

Contents

- ✓ Chapter 1: Introduction to Technical Leadership
 - ✓ 1.1 Technical Leadership Fundamentals
 - ✓ 1.2 Building Trust and Credibility
 - ✓ 1.3 Risk-taking and Creativity
 - ✓ 1.4 Ethics, Professionalism and Time Management
- ✓ Chapter 2: Putting Leadership Principles into Practice
 - ✓ 2.1 Creating a Vision
 - ✓ 2.2 Team Building and Communication
 - ✓ 2.3 Conflict Management and Resolution
 - 2.4 Making Strategic Decisions
- Chapter 3: Ethical Leadership
 - 3.1 Towards an Ethical Culture
 - 3.2 Organisational and Individual requirements
 - 3.3 An Inclusive Leader



Conflict Management and Resolution

Quotes

- ✓ When dealing with people, remember you are not dealing with creatures of logic, but instead are dealing with creatures of emotion – *Dale Carnegie*
- ✓ A key to resolving any conflict is to identify a common goal - *Anna Karpman*

Conflict

- ✓ When more than one person is in a meeting, disagreement on the interpretation of results, conclusions, implementation, and subsequent directions can often be the outcome.
- ✓ Such situations lead to **conflict** – a state of disagreement or disharmony between people and ideas.
- ✓ Since conflict is inevitable, effective leaders must manage and resolve conflict to benefit their team and organisation and ensure that the conflict does not inhibit effective operation and progress.
- ✓ If this is not managed properly, conflict leads to a reduction in productivity, creativity, communication, and collegiality among team members.



Conflict management and Resolution

- ✓ Conflict will occur in every project and interaction from sources as diverse as:
 - Poor communication
 - Actual vs perceived facts
 - Values and beliefs
 - Resources (manpower, facilities etc)
 - Personalities and emotion
 - Technical methods, views and opinions
 - Unfair treatment
 - Inadequate training
 - Lack of equal opportunities

- ✓ Some of the above can be addressed readily by meetings and knowledge sharing (e.g. relevant facts, communication, technical methods, resources),

- ✓ while others may present serious difficulties for the leader (e.g. values/beliefs, priorities, personalities, lack of equal opportunities) and therefore require considerable effort, perhaps with compromising results.



Conflict management and Resolution: An Example

- ✓ As the Division Head, you call a meeting of your three **Supervisors (Design, Manufacturing, and Facilities)** and the engineers who report to them (12 people in total) to discuss progress on the development and manufacture of a new sensor.
- ✓ There have been problems in finalising the physical design and sensor manufacturing process and facilities; the time frame for completion of the project is approaching quickly.
- ✓ The **Manufacturing supervisor** and the **Design supervisor** disagree strongly about the reasons for the delay in project completion, with each blaming the other.
- ✓ This situation quickly degrades into raised voices, inappropriate language, and personal insults.
- ✓ The situation was further degraded by the presence of the individuals (i.e. engineers) who report to these supervisors and watched them argue and blame each other.
- ✓ How do you gain control of this meeting and resolve the dispute?



Conflict management

Conflict management and Resolution: An Example

Resolution

- ✓ As the Division Head, you should have intervened when the first personal insults began in order to avoid escalation of this situation.
- ✓ If all this happened so quickly that the time was already past, then you need to call a halt to the discussion immediately.
- ✓ You could perhaps ask the engineers (non-supervisors) to leave, although this could start unfounded rumours and gossip, so perhaps they should observe how you handle this situation.
- ✓ Ask each supervisor to take a breath and calm down and describe what they feel the primary and secondary problems are and what solutions they think should be considered **without** allowing comments/remarks from the other supervisor, while one is speaking;
- ✓ The discussion that follows can then narrow the possibilities of a solution.
- ✓ You should also ask the engineers listening to offer their suggestions, comments, and ideas for problem resolution.
- ✓ You need to establish the likely causes of the problems that are being experienced so that a plan can be put in place to investigate these possible causes and implement a solution.

Conflict management and Resolution: Suggested Solution

- ✓ After these decisions are made, and the meeting ends, you need to have individual meetings with the design and manufacturing supervisors and let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable, unprofessional, and will not be tolerated.
- ✓ Remind them that their responsibility is the development of the sensor, that that effort must take priority over egos and personal feelings, that self-control is required, and that you expect them to cooperate with each other to achieve their goal.
- ✓ Insist that they work out their differences on the project between the two of them, not in front of their teams.
- ✓ You will need to monitor the interactions to ensure that your requests are met.
- ✓ You should also call a meeting of the engineering staff who witnessed the ego based argument, and remind them that the sensor development is the collective priority, that you have already discussed the outburst with their supervisors, and that you expect collaboration and cooperation to be the foundation of everyone's efforts.



Conflict Resolved

Approaches to Manage Conflict

- ✓ Conflict naturally engages emotions and egos. Leaders must be aware of these reactions and attempt to remove this contributing factor from those engaged in the conflict.
- ✓ An effective leader is not upset or annoyed when conflict arises because others disagree with them. Leaders sometimes view these disagreements as a challenge to their competence or leadership prowess, especially if the challenge is presented in a rude or abrupt manner.
- ✓ The leader must listen carefully to all sides to understand clearly the basis for the conflict; this will help keep interactions and meetings under control and ensure that there are appropriate ways to respond to disagreements.
- ✓ The leader may need to meet with some of the team members individually if emotions are dominating team discussions.
- ✓ After the leader makes the decision, they must explain clearly why that particular decision was made.



Multiple – Choice and Short Answer Questions

MCQ

The favoured technique for resolving conflict is (select one only):

1. Negotiating
2. Removal of participants
3. Not allowing their disagreement to continue
4. None of the above

Discussion Question

Gladys and Jackie both moved from small R&D facilities to your medium-sized company because of the opportunities for advancement. They were at similar stages in their careers and both had families, so they quickly became friends. As the Division Head, you need to formulate a team to undertake the design and fabrication of a new product; both Gladys and Jackie report to you.

Your choice for team leader is Jackie, because of her ability to develop collegiality and establish common goals for a team, although her managerial expertise has come at the expense of focusing on her technical skill set. Gladys has continued to grow technically and has developed several novel products that have been extremely profitable. Unfortunately, she has not shown the people skills you had hoped to see.

After the decision was announced, you observe significant friction between Gladys and Jackie. This has progressed to heated disagreements and passive-aggressive commentary in planning meetings where both are present and has now begun to negatively impact interactions among members of their groups which are critical to the success of the new product development.

How do you deal with the conflict between Gladys and Jackie and ensure that both groups succeed with minimal disruption?