

Bell & Hart

Conflicts are inevitable in the work environment, often problems arise between co-workers, supervisors and employees, between customers and workers, etc. Sometimes these tensions are not managed adequately, even though knowing how to do it is a key in business management.

For example: two employees who share the same workspace - one of them is very tidy, punctual, always does his work on time, keeps his desk and space clean inside that office, avoids playing music or talking loudly when he serves customers by phone. On the other hand, the other employee keeps a really messy desk and is usually quite scandalous to work, although in the end he fulfills his goals. Possibly both people love their work, but they feel uncomfortable and there is tension between them. How to solve this? First it is necessary to analyze the situation and realize it, this would be the starting point to think about how to work together effectively.

A conflict can be useful but not pleasant, it can push both parties to communicate better to grow and through ideas to solve the conflict. However, all this only happens if we understand why that tension or problem is there. Identifying the root of the problem will lead us to take measures to solve it.

In the following article we will see or cho common causes of conflict at work . There are also many ways to resolve conflicts or how to manage them more effectively.

Conflicts according to Bell and Hart

According to psychologists Art Bell and Brett Hart, there are eight common causes of conflict in the workplace. They are the following:

- Resources
- Styles
- Perceptions
- Goals
- Pressures
- Roles
- Personal values
- Unpredictable Policies

This classification can be used to identify the causes of conflicts, and once identified, appropriate measures could be taken to prevent them.

Conflict of resources.

We all need resources to be able to do our work well, this includes office elements, spaces such as a presentation room, help from colleagues, training, etc. The conflict arises when more than one person needs access to the same resource.

It is very likely that this type of conflict is occurring within your company. To solve it, you can use techniques such as Win - Win, or the Model of Influences and thus reach an agreement. Another way is by making sure that each member of your team has what it takes to do their job well. Teach how to prioritize your time or resources, the correct way to negotiate with each other to avoid this type of conflict.

If this type of problem persists, it is advisable that both parties sit down to openly discuss because their needs are in disagreement. An open discussion will help each party to see the other's perspective.

Conflict of Styles.

We all work differently according to our own styles and personalities, the conflict arises only when these styles or personalities collide. For example, there are people who love the excitement of doing things at the last minute, while others need the structure of strict deadlines to carry them out.

To prevent and manage this type of conflict in your team, take into account people's work styles, the roles they play in each group, just as the elections do when forming their team.

Conflict of Perceptions

Each of us see the world through our own lens, something that usually causes conflicts are the different perceptions of events. This increases when a person knows something that the other person does not know, and does not realize this. If within the team the members usually participate regularly in "territorial wars or gossip" the conflict of perceptions will be unleashed.

You must eliminate this conflict through open communication with your team, even when it comes to communicating bad news. This is really positive because by sharing directly with your team it will be less likely that they will reach their own interpretations.

Conflict of Objectives.

This happens especially when managers set their employees different objectives. For example, a task has been assigned to an employee. Immediately one of the managers tells him that it is necessary that this task be done quickly. While another maybe seconds later tell you that it does not matter how long it takes to execute this task, but that it does so with great efficiency. A great conflict to reconcile!

What to do in these cases? Setting goals for team members is important, but you must ensure that they do not conflict with others already set.

Conflict due to pressures

Given that office work is essentially a team, in many cases we will depend on the work of other people to carry out our work. However, what can we do when we need a colleague to give us a report by noon, and be busy making another report for another employee under the same deadline?

If you suspect there are conflicts due to short-term shock objectives, reschedule the tasks and deadlines to relieve the pressure.

Roles conflict

Sometimes we are assigned tasks that are not in our normal role or do not go with the role we have in charge. This leads us to enter another "territory" and this can lead to conflicts and power struggles. This can also happen in reverse - in our opinion a particular task must be completed by another co-worker.

Role conflict is similar to the conflict of perception. Because a team member can see one task as the responsibility of another or "territory" of someone in particular. When another employee comes and takes care of that task the conflict occurs.

Different Personal Values

What would happen if your boss asks you to do something that conflicts with your ethical standards? Would you do what he asks or would you refuse? But by denying yourself, you would also have to face losing your boss's confidence or even your work. When our work goes against our values, conflict can arise quickly. To avoid this, you must practice ethical leadership: try not to ask your team for things that clash with your values.

Unpredictable policies

When work policies are changed and your communication is not clearly communicated, your team may be confused and this may create conflicts. When changes are made to the rules or policies, be sure to communicate exactly what will be changed, also the reason for that change, and how it will affect the work of each one.

Final reflection: dealing with conflicts in a constructive way is vital for the good management of any company, for this first you must identify each conflict in a specific way, to then give you an adequate and permanent solution.

Bell and Hart's 'Causes of Conflict' Theory – Unit 9
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Cause of Conflict	What does this mean? What is an example?	What steps can you take to prevent this sort of conflict?	How can you resolve this sort of conflict if it occurs?
Conflict of Resource	When more than one person needs a resource such as the USA in the middle east	By making sure all parties have the resources needed to achieve success. People should also learn to manage their own resources	If the conflict occurs a good way to solve is for the conflicting parties to have a discussion preferably with an intermediary.
Conflict of Styles	As all people work differently with different styles and personalities if people with conflicting styles work together, they are likely to disagree such as if someone completes their work as soon as it's set has to work with someone who leaves their work to the last minute, they are likely to conflict	If the manager knows their employees and their styles of working, they could avoid putting people with conflicting styles in the same team and therefore create teams that would work well together according to styles.	Actively reviewing the culture in a team/ company is the way for conflict due to styles to be dealt with so that all people of different styles and personalities can be utilised where they can be most effective. German company Travis CI use this strategy.
Conflict of Perceptions	This is when 2 or more parties see the same situation differently, this can happen in a meeting where an objective is set by a manager and employees disagree on how the objective should be tackled.	To prevent this sort of conflict managers should leave little to interpretation when giving objectives instructions, such as mentioning priorities and being more specific on who should do which part of the project.	If it occurs the way to resolve is for the employees and the manager to sit together and clarify the objective and for the employees to try to understand each other's perspective.
Conflict of Goals	When 2 individuals have goals that conflict such as if one person is told to get something done quickly whereas someone else was told to take their time, if they are to collaborate it would certainly lead to conflict.	Managers should make sure that they are not giving their employees conflicting objectives, also if one large goal is overarching over all sub goals people are more likely to agree on their goals in general.	Managers should sit down with those who are in conflict and clarify the goal, usually finding a middle ground between the employees.
Conflict of Pressures	This usually happens when employees have different managers and have not communicated to each other what they have asked from their employees	Using a flat management structure does well to prevent this sort of conflict as if there is only one person who gives instruction to employees it can eliminate conflict in pressures	If managers create a culture of positive reinforcement employees can be motivated by that and then be less affected by negative emotions due to pressure which can resolve this type of conflict.
Conflict of Roles	This is when someone has been asked to do something they are not good at or comfortable with this can cause conflict as	To prevent this job roles should be apparent and their should be enough people proficient in the areas that are	To resolve this employees should let their discomfort with the task be known and to possibly contact the