

MODULE: IV

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Conflict Management

Conflict management is the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict while increasing the positive aspects of conflict. The aim of conflict management is to enhance learning and group outcomes, including effectiveness or performance in an organizational setting.

What is Conflict Management?

Conflict management is the practice of being able to identify and handle conflicts sensibly, fairly, and efficiently. It is the process of dealing with (perceived) incompatibilities or disagreements arising from, for example, diverging opinions, objectives, and needs.

Since conflicts in a business are a natural part of the workplace, it is important that there are people who understand conflicts and know how to resolve them. This is important in today's market more than ever.

Everyone is striving to show how valuable they are to the company they work for and at times, this can lead to disputes with other members of the team.

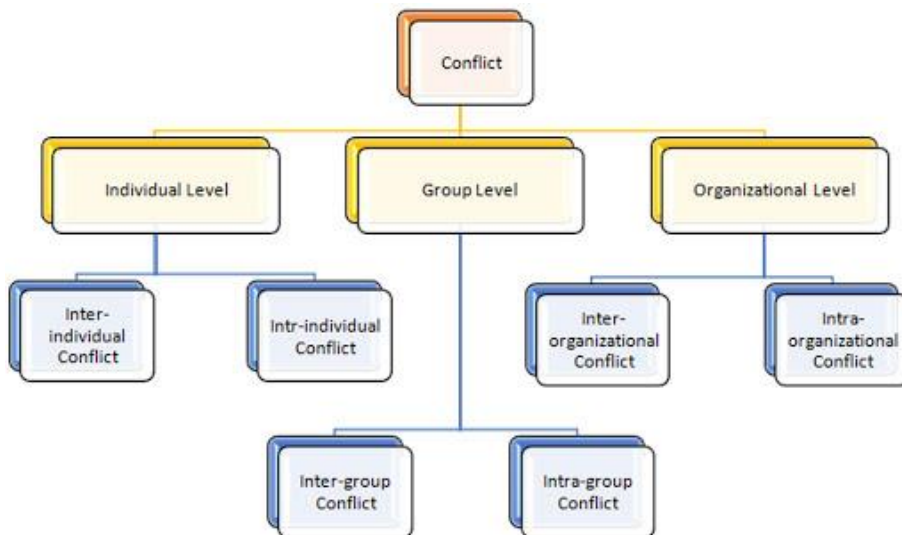
Types of Conflict

1. **Intrapersonal Conflict:** - The intrapersonal conflict is conflict experienced by a single individual, when his or her own goals, values or roles diverge. A lawyer may experience a conflict of values when he represents a defendant he knows to be guilty of the charges brought against him. A worker whose goal it is to earn her MBA might experience an intrapersonal conflict when she's offered a position that requires her to transfer to a different state. Or it might be a role conflict where a worker might have to choose between dinner with clients or dinner with family.
2. **Interpersonal Conflict:** - As you might guess, interpersonal conflict is conflict due to differences in goals, value, and styles between two or more people who are required to interact. As this type of conflict is between individuals, the conflicts can get very personal.
3. **Intragroup Conflict:** - Intragroup conflict is conflict within a group or team, where members conflict over goals or procedures. For instance, a board of directors may want to take a risk to launch a set of products on behalf of their organization, in spite of dissenting opinions among several members. Intragroup conflict takes place among them as they argue the pros and cons of taking such a risk.
4. **Intergroup Conflict:** - Intergroup conflict is when conflict between groups inside and outside an organization disagree on various issues. Conflict can also arise between two groups within the same organization, and that also would be considered intergroup conflict.

Within those types of conflict, one can experience horizontal conflict, which is conflict with others that are at the same peer level as you, or vertical conflict, which is conflict with a manager or a subordinate.

Level of Conflicts in an Organization

Conflict is a disagreement about the allocation of scarce resources or clashes regarding goals, values and so on, can occur on the interpersonal and organizational level. In other words, conflict has been defined as a process in which an individual purposely makes an effort to offset the efforts of another individual by some form of blockage that causes frustration to the latter in accomplishing his goals or furthering of his interests.



Generally, there are three level of conflicts in an organization life which are as follows:

1. Individual Level Conflict

A person joins any organization basically to satisfy his varying needs. He faces a conflict within himself when he perceives that organization is not satisfying his needs in accordance with his perceived standards. The analysis of

conflict may start at the individual level itself. Since an organization is composed of various individuals, many conflicts develop at individual level. The individual level conflicts may be analyzed in two ways: intra-individual and inter-individual or interpersonal.

a) Intra-individual Conflicts

Intra-individual conflicts arise within a person and are of psychological nature. Many times, the individual remain conflict-hidden, but he fails to perceive it. However, they may be latent or overt. Such conflicts are generally related to the goals a person wants to achieve or roles in the manner he wants to achieve. Hence, intra-individual conflicts are of two types:

i) Goal Conflict

Goal conflict occurs when two or more motives block each other. In other words, an individual in the organization faces a goal conflict when he discovers many alternatives of goals which he wants to achieve, being equally attractive, but actually exclusive. He is caught in his own web and faces a serious intra-personal conflict.

ii) Role Conflict

An individual performs a number of roles. Role conflict arises when a person has alternative ways of achieving organizational goals and he is asked a behavior which may ensure the achievement of goals. A

superior is respected to get things done but he is internally in tension whether to apply autocratic, participative or free night technique of direction.

b) Inter-individual Conflicts

Inter-personal conflicts arise between two individual having competition for achieving scarce things, such as status, power, position, promotion or resources or they may pick up conflict due to their divergent opinions, attitudes or values. Disagreement among individuals in an organization may arise for variety of reasons such as: personal differences, value of interest differences, perceptual differences, power and position differences, resource constraints.

2. Group Level Conflicts

A group constitutes two or more persons who interact in such a way that each person influences and is influenced by others. Group level conflicts refer to the disagreement, competition or clash between two groups of the organization, say between supervisory staff and the workers or between management and trade unions. Group level conflicts further can be classified as inter-group conflicts and intra-group conflicts.

a) Inter-group Conflicts

Inter-group conflict arises out of the interaction of various groups. There are many factors in the organization which determine the inter-group relationship. Inter-group conflicts over authority, jurisdiction and resources are exceedingly common. Every group is in at least partial conflict with every other group it interacts with. Most of the departments in the organization compete for the allocation of scarce resources and power. They differ in goals, act, work activities, power and prestige. The seeds of inter-group conflict are shown in these differences.

Research findings generally confirm the following sources of inter-group conflicts:

- Incompatible goals
- Task interdependence
- Resource allocation
- Competitive incentive and reward system
- Line and staff conflicts
- Differences in value and perception
- Heterogeneity of members
- Communication distortion
- Participative decision making
- Low formalization

b) Intra-group Conflict

Intra-group is the group consisting of a number of persons whose interactions at a given time generate a system of values, norms and sanctions appropriate to the nature of the task on which they are working, which has created

a set of well-defined role and status relations which are interdependent. Intra-group conflict may arise in three situations:

- When group faces a novel problem of task.
- Where new values are imported from the social environment into the group.
- Where a person's extra-group role comes into conflict with his intra-group role.

3. Organizations Level Conflict

Conflict at individual level and at group level takes place within the organizational setting. Conflict at organization level may be intra-organizational and inter-organizational. Individuals in the organizations have many conflicting organizational cross pressures operating on them. The following examples indicate the source of potential conflict:

The boss wants more production; subordinates want more considerations. Customers want faster deliveries; peers request schedule delay. Consultants suggest change; subordinates resist change. The rule book provides a formula; the staffs say it will not work.

Types of organization level conflicts are as follows:

a) Intra-organizations Conflict

The reasons of conflicts in an organization are many but mainly three kinds of internal strains can be identified:

- i. The Horizontal Strain:** The competition between different functional sub-systems.
- ii. Vertical Strain:** The competition between various level in three hierarchy for power, privilege or reward and
- iii. Line and Staff Conflict:** Line and staff conflict further can be classified as horizontal conflict and vertical conflict.

b) Inter-organizations Conflict

The basis of inter-organizations conflicts are essentially the same as three basis of inter-group conflict. Most commonly cited reasons for inter-organizations conflicts like incompatible objectives, over status, prestige and money are present in inter-organizations conflicts also. In other words, inter-organizations conflict is more extensive, more diffusing than the conflicts amongst persons or groups.

Team Conflict and How to Resolve Them

Conflicts are a natural part of life, both in our personal lives and in the workplace. Workplace conflicts occur because team members don't always agree or know how to work together despite their differences. These differences could be in the way they manage their tasks, their work styles or personalities.

For a team to work together effectively, conflicts need to be resolved in a timely and professional manner that minimizes disruption to productivity. The ability to resolve team conflicts is crucial to the success of any organization.

What is team conflict?

Team conflicts arise when there are disagreements over their goals, methods or needs of the team. Conflicts can also occur when there are differing personalities. At first, these conflicts may seem commonplace, but failing to resolve them could hurt productivity and overall morale. When conflicts between team members arise, addressing these disagreements and coming to a mutual understanding allows everyone to collaborate harmoniously and productively.

Conflict resolution is a valuable leadership skill to have. Individuals with the ability to recognize conflicts, acknowledge differences and find quick and peaceful resolution are essential to any organization.

Why is conflict resolution important?

Conflict resolution is important for the success of any team. Leaving a conflict unresolved can negatively impact morale and productivity, resulting in a tense and uncomfortable work environment for all. Resolving conflicts in the workplace allows teams to trust each other and work better together to achieve their goals. Conflict resolution allows team members to understand each other better and create smoother working relationships in the future.

Team conflict resolution

Conflicts are inevitable, even in the most engaged of workplaces. Regardless of the source of the conflict, if they are left unresolved, conflicts can quickly impact employee morale and productivity.

It's important to practice the following skills when resolving team conflict in the workplace:

1. **Create a healthy culture:** - Treat everyone in your team fairly and equally, provide them with praise and recognition, and be open and honest at all times.
2. **Learn to spot the early signs of conflict:** - Read team members' body language (e.g. crossed arms), facial expressions and tone of voice.
3. **Deal with conflict promptly:** - Take action early to help your people resolve the situation before it escalates.
4. **Develop rules for handling conflict:** - Ensure team members listen to one another, respect each other's points of view, and refrain from interrupting each other.
5. **Never take sides:** - Your role is to help the team members address the issues causing the conflict and to reach a resolution that works well for them.

Collaboration skills

Collaboration skills help you work well with others to complete a task or develop ideas together. When you collaborate with others, you work together to achieve a common goal. For instance, a design team may use this skill set to develop new products or solve an existing problem for customers. Regardless of the task at hand, cooperation skills allow you to work effectively in a team, making it one of the most sought-after skills for different job roles.

Often, employers prefer hiring candidates who display exceptional cooperation skills during interviews. To collaborate successfully at the workplace, you require strong communication skills, active listening skills, conflict resolution and emotional intelligence. Also, through collaboration, you have time to listen to the ideas of others, allowing you to learn something new.

Benefits of collaboration

Being collaborative brings a lot of advantages, such as: -

1. **Solving Problems:** - Solving complex workplace problems alone can be an overwhelming task. Collaborating with others and listening to their opinions is a great way to solve problems.
2. **Inspires self-analysis:** - When you work collaboratively, you notice your strengths and weaknesses. It helps you identify areas that require help from experts.
3. **Increase efficiency:** - When you work together, it becomes easier to complete projects and meet deadlines. Instead of working on a complete project, collaboration divides the task in ways that leverage everyone's strengths.

How to develop your collaboration at the workplace

Here are a few ways to develop collaboration at the workplace

1. **Communicate clearly:** - When communicating with others, communicate your intentions clearly before starting the work. Effective communication is essential for working collaboratively, especially when you are collaborating with other departments. Instead of using department-specific acronyms and technical words, use language that is easily understandable by everyone. Also, communicate the work scope, timeline and contribution to your team. If, because of some reason, you cannot meet the project's deadline or finish a task, communicate this as well.
2. **Actively listen:** - When working in a team, it is essential to listen to every idea, advice or feedback. Being considerate and respectful of others' ideas is an excellent way to build a collaborative work atmosphere. While you may have ideas to complete a project, taking your colleague's opinion may prove beneficial. This gives you more opportunity to take advantage of a colleague's area of interest and expertise.
3. **Solve problems:** - In a business or workplace environment, mistakes can happen. Though you cannot eliminate them, you can collaboratively overcome these mistakes as a team. Instead of blaming others for

a mistake, look for ways to find solutions to rectify it. When a team calmly focuses on analysing the situation, they work together to find solutions. To enhance your cooperation skills, it is essential to forgive the mistakes of others and ensure you take responsibility when you commit an error. This builds trust and ensures team members are comfortable communicating, even after making a mistake

4. **Celebrate success:** - One good way of motivating a team and ensuring a collaborative workplace is celebrating success together. In both entry-level and leadership job roles, it is essential to take time to commemorate achievements with your colleagues or team members. Regardless of how small the success is, thank your colleagues for their contribution and let them know you appreciate their efforts.

Competition

| Advantages | Disadvantages |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Employee urgency | Increased stress |
| Improved productivity | Employee resentment |
| | Potential for malicious behavior |

Collaboration

| Advantages | Disadvantages |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Self-reinforcing cooperation | Too many potential leaders |
| Staff camaraderie | Different working styles |
| Improved division of work | Potential for laziness |
| More creative input | |
| Improved quality | |
| Reduced costs and cycle times | |
