Benefits of conflict resolution training

Introduction

Conflict resolution training for employees can have a positive impact on team effectiveness; Research shows that conflict can be one major challenge that can prevent a team from effectively working together, however, preparing teams to deal with conflict before it arises can help them overcome or prevent the challenge and continue focusing on the goal. Conflict can be both constructive and destructive, and though most people associate conflict negatively, it can be the origin of improvement and change when dealt with efficiently. Training employees to handle conflict can include task management and interdependence, managing emotions during problem solving, and reviewing lessons learned.

The influence of task management and interdependence

Task management involves planning, testing, tracking, and recording – all to which summarize a task strategy; each of these tasks can be delegated to individuals of a team in order to get the work of a bigger goal done. Components that make up a strategy help keep day to day operations running smoothly while taking on a project. There are 3 component areas that a project strategy can be broken down into (Vukotich, 2011); Strategic – the overall plan or goal the organization has and what they hope to achieve, Operational – addressing the things that need to be completed including who will be in charge of which tasks, and Tactical – deadlines set in place with names assigned to tasks, so everyone is held accountable. Task related conflicts derive from discrepancies on how to best achieve common objectives. Training employees to have a task strategy put in place at the

beginning of a project educates teams on the resources available and minimizes conflict likelihood (Vukotich, 2011).

Task interdependence refers to the measure of which an individual team member may rely on others for information, materials, and support in order to be able to complete the task in which they were assigned (Brass, 1981). In previous studies (e. g., Schopler, 1986) sharing resources (high task interdependence) has supported an increase in the amount of interaction among team members and improved active collaboration. High task interdependence has supported efficient communication, relationship development among team members, along with higher levels of support and influence within groups, therefore proving task interdependence a positive impact on team effectiveness (Somech, Desivilya, & Lodogoster, 2009). Encouraging team members to interact with one another and share knowledge is an effective way to preventing conflict and improving job performance.

The benefit of managing emotions during problem solving

In today's work environments, teamwork has become more prevalent leading researchers to study the influence emotional intelligence may have on job performance. When employees are educated on strategies for controlling emotions during problem solving (Jordan & Troth, 2004) they are able to effectively manage and become more aware of both their own, and other team member's emotions. Emotional awareness and management abilities help maintain operational and genuine relationships between team members which could lead to improvements in performance and acquiring

organizational goals. Like task interdependence, emotional intelligence contributes to more efficient group communication and information exchange and leads to decision making as a team. Emotion is often considered the guide that promotes thinking (Mayer 2004), or in other words prioritizes decisions. While emotions facilitate thought, Mayer suggests " having a good system for emotional input could help evolve thinking patterns that lead towards more thought out decisions."

Research (Jordan & Troth, 2004) shows that conflict resolution behaviors cultivate from an individual's ability to be aware of, control and manage their own emotions and can aid in educating team members on the process of evaluating emotions. The effect of emotion on work teams has been linked to the individual group member's emotional traits and the environment in which the group works. In order to fully comprehend the emotions of both the self and others, one must understand the reasoning and meaning behind the feelings as they come up. This is a basic skill behind emotion management (Mayer, 2004). Once there is an understanding of emotions and their reasoning, an individual is able to regulate and manage one's own and others' emotion and can efficiently assist in accomplishing the group's goal.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) promotes the ability to reason with team members and establish positive social relationships, both important in workplace teams. Positive outcomes from EI training include the development of skills to avoid conflicts and other social altercations. Individuals are generally able to implement harmony and satisfaction in the

workplace and other aspects of their life by becoming more aware of their emotions and determining where they originate from.

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