What is conflict resolution in a team setting essay examples

Conflict Resolution in Teams

In any organization, individuals are grouped together to create a higher level of competitiveness and efficiency. While an individual may have his own knowledge, experiences and skills to share, working in a team environment ups the ante in that teams make use of all of the skills and knowledge as contributed by its diverse team members. This diversity often causes conflict however. Philips (2011) defines conflict as the situation that arises from clases in the perceptions and goals of inviduals in an areana where the outcome is mutually important. Conflict, the author added, could be effective in that it helps the group process attain its goals of productivity and effiency or ineffective thus disrupting the group process. The article " Resolving Conflict in Work Teams1" state that conflict is one of the most critical issues faced by most teams in large companies, because most managers do not pay importance and enough attention to resolving conflict, despite being aware of disagreements and disputes within their respective teams.

Because conflict arises from may factors, it is hard to identify which particular factor creates the most conflict. The purpose for the desire to identify that factor is to mitigate it, but since conflict often comes from communication, structural or personal factors it may be difficult to identify one from the other or quantify the effect singularly or collectively. Thus conflict resolution approaches have been utilized by managers to ensure that disruptive conflict within teams are identified and managed.

One of the most popular methods for conflict resolution in team environments is the Principled Negotiations approach. This approach was developed and advocated by Roger Fisher and William Ury. In this approach, negotiation is the central idea for conflict resolution and revolves around four sub-principles of separting people from their problem, focusing on interest rather than position, generating options before agreeing, and agreeing based on a clear and defined objective criteria. This approach ensures that throughout the negotiation process, the correct elements are present. For example, in separting people from their problem, people in conflict are made to identify the difference between personalities and issues. In focusing on interest people in conflict are then asked what they specifically need and not what they say they need. Knowing options also make negotiations easier because people in conflict are made to understand the gravity of their decisions or the potential upside of an otherwise unknown option. Lastly, when people are asked to agree to an objective criteria, the personal biases are removed thus making the negotiating process fair and credible. One good example of this approach to confict resolution was stated in the International Online Training Program On Intractable Conflict, from the Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, USA2, wherein a US mediation to the Hawaiian way of conflict resolution was done but shows how culture sometimes affects principled negotiations.

Another approach to conflict resolution is John Burton's Human Needs Model approach. In this model, if and when individuals are denied their fundamental needs, conflict becomes inevitable. Fundamental needs include

a sense of identity, security, recognition and equality. The only way to resolve the conflict is obviously provide access to that particular need.

However, any approach requires implementalbe action. For managers wanting to resolve conflict, these can be summarized as follows:

Staying in control of your own emotions is the first step in managing conflict.

Frankness, sincerity and objectivity are a requirement to resolve conflict. Going to the source of conflict directly rather than through channels will help resolve the conflict faster.
Focusing on solving the problem will have a better and bigger impact with the team, rather than dwelling on personal disruptions.

Listening sincerely is also of great importance since it shows the managers capacity to understand and extend over the conflict.

There is no clear cut formula to conflict resolution and it is up to team members to determine the best way of finding a resolution. These approaches may help in the process, but it is that first step of acknowledging that there is conflict within the group that would enable that group to perform as per its intention and objectives.

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