5 STAGES OF CONFLICT PROCESS

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Organizational conflict arises when the goals, interests or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible and those individuals or groups block or thwart one another’s attempts to achieve their objective.

We can identify the stages that a conflict born and grows in an organization. In this post we will look at the stages of a Conflict covering the birth, rise and ending of it. The conflict process can be seen as comprising five stages. These stages are described below;

Stage 1: Potential Opposition or Incompatibility

The first step in the conflict process is the presence on conditions that create opportunities for conflict to develop. These cause or create opportunities for organizational conflict to rise.

These three conditions causes conflict.

Communications

Different words connotations, jargon insufficient exchange of information and noise in communication channel are all antecedent conditions to conflict. Too much communication as well as too little communication can lay the foundation for conflict.

Structure

In this context the term structure is used to include variables such as size, degree of specialization in the tasks assigned to group members, jurisdictional clarity, members/ goal compatibility, leadership styles, reward systems and the degree of dependence between groups. The size and specialization act as forces to stimulate conflict. The larger the group and the more specialized its activities, the greater the likelihood of conflict. Tenure and conflict have been found to be inversely related.

The potential for conflicts tends to be greatest when group members are younger and when turnover is high. In defining where responsibility for action lies; the greater the ambiguity is the greater the potential for conflict to surface. Such Jurisdictional ambiguity increases inter group fighting for control or resources and territory.

Personal Variables

Certain personality types- for example individuals who are highly authoritarian and dogmatic- lead to potential conflict. Another reason for conflict is difference in value systems. Value differences are the best explanations of diverse issues such as prejudice disagreements over one’s contribution to the group and rewards one deserves.

Stage 2: Cognition and Personalization

Conflict must be perceived by the parties to it whether or not conflict exists is a perception issue. If no one is aware of a conflict, then it is generally agreed that no conflict exists. Because conflict is perceives does not mean that is personalized.
For e.g. “A may be aware that B and A are in serious disagreements but it may not make A tense or nations and it may have no effect whatsoever on A’s affection towards B” It is the felt level, when individuals become emotionally involved that parties experience anxiety, tension or hostility. Stage 2 is the place in the process where the parties decide what the conflict is about and emotions plays a major role in shaping perception.

Stage 3: Intentions

Intentions are decisions to act in a given way intentions intervene between people’s perception and emotions and their overt behavior.

Using two dimensions cooperativeness (the degree to which one party attempts to satisfy the other party’s concerns) and assertiveness (the degree to which one party attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns)- five conflict handling intentions can be identified.

Five Conflict Handling Intention

Competing: when one person seeks to satisfy his or her own interests regardless of the impact on the other parties to the conflict, he is competing.
Collaborating: A situation in which the parties to a conflict each desire to satisfy fully the concerns of all the parties. In collaborating, the intention of the parties are to solve the problem by clarifying differences rather than by accommodating various points of view.
Avoiding: a person may recognize that a conflict exists and want to withdraw from it or suppress it. Avoiding included trying to just ignore a conflict and avoiding others with whom you disagree.
Accommodating: The willingness of one partying a conflict top lace the opponent’s interest above his or her own.
Compromising: A situation in which each party to a conflict is willing to give up something. Intentions provide general guidelines for parties in a conflict situation. They define each party’s purpose. Yet people intention is not fixed. During the course of conflict, they might change because of re-conceptualization or because of an emotional reaction to the behavior of other party.

Stage 4: Behavior

This is a stage where conflict becomes visible. The behavior stage includes the statements, actions and reactions made by the conflicting parties. These conflict behaviors are usually overt attempt to implement each party’s intentions.

Stage 5: Outcomes

The action reaction interplay between the conflicting parties result in consequences. These outcomes may be functional in that the conflict results in an improvement in the group’s performance, or dysfunctional in that it hinders group performance.

Conflict is constructive when it improves the quality of decisions simulates creativity and innovations encourages interest and curiosity among group members provides the medium through which problems can be aired and tensions released and fosters an environment of self-evaluation and change.