. When you learn to effectively manage and resolve conflicts with others, then more opportunities for successful team memberships are available to you. If we can learn to manage this highly probable event called conflict (we average five conflicts per day), then we are less apt to practice destructive behaviors that will negatively impact our team. Although conflict may be misunderstood and unappreciated, research shows that unresolved conflict can lead to aggression.

Most of us use conflict skills that we observed growing up, unless we have made a conscious effort to change our conflict management style. Some of us observed good conflict management, while others observed faulty conflict management. Most of us have several reasons to improve our conflict-management skills. What modes do people use to address conflict? All people can benefit, both personally and professionally, from learning conflict management skills. Typically we respond to conflict by using one of five modes: a. COMPROMISING b. COLLABORATING c. ACCOMMODATING d. COMPETING e.

AVOIDING Each of these modes can be characterized by two scales: assertiveness and cooperation. None of these modes is wrong to use, but there are right and wrong times to use each. COMPROMISING The compromising mode is moderate assertiveness and moderate cooperation. Some people define compromise as " giving up more than you want," while others see compromise as both parties winning. Times when the compromising mode is appropriate are when you are dealing with issues of moderate importance, when you have equal power status, or when you have a strong commitment for resolution.

Compromising mode can also be used as a temporary solution when there are time constraints. Compromising Skills| 1 2 | | | | | * COLLABORATING The collaborating mode consists of high assertiveness and high cooperation. Collaboration has been described as " putting an idea on top of an idea on top of an idea…in order to achieve the best solution to a conflict. " The best solution is defined as a creative solution to the conflict that would not have

been generated by a single individual. With such a positive outcome for collaboration, some people will profess that the collaboration mode is always the best conflict mode to use.

However, collaborating takes a great deal of time and energy. Therefore, the collaborating mode should be used when the conflict warrants the time and energy. For example, if your team is establishing initial parameters for how to work effectively together, then using the collaborating mode could be quite useful. On the other hand, if your team is in conflict about where to go to lunch today, the time and energy necessary to collaboratively resolve the conflict is probably not beneficial.

Times when the collaborative mode is appropriate are when the conflict is important to the people who are constructing an integrative solution, when the issues are too important to compromise, when merging perspectives, when gaining commitment, when improving relationships, or when learning. * ACCOMMODATING The accommodating mode is of low assertiveness and high cooperation. Times when the accommodating mode is appropriate are to show reasonableness, develop performance, create good will, or keep peace. Some people use the accommodating mode when the issue or outcome is of low importance to them.

The accommodating mode can be problematic when one uses the mode to " keep a tally" or to be a martyr. For example, if you keep a list of the number of times you have accommodated someone and then you expect that person to realize, without your communicating to the person, that she/he should now accommodate you. * COMPETING The competing conflict mode is high

assertiveness and low cooperation. Times when the competing mode is appropriate are when quick action needs to be taken, when unpopular decisions need to be made, when vital issues must be handled, or when one is protecting self-interests. | | | | | * AVOIDING The avoiding mode is low assertiveness and low cooperation. Many times people will avoid conflicts out of fear of engaging in a conflict or because they do not have confidence in their conflict management skills. Times when the avoiding mode is appropriate are when you have issues of low importance, to reduce tensions, to buy some time, or when you are in a position of lower power. Avoiding Skills What factors can affect our conflict modes? Some factors that can impact how we respond to conflict are listed below with explanations of how these factors might affect us. Gender – Some of us were socialized to use particular conflict modes because of our gender. For example, some males, because they are male, were taught " always stand up to someone, and, if you have to fight, then fight. " If one was socialized this way he will be more likely to use assertive conflict modes versus using cooperative modes. * Self-concept – How we think and feel about ourselves affect how we approach conflict. Do we think our thoughts, feelings, and opinions are worth being heard by the person with whom we are in conflict? * Expectations – Do we believe the other person or our team wants to resolve the conflict? Situation – Where is the conflict occurring, do we know the person we are in conflict with, and is the conflict personal or professional? * Position (Power) – What is our power status relationship, (that is, equal, more, or less) with the person with whom we are in conflict? * Practice – Practice involves being able to use all five conflict modes effectively, being able to determine what conflict

mode would be most effective to resolve the conflict, and the ability to change modes as necessary while engaged in conflict. * Determining the best mode – Through knowledge about conflict and through ractice we develop a " conflict management understanding" and can, with ease and limited energy, determine what conflict mode to use with the particular person with whom we are in conflict. * Communication skills – The essence of conflict resolution and conflict management is the ability to communicate effectively. People who have and use effective communication will resolve their conflicts with greater ease and success. * Life experiences – As mentioned earlier, we often practice the conflict modes we saw our primary caretaker(s) use unless we have made a conscious choice as adults to change or adapt our conflict styles.

Some of us had great role models teach us to manage our conflicts and others of us had less-than-great role models. Our life experiences, both personal and professional, have taught us to frame conflict as either something positive that can be worked through or something negative to be avoided and ignored at all costs. Discerning how we manage our conflict, why we manage conflict the way we do, and thinking about the value of engaging in conflict with others is important. With better understanding we can make informed choices about how we engage in conflict and when we will engage in conflict.

The next section provides points for us to consider when determining if we will enter into a conflict situation or not. How might you select your conflict management style? There are times when we have a choice to engage in or

avoid a conflict. The following six variables should be considered when you decide whether to engage in a conflict. 1. How invested in the relationship are you? The importance of the working/personal relationship often dictates whether you will engage in a conflict. If you value the person and/or the relationship, going through the process of conflict resolution is important. . How important is the issue to you? Even if the relationship is not of great value to you, one must often engage in conflict if the issue is important to you. For example, if the issue is a belief, value, or regulation that you believe in or are hired to enforce, then engaging in the conflict is necessary. If the relationship and the issue are both important to you, there is an even more compelling reason to engage in the conflict. 3. Do you have the energy for the conflict? Many of us say, " There is not time to do all that I want to do in a day. Often the issue is not how much time is available but how much energy we have for what we need to do. Even in a track meet, runners are given recovery time before they have to run another race. Energy, not time, is being managed in these situations. 4. Are you aware of the potential consequences? Prior to engaging in a conflict, thinking about anticipated consequences from engaging in the conflict is wise. For example, there may be a risk for your safety, a risk for job loss, or an opportunity for a better working relationship.

Many times people will engage in conflict and then be shocked by the outcome or consequence of engaging in the conflict. Thoughtful reflection about the consequences, both positive and negative, is useful before engaging in or avoiding a conflict. 5. Are you ready for the consequences? After analyzing potential consequences, determine whether you are

prepared for the consequences of engaging in the conflict. For example, one employee anticipated a job loss if she continued to engage in the conflict she was having with her boss over a particular issue.

After careful consideration, the employee thought and believed strongly enough about the issue that she did engage in the conflict with her boss. Her annual contract was not renewed for the upcoming year. Because this individual had thought through the consequences of engaging in the conflict, she was prepared to be without a job for a while and able to financially and emotionally plan for this outcome. Most consequences of engaging in conflict are not this severe, but this example illustrates the value of thinking through consequences. 6. What are the consequences if you do not engage in the conflict?

To avoid losing a sense of self, there are times when you must engage in conflict. Most people have core values, ideas, beliefs, or morals. If a person is going to sacrifice one of their core beliefs by avoiding a conflict, personal loss of respect must be considered. In such cases, even if a person is not excited about confronting the conflict, one must carefully consider the consequences of evading the conflict. When the personal consequences of turning away from the conflict outweigh all other factors, then a person usually must take part in the conflict. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Applying the preceding information about the five different modes of conflict management, factors affecting models of conflict management, and processes for selecting one or more approaches to conflict involves both self-awareness and an awareness of the others involved in the conflict. In terms

of self-awareness, reflecting on the following questions would provide useful information in selecting how to approach a conflict situation. 1 2 1. Am I in conflict? 3 2. With whom am I in conflict? 4 3. Why am I motivated to resolve the conflict? 5 4. What conflict mode am I going to use to manage this conflict?

Since conflict involves at least two people, improving awareness of the other party involved in a conflict might also be useful in choosing how to approach a conflict situation. Reflecting on the following questions might improve awareness of the other party involved in a confliction. 1 1. What is the nature of the conflict, that is, what is the conflict about? 2 2. What might motivate the other person(s) involved to resolve the conflict? 3 3. What conflict modes is the other person using? 4 4. How might I Intervene to resolve/manage the conflict? 5 Learning more about conflict allows greater intentionality in selecting a conflict response. Most people have set reactions to conflicts. By learning more about principles of conflict, conflict modes, and reflection on the above questions, we can be more intentional in deciding on a conflict response. Greater intentionality will likely lead to more effective conflict management. Summary Productively engaging in conflict is always valuable. Most people are willing and interested in resolving their conflicts; they just need the appropriate skill set and opportunities in which to practice this skill set.

Without a conflict skill set, people want to avoid conflict, hoping it will go away or not wanting to make a " big deal out of nothing. " Research and personal experiences show us that, when we avoid conflict, the conflict

actually escalates and our thoughts and feelings become more negative. Through conflict self-awareness we can more effectively manage our conflicts and therefore our professional and personal relationships. Furthermore, by discussing issues related to conflict management, teams can establish an expected protocol to be followed by team members when in conflict.

All teams and organizations have a conflict culture (the way the team responds to conflict). Practicing one's conflict management skills leads to more successful engagement in conflict with outcomes of relief, understanding, better communication, and greater productivity for both the individual and the team. When we manage our conflicts more effectively, we use less energy on the burdensome tasks such as systemic conflict and get to spend more of our energy on our projects at work and building our relationships. THE END