Managing Conflict and Stress

Comportamiento organizacional

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A Modern View of Conflict

- A Conflict Continuum
- Functional versus Dysfunctional Conflict
- Antecedents of Conflict
- Desired Outcomes of Conflict

Major Sources of Conflict

- Personality Conflicts
- Inter-group Conflict
- Cross-Cultural Conflict
Managing Conflict

• Programming Functional Conflict
• Alternative Styles for Handling Dysfunctional Conflict
• Third-Party Interventions: Alternative Dispute Resolution
Conflict: “A process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party.”

Functional conflict serves the organization’s interests while

dysfunctional conflict threatens the organization’s interests.
Antecedents of Conflict

- Incompatible personalities or value systems.
- Overlapping or unclear job boundaries.
- Competition for limited resources.
- Interdepartment/intergroup competition.
- Inadequate communication.
- Interdependent tasks.
- Organizational complexity.
Antecedents of Conflict (continued)

- Unreasonable or unclear policies, standards, or rules.
- Unreasonable deadlines or extreme time pressure.
- Collective decision making.
- Decision making by consensus.
- Unmet expectations.
- Unresolved or suppressed conflict.
**Desired Outcomes of Conflict**

**Agreement:** Strive for equitable and fair agreements that last.

**Stronger relationships:** Build bridges of goodwill and trust for the future.

**Learning:** Greater self-awareness and creative problem solving.
Tips for Managers Whose Employees Are Having a Personality Conflict

1. Follow company policies for diversity, anti-discrimination, and sexual harassment.
2. Investigate and document conflict.
3. If appropriate, take corrective action (e.g., feedback or B Mod).
4. If necessary, attempt informal dispute resolution.
5. Refer difficult conflicts to human resource specialists or hired counselors for formal resolution attempts and other interventions.
Minimizing Inter-group Conflict: An Updated Contact Model

Level of perceived Inter-group conflict tends to increase when:

- Conflict within the group is high
- There are negative interactions between groups (or between members of those groups)
- Influential third-party gossip about other group is negative

Recommended actions:

- Work to eliminate specific negative interactions between groups (and members).
- Conduct team building to reduce intragroup conflict and prepare employees for cross-functional teamwork.
- Encourage personal friendships and good working relationships across groups and departments.
- Foster positive attitudes toward members of other groups (empathy, compassion, sympathy).
- Avoid or neutralize negative gossip across groups or departments.
## Skills and Best Practices: How to Build Cross-Cultural Relationships

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<th>Behavior</th>
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<td>Be sensitive to the needs of others</td>
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<td>Be cooperative, rather than overly competitive</td>
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<td>Advocate inclusive (participative) leadership</td>
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<td>Compromise rather than dominate</td>
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<td>Build rapport through conversations</td>
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<td>Be compassionate and understanding</td>
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<td>Avoid conflict by emphasizing harmony</td>
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<td>Nurture others (develop and mentor)</td>
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Five Conflict-Handling Styles

Concern for Others

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Concern for Self

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What is your Conflict-Handling Style?

• How important are conflict-handling skills in the modern workplace? Explain.

• Did this instrument do a reasonable good job of identifying your primary and backup conflict-handling styles? Explain.

• Do you need to improve your conflict-handling skills? Explain.

• In your opinion, which conflict-handling style would tend to be most successful in today’s workplace? Which is the least successful?

• What is your experience with managers who had dysfunctional conflict-handling styles? What was the impact on work motivation and job satisfaction?
Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Techniques

**Facilitation:** Third party gets disputants to deal directly and constructively with each other.

**Conciliation:** Neutral third party acts as communication link between disputants.

**Peer review:** Impartial co-workers hear both sides and render decision that may or may not be binding.

**Ombudsman:** Respected and trusted member of the organization hears grievances confidentially.

**Mediation:** Trained third-party guides disputants toward their own solution.

**Arbitration:** Neutral third-party hears both sides in a court-like setting and renders a binding decision.
Conflict Defined

- Is a process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect, something that the first party cares about.
  - Is that point in an ongoing activity when an interaction “crosses over” to become an interparty conflict.
- Encompasses a wide range of conflicts that people experience in organizations
  - Incompatibility of goals
  - Differences over interpretations of facts
  - Disagreements based on behavioral expectations
Transitions in Conflict Thought

Traditional View of Conflict

The belief that all conflict is harmful and must be avoided.

Causes:
- Poor communication
- Lack of openness
- Failure to respond to employee needs
Transitions in Conflict Thought (cont’d)

Human Relations View of Conflict

The belief that conflict is a natural and inevitable outcome in any group.

Interactionist View of Conflict

The belief that conflict is not only a positive force in a group but that it is absolutely necessary for a group to perform effectively.
**Functional versus Dysfunctional Conflict**

**Functional Conflict**
Conflict that supports the goals of the group and improves its performance.

**Dysfunctional Conflict**
Conflict that hinders group performance.
Types of Conflict

Task Conflict
Conflicts over content and goals of the work.

Relationship Conflict
Conflict based on interpersonal relationships.

Process Conflict
Conflict over how work gets done.
Stage I: Potential Opposition or Incompatibility

- Communication
  - Semantic difficulties, misunderstandings, and “noise”

- Structure
  - Size and specialization of jobs
  - Jurisdictional clarity/ambiguity
  - Member/goal incompatibility
  - Leadership styles (close or participative)
  - Reward systems (win-lose)
  - Dependence/interdependence of groups

- Personal Variables
  - Differing individual value systems
  - Personality types
Stage II: Cognition and Personalization

**Perceived Conflict**
Awareness by one or more parties of the existence of conditions that create opportunities for conflict to arise.

**Felt Conflict**
Emotional involvement in a conflict creating anxiety, tenseness, frustration, or hostility.

**Conflict Definition**
- Negative Emotions
- Positive Feelings
Stage III: Intentions

Intentions

Decisions to act in a given way.

Cooperativeness:
• Attempting to satisfy the other party’s concerns.

Assertiveness:
• Attempting to satisfy one’s own concerns.
Stage III: Intentions (cont’d)

Competing
A desire to satisfy one’s interests, regardless of the impact on the other party to the conflict.

Collaborating
A situation in which the parties to a conflict each desire to satisfy fully the concerns of all parties.

Avoiding
The desire to withdraw from or suppress a conflict.
Stage III: Intentions (cont’d)

Accommodating

The willingness of one party in a conflict to place the opponent’s interests above his or her own.

Compromising

A situation in which each party to a conflict is willing to give up something.
Stage IV: Behavior

Conflict Management

The use of resolution and stimulation techniques to achieve the desired level of conflict.
Stage V: Outcomes

- Functional Outcomes from Conflict
  - Increased group performance
  - Improved quality of decisions
  - Stimulation of creativity and innovation
  - Encouragement of interest and curiosity
  - Provision of a medium for problem-solving
  - Creation of an environment for self-evaluation and change

- Creating Functional Conflict
  - Reward dissent and punish conflict avoiders.
Stage V: Outcomes

Dysfunctional Outcomes from Conflict

- Development of discontent
- Reduced group effectiveness
- Retarded communication
- Reduced group cohesiveness
- Infighting among group members overcomes group goals
Stress

- Stress, behavioral, physical, or psychological response to stressors
  - Stress is not merely nervous tension
  - Stress can have positive consequences
  - Stress is not something to be avoided
  - The complete absence of stress is death
  - Stress is inevitable
Stress

A dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint, or demand related to what he or she desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important.
Constraints
Forces that prevent individuals from doing what they desire.

Demands
The loss of something desired.
Potential Sources of Stress

* Environmental Factors
  - Economic uncertainties of the business cycle
  - Political uncertainties of political systems
  - Technological uncertainties of technical innovations
  - Terrorism in threats to physical safety and security
Potential Sources of Stress

Organizational Factors

- Task demands related to the job
- Role demands of functioning in an organization
- Interpersonal demands created by other employees
- Organizational structure (rules and regulations)
- Organizational leadership (managerial style)
- Organization’s life stage (growth, stability, or decline)
Potential Sources of Stress (cont’d)

- Individual Factors
  - Family and personal relationships
  - Economic problems from exceeding earning capacity
  - Personality problems arising for basic disposition

- Individual Differences
  - Perceptual variations of how reality will affect the individual’s future.
  - Greater job experience moderates stress effects.
  - Social support buffers job stress.
  - Internal locus of control lowers perceived job stress.
  - Strong feelings of self-efficacy reduce reactions to job stress.
Consequences of Stress

High Levels of Stress

Physiological Symptoms
Psychological Symptoms
Behavioral Symptoms
Managing Stress

**Individual Approaches**
- Implementing time management
- Increasing physical exercise
- Relaxation training
- Expanding social support network
Managing Stress

Organizational Approaches

- Improved personnel selection and job placement
- Training
- Use of realistic goal setting
- Redesigning of jobs
- Increased employee involvement
- Improved organizational communication
- Offering employee sabbaticals
- Establishment of corporate wellness programs