

Conflict and anger



Effective Ways to Manage Conflict and Anger Denise Bernal PSY302 Dr.
Rachana Misraraj June 23, 2010 Outline I.

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Managing Conflict in the Workplace VI. Understanding and Handling Anger in
the Workplace Effective Ways to Manage Conflict and Anger Conflict and
anger in the workplace happens, it happens in every organization, but there
are effective ways for you as the employee and the manager to manage it
and get control before it gets out of hand. Conflict occurs when one does not
have a ??? clear??? understanding of the other side, one believes they are
right and the other person is wrong. Anger arises when the conflict has not
been addressed; it arises from feelings of frustration, annoyance,
disappointment, and hurt.

This paper will focus on logical ways to understand and effectively manage
conflict and anger in the workplace. Peter F. Drucker said, ??? The most
important thing in communication is to hear what isn??™t being said???
(2008). What is conflict When I asked people around me to define what they
thought conflict is I got responses such as: confrontation, argument,
difference of opinion, fight, struggle, a duel, and disagreement. Many of us
see conflict as a negative thing and don??™t want to have to deal with it, but
there are techniques that can be implemented to help one handle difficult
situations. Per Anthony Portuesi, Driven Leaders says ??? Conflict is often the
driving force to address problems or recognize different points of view ??“ all
very positive??? (2008). Portuesi also said, ??? Conflict isn??™t the

problem??“ it??™s when conflict is managed poorly that it becomes a problem??? (2008).

One needs an approach or strategy so that they don??™t over-react to conflict. When conflict occurs we are usually going with our own ??? story??? and don??™t have a clear understanding of the other persons ??? story??? which leads to us thinking we are right and the other person is wrong. But if we take the time to see the ??? whole picture???, which means we see and understand, how the other person sees things and we help them see how we see things. What is Anger Anger is an emotion that comes from feelings of frustration, annoyance, disappointment, and hurt. Per Charles Spielberger, anger is ??? An emotional state that varies in intensity from mild irritation to intense fury and rage??? (2010). It is a normal emotion we feel, like fear, joy, sadness, and happiness, and is helpful when expressed appropriately. Anger is caused by frustration like not getting what we want when we are expecting it and feeling as though others do not care how we feel or do not respect us.

However, most of the time our anger gets out of control, as it is not addressed quickly enough, and becomes difficult to manage. Addressing anger before it gets out of hand is very important and can be useful and in this paper I will share some tips for managing ones own anger and responding to co-workers anger. We have to learn to listen to what is going on around us, what others are saying, and not be ??? quick??? with responding with conflict and anger. Joshua Uebergang, from Earthling Communication, put together a collection of famous quotes. This one from William James states, ??? Whenever you??™re in conflict with someone,

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there is one factor that can make the difference between damaging your relationship and deepening it. That factor is attitude??? (2010). Our attitude can cause a situation to go from calm to explosive in a matter of seconds.

Keep a positive attitude and an open mind so that what others in the workplace have to say can be heard without ??? jumping??? to an immediate bad decision. Per the article, Conflict in the Workplace, by Brett Hart, PhD there is six causes of conflict: incompatible goals, different personal values, dependence on others, scarce resources, power distribution, and unpredictable policies. Learning strategies to manage conflict brings rewards for all employees, managers, as well as the overall organization.

Understanding how conflict originates at work and recognizing that these causes can be helpful if addressed. The first cause, incompatible goals, explains how receiving different messages from managers can quickly cause problems.

For example, at my previous employment as a Guest Service Representative at a major resort the Office Manager told us that quality customer service was a priority, but the Department Manager told us to focus primarily on speed of booking the reservations and we were spending too much time with the guests. This caused a very big problem between the two managers as we were told to sacrifice quality customer service for speed of service. Second source of conflict, different personal values, explains how some employees do things together after work and some prefer to go home to their families??
™ forms segregation that brings about gossiping and suspicion.

I was the one who preferred to go home to my family, I did not feel socializing with my co-workers, who I have spent at a minimum of eight hours with already, should occupy my ??? family time??? and there were many of my co-workers who talked about me because of my choices. The extent in which we depend on others to complete our work is the third contributing factor that can cause conflict. The conflict arises when we have to rely on others to complete their part of a project while we are receiving pressure from another so they can complete their part. This reminds me of group school projects, where you have a group of three or more and each person is to do part of the assignment, the assignment has to be completed in parts and yet all come together in the end, each participant is waiting for the person before to do their part so they can complete theirs and you always have one in this group that falls behind on their duty. Scarce resources are the fourth source of conflict. Whether it be, the budget, supplies, time with the boss, etc we all require ??? our??? share to be able to meet job demands and if we don't have access to these, conflict can occur. The fifth source, per Hart, is power distribution. We have all seen where co-workers ??? step on others toes??? as they try to complete their tasks or even where some departments get viewed as providing more valuable service than others.

This causes resentment, which can lead to conflict. The final source, unpredictable policies, which most people can identify with, causes conflict. You have companies that have no policies in place or unclear policies, or companies that constantly change their policies and this creates uncertainty or one's own interpretation of the policies, which leaves one feeling

helpless and vulnerable. When I worked for the insurance agency we had no policies in place, things were constantly being changed without advising the staff. The employees went to management regarding a policy and procedure manual and we each did our part in developing this manual. It worked out well and the policy and procedure manual was put online for all staff to be able to access it and new employees had to sign off each section.

Understanding the causes of conflict and learning how to approach a confrontational situation will help determine the outcome and be able to reach a successful solution. Per Lauren Nelson, eHow writer, there are five conflict management strategies each with their own benefits and drawbacks. They are: avoidance, accommodation, competition, compromise, and collaboration. Avoidance strategy, per Nelson, is ??? Instead of facing the problem and dealing with the conflict, you avoid the issue all together??? (2010). This does not solve the problem, just provides a temporary peace, but the conflict will arise again.

This is considered a lose-lose approach. For example, a manager ignoring an employee who is continuously tardy, while this avoids a confrontation it will continue to occur, which could lead to other employees doing the same thing. Accommodation conflict strategy ??? involves one side making concessions to another side??? (Nelson, 2010). This is considered a lose-win approach as you have the ??? winner??? the one who receives the concessions and the ??? loser??? the one who makes the concessions. This leaves one person feeling unhappy and even bitter.

An example of this would be, to avoid a "fight" at work you give up your office, that you love and earned, for another employee who has a habit of letting others do their job. You make this sacrifice to avoid a fight. The competitive approach to conflict occurs when you have to select a solution to a problem when you are presented with two solutions.

This is a win-lose approach, as you have to select only one solution. Another conflict management strategy is compromise, Nelson explains this as, "Where all parties involved make a sacrifice to achieve a common goal" (2010). This approach is classified as a lose-lose approach as "Each side must give up something of importance" (Nelson, 2010). It does not completely satisfy either party and does not foster innovation. This involves negotiating and bargaining, in order to attain part of what you want you have to give up something, you have to keep a clear mind on the needs and wants that you are willing to negotiate on. Collaboration, the final strategy is classified as a win-win approach, as parties involved in a conflict work together to come up with a solution that meets everyone's needs. Collaboration promotes creative problem solving and it fosters mutual respect and rapport.

This strategy is the most preferred as everyone wins and involves meaningful conversation. The person needs to be aware that conflict exists and needs to be sure when the opportunity arises that the correct strategy is used and keeps in mind the goal that they are in search of. There are effective ways to avoid workplace conflict, such as: refrain from discussing religion, politics and ethnicity, keep your personal and professional lives separate, stay away from office romances, be kind and respectful, avoid

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office gossip, and by establishing and respecting boundaries. If you happen to get caught in a conflict it can be resolved by: staying calm so the discussion will be productive, analyze the situation, meet on neutral grounds, focus on the problem and not the person, be sure the language you use is neutral, be sure to listen actively, don't interrupt, and try to understand what the other person is saying.

Anger can be a good thing when expressed correctly, when one holds their anger in it can cause health problems as well as be expressed incorrectly with results that are not reversible, with a negative impact on the business, such as: poor communication, employee absenteeism, work relationships, job performance, and lowered morale. Anger blurs good judgment, controls lives, and drives unwanted behavior. But if recognized and handled early on, then it becomes a useful tool to resolve workplace issues. Anger that is not expressed correctly can control our lives and drive behavior.

So can employees understand and manager anger I have always been one who holds my anger in and then I explode about everything that has upset me all at one time. Over the years I have learned that this is not healthy nor can anything be resolved if I don't talk about the things that upset me. To be able to effectively manage anger in the workplace one has to be able to recognize the source of our anger, the emotions that come with it, and the expectations we make. People generally love to be agreed with, hate to be disagreed with, they like the people who agree with them and dislike the ones who disagree.

So if we learned to strengthen our ??? people skills??? when dealing with each other we could avoid some of the anger that we create in others and ourselves. We know that when we raise our voice at someone the other person will respond the same, which escalates the situation. Just like if someone is sitting but we stand over them we are putting them on the defense. One of the best courses the insurance agency had us take was one on dealing with anger, they taught you to never raise your voice at someone and to be at the same level as the person you are speaking to. This was a very useful class as in customer service you often times end up dealing with angry people. Dr.

Lyle Becourtney Anger Management Groups put together a collection called, Famous Anger Quotes, this one by Aristotle says, ??? Anyone can become angry. That is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose and in the right way???;that is not easy??? (2010). Some causes of workplace anger are: harassment, favoritism, rejection of a project that an employee has put a lot of time and effort into, insensitivity by manager, inadequate training, lack of teamwork, poor communication, downsizing, and absentee leadership. Doug Stewart, Anger Management Training Institute, said there is seven tips to avoid and manage anger, they are: be proactive instead of reactive, be slow to anger, instead of telling people they are wrong you should point out mistakes indirectly, look for common ground as quickly as possible, if you find out you are wrong then admit it, admitting a poor decision you made before pointing out an similar error by another, and mend fences whenever possible. If you feel your anger level beginning to rise to a difficult level there are some

things you should do as: delay discussing it until calm down, take steps to reduce this feeling of anger through relaxation and breathing/the well known count to ten, know what the source of your anger is, ask for help if needed, talk to a friend, and be sure to use effective communication.

One must remember that you are responsible for your own actions and the words that you speak. Take the time to calm down before you react to a situation and talk about the things that make you angry. This quote from Dr. Lyle Becourtney's Famous Anger Quotes collection, written by Ambrose Bierce, "Speak when you are angry and you will make the best speech you will ever regret" (2010), can help us realize how important it is to not discuss things when we are angry as once words are spoken you can not take them back. In our workplaces we are confronted with conflict and anger, not only our co-workers anger but our own to.

Don't let your frustration with a situation or a co-worker build up inside of you, take the time to be able to present how you feel in a calm manner and be ready to listen to what others will say. There are ways to recognize conflict and anger and if we learn to use the techniques to manage it then everyone ends up better off and we have more productive workplaces. We need to always be aware of others feelings, the way we speak to people, how to present the information, respect boundaries, stay calm, and always be willing to listen to others. You have to be able to control your feelings and emotions. Winston Churchill said, "Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen" (2010), this quote was one of Joshua Uebergang from his Collection of the Most Famous

Inspirational Quotes and says so much in so few words. References

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