"RISE ABOVE THE BATTLE -DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE AT WORKPLACE."
A study on Conflict Management and its importance in the Human Resources Development.

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Abstract : Workplace a second home

As the boundaries between work and home life continue to blur, as work assumes an ever greater part of our life, so too recruitment becomes a more emotional experience, more akin almost to a relationship than a job and the workplace is becoming a second family.

Key words: battle -Dealing , sabbaticals , home life continue .

INTRODUCTION

If we have learned anything from the 20 years since the last major recession, it is that treating people well works. There are two key issues at stake. Will we emerge with a stronger and more productive economy, or return to the dark ages? Do we believe in work-life balance, or are caring about family life a luxury for the good times?

Family-friendly policies can help get the best out of every employee. They can be used as a motivator when pay rises are scarce. And they help to ensure that employers attract and retain talent from the widest possible pool of people. Many good employers are looking at flexible options and sabbaticals as alternatives to redundancies. They are reaping the benefits.

The good news is that even though the dynamics of workplace are somewhat ambiguous and constantly changing, a calculated effort can successfully shape an organization's culture.

It's something that builds up over the years and really warrants and necessitates periodic, active review, consideration, and decision making.

Because organizational culture envelops nearly every aspect of a work environment means that it can be molded in a great number of ways. The best efforts to develop it involve multiple techniques. Living with them starts with the hiring process, or even before, for every employee.

A positive work environment can also stem from employees' sense of engagement and ownership of their organization Workplace culture can be molded in myriad ways, but one person on every staff has as much influence as perhaps the rest of the staff combined: the CEO, of course.

The way an association executive interacts with the rest of her staff, from public settings to closed-door meetings and everything in between, has a ripple effect throughout an organization, she says. "It speaks volumes to everybody."

Diverse workforce and its importance

As workforce demographics shift and global markets emerge, workplace diversity inches closer to becoming a business necessity instead of a banner that companies wave to show their commitment to embracing differences and change. Employees reap tangible and intangible benefits from workplace benefits, not the least of which include respect from co-workers and business

Mutual Respect

Workplace diversity fosters mutual respect among employees. Whether employees work in groups or teams comprised of co-workers with varied work styles, or colleagues who represent different

cultures or generations, a synergistic work environment become the norm. Although an idyllic atmosphere may be difficult to achieve, employees nevertheless recognize the many strengths and talents that diversity brings to the workplace and they gain respect for their colleagues' performance.

Conflict Resolution

Conflict inevitably occurs in the work environment. However, employees who acknowledge others' differences often also find similarities, particularly when there are common goals -- production and quality. Respect for co-workers either reduces the likelihood of conflict or facilitates an easier road to conflict resolution. The ability to resolve workplace conflict minimizes potential liability for employee complaints that would otherwise escalate to formal matters, such as litigation. Workplace diversity preserves the quality of employees' relationships with their co-workers and their supervisors.

Business Reputation

Diversity in the workplace is important for employees because it manifests itself in building a great reputation for the company, leading to increased profitability and opportunities for workers. Workplace diversity is important within the organization as well as outside. Business reputations flourish when companies demonstrate their commitment to diversity through aggressive outreach and recruiting efforts. An organization known for its ethics, fair employment practices and appreciation for diverse talent is better able to attract a wider pool of qualified applicants. Other advantages include loyalty from customers who choose to do business only with companies whose business practices are socially responsible.

Job Promotion

The importance of workplace diversity cannot be overstated when it comes to an organization's ability to reach markets in foreign countries. The appeal of global markets creates two kinds of opportunities for employees: opportunities for promotion and employee development. A global marketplace opens doors for employees with diverse language skills and multicultural understanding to build global profit centers. Employees interested in learning multinational business strategy and who are available for possible expatriate assignments may also find new and challenging career opportunities.

Increased Exposure

A diverse workplace offers more than exposure to employees from different cultures and backgrounds. Employees learn from co-workers whose work styles vary and whose attitudes about work vary from their own. This is particularly true for employees within multigenerational work environments. Traditional-generation workers learn new technology and processes from workers who belong to the tech-savvy millennial generation. Likewise, Generation X employees learn from exposure to the assertive, go-getter work ethic typical of many Baby Boomers.

Management Attitude vs. Worker Attitude

An attitude could be generally defined as the way a person responds to his or her environment, either positively or negatively. The definition of attitude is nonetheless a source of some discussion and debate.

When defining attitude, it is helpful to bear two useful conflicts in mind. The first is the existence of ambivalence or differences of attitude towards a given person, object, situation etc. from the same person, sometimes at the same time. This ambivalence indicates that attitude is inherently more complex than a simple sliding scale of positive and negative, and defining these axes in different ways is integral to identifying the essence of attitude. The second conflict to keep in mind is the degree of implicit versus explicit attitude, which is to say subconscious versus conscious. Indeed, people are often completely ignorant of their implicit attitudes, complicating the ability to study and interpret them accurately.

The takeaway here is to be specific when discussing attitudes, and define terms carefully. For a manager to say that somebody has attitude, or that somebody is being negative or positive about something, is vague and non-constructive. Instead, a manager's job is to observe and to try to pinpoint the possible causes and effects of a person's perspective on something

An organization, regardless of its structure, depends upon an effective combination of managers

supervising the performance of their direct reports and all employees making their contribution towards organizational goals. If there is a pervasive problem with the attitude of managers or workers, you can find its effects somewhere in the organization, such as high rates of absenteeism and turnover

Attitudes in the Workplace

Everyone has attitudes about many things; these are not necessarily a bad thing. One aspect of employees' attitude is the impact it can have on the people around them. People with a positive attitude can lift the spirits of their co-workers, while a person with a negative attitude can lower their spirits. Sometimes, though, this principle works in reverse, and attitudes are often more complex than positive or negative. Attitudes may affect both the employee's work performance and the performances of co-workers.

A person's attitude can be influenced by his or her environment, just as a person's attitude affects his or her environment.

Can Management Change People's Attitudes?

Some attitudes represent a dangerous element in the workplace that can spread to those closest to the employee and affect everyone's performance. Is it a manager's responsibility to help change the person's attitude? Should the employee alone be responsible? The answer is that attitudes are the confluence of individual and external stimuli, and therefore everyone is in a position of responsibility.

Still, a manager may be able to influence an employee's attitude if the root cause relates to work conditions or work environment. For example, employees may develop poor attitudes if they work long hours, if the company is having difficulties, or if they have relationship issues with the manager or another employee. Similarly, if employees feel believe there is little chance for advancement or that their efforts go unappreciated by the organization, they may develop a negative attitude. To the extent they are able, managers should strive to remedy these situations to encourage an effective work environment.

A strong work environment is vital for an effective and efficient workplace. Employees who are in a positive, encouraging work environment are more likely to seek solutions and remain loyal, even if the company is having financial difficulties. Even so, employees have some responsibility to alter their own attitudes. If management does everything in its power to create a positive environment and the employee refuses to participate, then managers can do little else to help. At times, attitudes are beyond the reach of the business to improve.

Resolving Workplace Conflict

Webster's dictionary defines conflict as a sharp disagreement or opposition of interests or ideas. Anytime people work together, conflict is a part of 'doing business'. Conflict is a normal and natural part of any workplace. When it occurs, there is a tendency for morale to be lowered, an increase in absenteeism and decreased productivity. It has been estimated that managers spend at least 25 percent of their time resolving workplace conflicts – causing lowered office performance.

Handling and resolving conflicts that arise in the workplace is one of the biggest challenges managers and employees face. Typically there are two responses to conflict: run away (avoidance) or 'battle it out'. In either case, we often feel uncomfortable or dissatisfied with the results because no resolution has been achieved. By learning to constructively resolve conflict, we can turn a potentially destructive situation into an opportunity for creativity and enhanced performance.

Sources of Conflict

There are many causes or reasons for conflict in any work setting. Some of the primary causes are:

•Poor Communication: different communication styles can lead to misunderstandings between employees or between employee and manager. Lack of communication drives conflict 'underground'.
•Different Values: any workplace is made up of individuals who see the world differently. Conflict occurs when there is a lack of acceptance and understanding of these differences.
•Differing Interests: conflict occurs when individual workers 'fight' for their personal goals, ignoring organizational goals and organizational well-being.
•Scarce Resources: too often, employees feel they have to compete for available resources in order to do their job. In a resource scarce environment, this causes conflicts – despite awareness of how scarce resources may be.

•Personality Clashes: all work environments are made up of differing personalities. Unless colleagues understand and accept each other's approach to work and problem-solving, conflict will occur.
•Poor Performance: when one or more individuals within a work unit are not performing - not working up to potential – and this is not addressed, conflict is inevitable.

Addressing Conflict

There are a number of ways that can be utilized to address workplace conflict:

•Avoidance: 'hiding our head in the sand', hoping the conflict will go away.
•Collaboration: working together to find a mutually beneficial solution.
•Compromise: finding the middle ground whereby a 'little is given and little is gotten'.
•Competing: 'may the best person win'.
•Accommodation: surrendering our own needs and wishes to please the other person.

It is generally believed that either collaboration or compromise are the most productive forms of addressing conflict because there is not a winner or loser but rather a working together for the best possible solution.

Conflict Resolution

Arriving at a positive resolution of conflict is always the ultimate goal. In resolving conflict, it is important to make sure you do the following:

•Clearly articulate the causes of the conflict – openly acknowledging there will be differing perceptions of the problem(s).
•Make a clear statement of why you want the conflict resolved and reasons to work on conflict.
•Communication of how you want the conflict resolved.
•Address the issues face-to-face (notes, email correspondence, memos are not a productive way to resolve differences).
•Stick to the issues. In trying to resolve conflict, it is tempting to resort to name calling or bring up issues from the past. It is important to address specific behaviors and situations if change is to take place.
•Take time out if necessary. In the resolution of a conflict, our emotions may interfere with arriving at a productive resolution. If this transpires, take a time-out and resume resolving the conflict at another designated time.

H.R - The mediator

Resolving Conflict Situations

To manage conflict effectively you must be a skilled communicator. That includes creating an open communication environment in your unit by encouraging employees to talk about work issues. Listening to employee concerns will foster an open environment. Make sure you really understand what employees are saying by asking questions and focusing on their perception of the problem. To learn more about communication skills, see Chapter 13: Communication.
Whether you have two employees who are fighting for the desk next to the window or one employee who wants the heat on and another who doesn't, your immediate response to conflict situations is essential. Here are some tips you can use when faced with employees who can't resolve their own conflicts.

•Acknowledge that a difficult situation exists. Honesty and clear communication play an important role in the resolution process. Acquaint yourself with what's happening and be open about the problem.
•Let individuals express their feelings. Some feelings of anger and/or hurt usually accompany conflict situations. Before any kind of problem-solving can take place, these emotions should be expressed and acknowledged.
•Define the problem. What is the stated problem? What is the negative impact on the work or relationships? Are differing personality styles parts of the problem? Meet with employees separately at first and question them about the situation.
•Determine underlying need. The goal of conflict resolution is not to decide which person is right or wrong; the goal is to reach a solution that everyone can live with. Looking first for needs, rather than solutions, is a

powerful tool for generating win/win options. To discover needs, you must try to find out why people want the solutions they initially proposed. Once you understand the advantages their solutions have for them, you have discovered their needs.

•Find common areas of agreement, no matter how small:

oAgree on the problem
oAgree on the procedure to follow
oAgree on worst fears
oAgree on some small change to give an experience of success

•Find solutions to satisfy needs:

oProblem-solve by generating multiple alternatives
oDetermine which actions will be taken
oMake sure involved parties buy into actions. (Total silence may be a sign of passive resistance.) Be sure you get real agreement from everyone.

•Determine follow-up you will take to monitor actions. You may want to schedule a follow-up meeting in about two weeks to determine how the parties are doing.
•Determine what you'll do if the conflict goes unresolved. If the conflict is causing a disruption in the department and it remains unresolved, you may need to explore other avenues. An outside facilitator (such as the Staff Ombuds Office) may be able to offer other insights on solving the problem. In some cases the conflict becomes a performance issue, and may become a topic for coaching sessions, performance appraisals, or disciplinary action

SUMMARY

Avoiding conflict is often the easiest way to deal with it. It does not however make it go away but rather pushes it underground, only to have it resurface in a new form. By actively resolving conflict when it occurs, we can create a more positive work environment for everyone.

"Whenever you're in conflict with someone, there is one factor that can make the difference between damaging your relationship and deepening it. That factor is attitude."-William James

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