2010 Human Resources Seminar
Conflict Resolution

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Why Do People Get Into Conflict?

- I don't like you
- I didn't know something
- What you are trying to do conflicts with what I am trying to do
- Somebody – or something else – is causing us trouble

Occam's Razor

The fewer the assumptions, the better the explanation.
Hanlon’s Razor

Never attribute to malice that which can be adequately explained by stupidity.

H.L. Mencken

For every complex problem, there is a solution that is simple, neat, and wrong.

How People Respond to Conflict

- Force my will on you
- Give in to you
- Avoid the issue
- Give a little – take a little
- Collaborate
Conflict Resolution Roles

- Referee
- Mediator
- Negotiator
- Arbitrator

Referee

- Enforce the pre-agreed upon rules
- Don’t take sides
- Don’t try to get the parties to work together
- Don’t have to live with the outcome

Mediator

- Get parties to agree to rules
- Don’t take sides
- Try to get the parties to work together
- Don’t have to live with the outcome
Negotiator

- May have to negotiate the rules
- Take a side
- Try to get the parties to work together
- Have to live with the outcome

Arbitrator

- Can set the rules
- Determines the outcome

Maslow’s Hierarchy

- Actualization
- Esteem
- Love/Belonging
- Safety
- Physiological
Personality Disorders

- Depending on the seriousness of the Personality Disorder, professional help may be required to effect a resolution

Gender, Culture, Age

- Men and women may effect conflict resolution differently
- Men and women talk about conflict differently
- Value to a male/female intervention team

Gender, Culture, Age

- Cultural differences can be a real challenge in conflict resolution:
  - Religion
  - Age
  - Ethnicity
  - Regional
  - Language
Gender, Culture, Age

- Generational differences can be a significant challenge:
  - Leadership
  - Interactions
  - Communications
  - Feedback
  - Authority

Key Strategies

- Define the conflict as us versus the problem
- Identify shared values/beliefs/concerns
- Separate opinions from facts
- Actively listen

Resolution Structure

- Define the Process
- Give Opportunity to Express Feelings
- Build Towards Results/Outcome
Define the Process

- How will you give the parties their “day in court”?
- Explain the mechanics of the resolution process:
  - Who will be involved? What are their roles?
  - What is the timeline?
  - When will I have my chance to speak?
  - How will we work towards resolution?

Opportunity to Express Feelings

- An uninterrupted opportunity to get emotions out on the table
- An authentic acknowledgment of those emotions
- Once expressed, the discussion can then be refocused

Build Towards Results/Outcome

- The devil is in the details
- End with a clear understanding of who will do what and when
- Key questions:
  - How will you be different tomorrow?
  - Who will own this?
  - When will it happen?
Work Sheet

- Is the Conflict Acute or Chronic?
- Who are the parties?
- What is your Role? Will it “morph” over time?

Work Sheet

- What are the parties’ interests?
  - The mechanics (process)
  - I want someone to listen to me (emotions)
  - How will this be resolved (outcome)

Work Sheet

- What is the basis for the conflict?
  - Personal differences
  - Missing information
  - Conflicting responsibilities
  - External pressures
Work Sheet

- Statement of the Conflict (without personalities)

Work Sheet

- Who controls the factors that bear upon the outcome?

Work Sheet

- What are the shared . . .
  - Values
  - Beliefs
  - Desires
Work Sheet

- Do the parties accept the process?
- Have the parties been given the opportunity to state their positions?
- What is the key point of separation?
- What is the solution?