Effectiveness of Conflict Management Games and Activities in Workplace

Dr.Radha GaneshKumar[1], Dr.L.Sujatha[2], **Mr.K.Guru[3]**,

[1]Head of the Department, Department of Management Studies, SRM Valliammai Engineering College, Chennai.
[2]Assistant Professor (Sel.G), Department of Management Studies, SRM Valliammai Engineering College, Chennai.
[3]Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies, SRM Valliammai Engineering College, Chennai.

Abstract

Conflict is a normal and usual part of the workplace. It happens in every business. For any team that wants to accomplish its goals, conflict is inevitable. While differences will occur, the effect doesn't have to be negative. Conflict can produce openings. Conflict challenges us to think harder, to be more creative, to achieve greater understanding, and to search for alternative approaches that are more effective, more sustainable, and more successful. Unresolved conflict, however, can result in the dissolution of a group. When unaddressed tension occurs in the workplace, it can decrease productivity, hamper production, and increase absenteeism. It leads to increased stress among staff, decreased morale, and at worst, aggression or violence. Studies recommend that managers spend at least 25 percent of their time handling internal conflicts. This affects the productivity of the work force and can have a dramatic impact on organizational performance. Real-life situations, especially in the realms of competition and partnership, games will reveal the conventional way conflict is dealt with in the squad. Teams can begin to appreciate their usual solutions, and then go on to find more effective methods for dealing with similar scenarios. Experiential exercises allow team members to learn their reactions to conflict and their subsequent actions. In this journal, the observational analysis with regard to future workplace conflicts, we try to explore the means and the skills to bring about positive results by playing in conflict-resolution games, improve teamwork and challenge inefficient processes to create a team that is more unified and more successful.

Introduction

Conflict, like any key business activity, must be managed. The dispute resolution games in this book are designed to enable team members to develop their capacity to resolve conflict and ultimately transform conflict into collaboration. Games and competitions offer an enjoyable experience for squad members to encounter real conflict: filled with emotions, expectations, and contact barriers.

Components of Conflict

Conflict results from a clash in goals, interests, or values in a domain where people care about the outcome. The seeds of discontent which are sown in doubt about, or frustration with, the common objective and how to achieve it. Further, achieving collective objectives will clash with achieving individual goals within the organisation. When it comes to conflict, various differences may be involved. Team participants may disagree on what the issue is; or, they may agree on what the problem is but have a different viewpoint about it; or, they may share the same opinion but have different ideas on how to solve the problem.

• Communication—Communication can both cause and remedy dispute. As with all workplace skills, effective communication must be learned. A lack of open communication tends to drive conflict underground, which may create a downward spiral of confusing and hostility. Effective communication (including active listening) is the medium by which confrontation can be avoided, facilitated, or solved.

• Rivalry—The competition for limited resources will certainly create conflict. Time, money, space, supplies, facilities, and equipment are all valuable resources. Competition over either of these programs will inevitably lead to interpersonal or interdepartmental conflict. Whenever workers compete over scarce resources, prestige, or position in the organization's hierarchy, disagreement can occur.

• Inconsistency—Whenever market laws are changed, inconsistently applied, or nonexistent, misunderstandings are likely to occur. Associates deserve to learn and understand corporate laws and policies; they should not have to guess. Inconsistency in the workplace is a common source of stress.

• Diversity—Individuals are individuals, and they vary in many ways. This holes are also a starting point for conflict. There are various templates on the way we deal around individuals and problems. Team participants need to understand their own personality to learn how to accept differing styles. Conflict can also be caused by differing personal convictions. "Factions" in the office will lead to gossip, mistrust, and ultimately conflict. The society must learn to tolerate diversity in the workplace and to cooperate as a team. Emphasizing disparities helps team members look for common land. Most teams are varied in age, gender, culture, experience, and expertise. They may also be diverse in race, creed, religion, or disability. While all this diversity may result in friction, teams that learn to embrace their differences and appreciate revolutionary ideas can turn conflict into imaginative teamwork.

• Perspective—Just because two or three workers may have opposing types, they may also have conflicting opinions. They will see the same case in drastically different ways. For example, we already have four generations in the workplace. Each age brings a fresh perspective.

• Interdependency—Interdependency and stronger coordination within an organization are also sources of conflict. The more often people interact, the more space there is for conflict. Conflicting burdens can occur when two or more associates or agencies are responsible for separate actions with the same deadline. Interdependency demands that people understand others' points of view, interests, and objectives. Teamwork and growing levels of participation within an organization will require a greater need for conflict resolution skills.

• Emotional Intelligence—Emotional intelligence is a personal trait that is really useful in minimizing stress. The number of an individual's emotional intelligence is referred to as that person's emotional knowledge quotient, or EQ. People with high EQs are empathetic and sensitive to the feelings of others. Dealing with employees as human people with real lives is often overlooked in the noisy workplace. People with high emotional intelligence can do this in a competent way, while maintaining appropriate boundaries. The good news is that everybody can improve his or her EQ by learning the skills to effectively combine integrity with feelings like sensitivity and empathy.

Characteristics of Conflict-Resolution Games

The confrontation games are appropriate to use in counseling sessions and employee meetings, as well as team-building programs. You may also want to try them as drills at free debates or grievance airings. This games contain the following features:

1. They are impactful. Though the games themselves take little time (some as little as 15 minutes), the lessons learned leave a lasting impression.

2. They are cheap. There are very few props available, and many of the props can be reused again and again before requiring replacement.

3. They are participative. The games involve the entire team—no one stays on the sidelines. Games help people focus their time and attention, while making them think, communicate, and have fun—all while learning to be stronger team players.

4. They are engaging. Because team members find solutions to the issues collaboratively, they are engaged in the process.

These games will prove to be effective time and time again.

The Costs of Ignoring Conflict

Mostly, people fear conflict and see it as something to discourage. Some may even have the impression that all conflict is bad. Because conflict is a subject where there is a tendency to feel significant discomfort, many may choose to fully escape conflict. The hazard of this tactic is that the conflict festers under the surface and then bursts out in tiny ways. Perhaps a team member is unresponsive to an e-mail request; or someone fails to ask for help and thus takes much longer than necessary on a task; or people simply ignore each other. Conflict under the soil is very damaging. It splits a squad as people take sides and try to build up their forces. It fosters competition, distrust, poor teamwork, and low productivity.

While disagreement may be possible to deter or ignore in the short term, this can result in unresolved conflict costs. This costs can include vacancies, increased absenteeism, health problems, and even stress-

related workers' compensation claims. The use of useful resources to address and resolve conflict early, and to promote teamwork in the workplace, is a necessary aspect of doing business.

Transforming Conflict into Collaboration
Engaging in disagreement doesn't have to be destructive or detrimental. In reality, it could be positive. Conflict can be helpful in introducing critical changes within a job environment. When faced with conflict, there are five different approaches to cope with the situation:
• Ignore—We could put off doing anything at all.
• Win-Lose—We should opt to claim leverage and "win" over our opponent.
• Lose-Win—We may choose to acquiesce and "give in" to the other person.
• Lose-Lose—We should settle to a settlement, where the sides giving everything up.
• Win-Win—We can choose an option where those involved in the conflict work together to discover a win-win solution—a shared solution.
Anyone who takes the time to learn rivalry realizes its potential to transform what happens into something better. That does not make conflict easy, but it does make it easier to tolerate as a natural part of our lives. If we make this philosophical transformation, we will therefore have to embrace the principle of conflict and the lessons that come with it. A thoughtful approach to conflict strengthens the team and sets the stage to resolve the disagreement. We get a chance to know our team better, to build morale, and to allow easier touch. Because our conventional knee-jerk approach to conflict is to strike back or clash, a collaborative strategy is often counterintuitive. Games present to teams their approaches to conflict, explain the consequences of those reactions, and then point the way to improved strategies—all while the players are having fun.
Conflict can clear the root issues and bring out disagreements so the team can deal on them and learn from them. However, just because conflict will yield a good outcome does not mean it's comfortable. Still, the best approach is for a team to deal with discord and to recognize that it's a normal part of living together, and that it can also benefit the society. Conflict—with the right case, tackled in the right way—can be optimistic. It is by conflict that an appreciation of the need for some important changes can be found.

Why Use Conflict-Resolution Games?
Games will reveal real conflict—along with emotions, personalities, misunderstandings, and responses. Through sports, the team faces friction in a secure environment. Competent facilitation is the key. As facilitator, you need to be aware of what's going on, take notes, motivate, redirect, and even disrupt something for a mid-activity chat where necessary. Engaging in conflict can be delicate ground for those on the team, but you need to have support and inspiration as they develop the skills and become secure with them.
You can see both of these games suggest small teams—this is to keep all players involved in the process. Another way to maximize attendance is to use "observers" who can offer excellent "big picture" feedback during the debriefing session. To maintain a high degree of involvement throughout the game and in the debriefing period, con- sider throwing out the debate questions found at the conclusion of the games to small teams for a self-debriefing prior to the big group conversation. This will mean that everyone relates the encounter to their situation and con- tributes to the discussion. Just as important as getting everyone involved in the game is getting everyone involved in the dialogue, where the bulk of the learning takes place.
When teams discover the positives of confrontation, they begin to lose some of the anxiety associated with conflict. Unit-building games are the perfect way for a team to enjoy such benefits. The debriefing conversation with each of the dispute-resolution games takes longer than the actual play, because attendees are changing certain core beliefs and principles regarding conflict. Be sure you allot plenty of time for the conference, so keeping it short gives the team the necessary time it takes for others to make the move.

The games in this book will help the team become aware of and learn the characteristics and skills needed to resolve—or transform— conflict. You will find games that build trust, reinforce EQ, improve verbal and nonverbal communication, contradict perceptions, and appreciate diversity. Use these games to encourage the teams to search for collaborative solutions in crisis situations. Use these games to inspire teams to witness the results of successfully turning discord into partnership. Use these games to take your squad from a group of people to a high-performing unit.

1.Facilitation\s
The role of the facilitator is essential to a team's effective navigation through the conflict process. The facilitator needs to pay close attention to team members as they witness the process. The actions of the team will provide insight for the debrief discussion. The facilitator thus benefits from a high EQ, which allows him or her to notice the underlying emotions the team may be experiencing. During the debriefing session at the conclusion of each meeting, it's important for the facilitator to ensure everyone's participation. This maintains a high degree of dedication as team members transition the game to real life and begins to build confidence in the new skills.

Conflict is fine for a team as long as it is handled in an acceptable manner. By engaging in conflict-resolution activities, members will become more accepting of others' beliefs, perspectives, and perceptions. Interacting on the informal level that conflict-resolution games deliver can change attitudes and behaviors, eventually providing an opportunity to build a more united and trustworthy team. Some may be hesitant to play because of the subject matter, however with ample climate-setting and rapport-building activities, and skilled facilitation, they can ease into the games naturally. You will well discover that the more resistant the human, the more dramatic the outcome.

Once team members have discovered the positives of dealing with confrontation—saving time, increased morale, better relationships, enhanced creativity, and more open communication—they are usually more likely to encourage conflict than reject it. And if they may be ready to welcome conflict, it may also be daunting; after all, it may be completely new ground for others. It is vital for the facilitator to allow team members to practice true conflict in order to observe the actual process, which is the same in games as in life. A team that feels empowered to do this becomes a resilient, solid, and effective team. The group would trans- form into a team that looks for the answers within—a team of people who trust and respect one another.

2. Leadership
If management wants the team to appreciate the true potential of conflict- settlement games, they must get involved in the process. Conflict resolution is an emerging challenge for any team, and it's important that leadership understands the skills needed to build a team that is confident in their ability to experience conflict and to transform that conflict into something constructive and successful. When leaders are aware of the expertise needed to do this, they will validate and encourage the continued application of those skills. Those in leadership roles will provide a supportive atmosphere by having opportunities for regular team meetings, along with activities to keep these skills fresh, and by broadening the comfort room for using the skills within the entire team.

Benefits of Conflict-Resolution Games
When learners are involved in the process, they take note of the techniques they know, they recall the rules, and they get comfortable with the skills. When they are more at home with the ideas, it is more likely they will use the experience in the workplace. Here's why:
• Games help the team experience the process. They experience the dispute phase in a friendly, supportive environment that helps the team to develop proactive solutions and practice the skills needed to resolve confrontation.
• Games help the staff understand key points—points that are appropriate, coherent, and unforgettable. Games are important vehicles to hammer home critical ideas.

• Games help build morale. They provide a backdrop for team members to take care of their studying and have the inspiration to make it fun in the process.

• Games help team members learn to trust each other. They provide forums for sharing experiences, thoughts, and conversations as the team finds solutions. Increased understanding and appreciation for each other's viewpoints are valuable by-products of the dialogue during the operation debriefing.

• Games help team members become more agile and versatile. Members quickly consider and appreciate the fact that there may be more than one way to solve a problem.

• Games provide opportunities for team members to affirm acceptable behaviors. When teamwork is shown, when constructive listening is shown, or when trust is built, a leader may demonstrate gratitude for the optimistic responses elicited from a team-building game and debriefing session.

• Games provide opportunities to connect. When we feel connected, we are more likely to look for a way to share rather than compete.

Conclusion

The topic of conflict fits well with the concept of games. Games are inherently competitive. Competition breeds disagreement. In competitive conditions, there is generally a winner and a loser. In a consensus, a team can agree something inferior without considering any alternatives. The end goal of conflict games is to expose group tactics. Experiential learning environments and simulations will challenge a team to deal through the current challenges of conflict—differing personality characteristics, attitudes, assumptions, and ways of thinking—and provide insights that can be implemented in real life. The best feature of games is that they inspire teams to learn new skills in a fun and entertaining way.

References

1. Abbott, K. (2006). A Review of Employment Relations Theories. Problems and Perspectives in Management, 1, 187 -199
2. Adejimola, A. S. (2009). Language and communication in conflict resolution: Journal of Law and Conflict Resolution, 1(1), 001-009
3. Ali D. Akkirman & Drew L. Harris, (2005),"Organizational communication satisfaction in the virtual workplace", Journal of Management Development, 24(5)397 – 409
4. Amason, A.C. & Schweiger, D.M. (1994), Resolving the paradox of conflict, strategic decision making and organizational performance, International Journal of Conflict Management,(5),239-254.
   Jyoti Choudrie, (2005). Understanding the role of communication and conflict on reengineering team development, Journal of Enterprise Information Management, 18 (1), 64 - 78
5. Kazimoto, P. (2013.) Analysis of Conflict Management and Leadership for Organizational Change. International Journal of Research in Social Sciences, 3(1),16-25.
6. Leat, M. (2008). Employee Relations. Edinburg Business School, Heriot-Wat University Lunenburg, F. C., (2010): Formal Communication Channels: Upward, Downward, Horizontal, and External Focus On Colleges, Universities, And Schools, 4(1).
7. Miranda, S. M., & Bostrom, R. P., 1993-94. The impact of group support systems on group conflict and conflict management, Journal of Management Information Systems, 10(3), 63-95.
8. Price, J. L. (1997), "Handbook of organizational measurement", International Journal of Manpower Practice, 18(6), 303-558.
9. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Putnam, L. L. (1988). Communication and interpersonal conflict in organizations. Management Quarterly, 1, 293- 300.
10. Putnam, L. L., (1994) "Productive Conflict: Negotiation as Implicit Coordination", International Journal of Conflict Management, 5(3), 284 – 298

11. Putnam, L.L. (2006) Definitions and Approaches to Conflict and Communication", in Oetzel, J.G., and Ting- Richmond, V.P., McCroskey J.C. & McCroskey L.L., (2005),
12. The Role of Conflict Management in Improving Relationships at Work:
13. The Moderating Effect of Communication. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305682395_The_Role_of_Conflict_Management_in_I mproving_Relationships_at_Work_The_Moderating_Effect_of_Communication [accessed May 09 2021].