

Effective strategies for human resources development in contemporary organizations through motivation, culture and dialogue

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Abstract: This paper analyzes the relationship between conflict management and organizational culture, highlighting how proactive and strategic approaches in conflict management can improve the internal atmosphere within companies.

By exploring established theories and practical examples, this paper emphasizes the importance of effective conflict management techniques that support an organizational culture based on honest communication, mutual respect, and collaboration. The study makes a brief incursion into what organizational culture represents, what staff motivation is and what are the causes of organizational conflict and how it can be solved.

The paper also presents concrete tools for conflict management and helps managers in organizations in assessing difficult situations and navigating them in an objective and positive manner.

Keywords: motivation, conflict, management, practice, personal

1. Introduction

Management, as a scientific part, has gradually developed through the contributions of numerous international experts, in response to the concrete challenges encountered in practice. There are numerous perspectives in terms of organizational management, each approach having its own particularities. In North American literature, the emphasis often falls on pragmatic approaches, oriented directly towards managerial actions. For example, Reece and O'Grady (1984) define management as "the process of coordinating human, financial, material and informational resources to achieve organizational objectives", and Longenecker and Pringle (1981) see it as "the process by which organizational resources are obtained and combined for the provision of products and services necessary for the market".

2. Theoretical foundation

Studies in recent decades have shown that, within each organization, the managerial culture plays an essential role, being a special resource that profoundly influences the internal dynamics.

Considering that managerial culture is centered on managers and the way they lead, its impact is felt throughout the organizational culture, shaping the way the entire company works. Managerial culture focuses on achieving the goals that managers are responsible for. Moreover, it represents a true adaptation mechanism, helping the organization to manage both internal and external influences, all through the prism of the management style practiced and the personality of each manager.

On a concrete level, managerial culture encompasses the set of values, beliefs, aspirations, expectations and behaviors of leaders in an organization. These are then found in the decision-making patterns and management styles adopted, subtly shaping the overall culture of the firm and influencing its performance.

Usually, this managerial culture is reflected in the way staff decisions and actions are aligned with the organization's goals.

Over time, managerial culture creates patterns of behavior, strengthens cohesion among employees, promotes certain leadership styles, and helps the organization adapt to change.

It should be noted that the way managerial culture manifests itself depends a lot on the personality and leadership style of managers, especially those at the top. In fact, in many organizations, the managerial culture bears the distinct imprint of the main leader, thus becoming more personalized than the organizational culture.

The more empathetic the manager is and shows stronger leadership, the more objectively his imprint is reflected in the entire managerial culture and, implicitly, in the company's culture and values.

However, if this subjection becomes excessive, there is a risk of functional imbalances and impairment of long-term development. Organizational culture, in turn, has a major influence on employee behavior and attitude.

Edgar Schein (2010) has pointed out that this culture includes the core values, norms and practices that underpin the way organisations operate. A positive culture fosters employee engagement, innovation, and loyalty.

To strengthen this organizational culture, it is recommended to establish and clearly promote values at the level of the company's policies, so that they are visible in the behavior of everyone, both managers and employees (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

In addition to the above, we will also try to encourage transparent and open communication, which will allow the free expression of ideas, without fear of consequences (Brown, 1998).

Another objective to be considered is the organization of continuous training programs and workshops dedicated to organizational culture, to reinforce basic values and strengthen team spirit (Deal & Kennedy, 2000).

3. Staff motivation as a component of management

Motivation is identified as a major component of management and one of the most frequently treated topics in literature. As a result, there is a wide variety of approaches, not infrequently contradictory.

From the point of view of the managerial conception on which it is based, we distinguish two major meanings of motivation: Motivation in a narrow sense, based on a classic vision of the organization and management, which considers only the employees or the company's staff. This perspective still prevails in both world managerial theory and practice.

Motivation in a comprehensive sense, outlined in recent years, based on a modern vision of the organization and management. Its essential characteristic is the focus on stakeholders, i.e. on those people, categories of personnel and bodies that have major interests in the development and performance of the company.

The main stakeholders that are usually considered are: owners, customers, managers, employees, the union, suppliers, the bank, the central and/or local administration, and the local community. The two perspectives on the company and management are also reflected in the significantly different definitions of motivation.

Motivation in a narrow sense consists of correlating the needs, aspirations and interests of the personnel within the organization with the achievement of the objectives and the exercise of the tasks, competencies and responsibilities assigned within the organization.

3.1 The influence of managerial power on employee motivation

The power that managers wield within an organization is closely related to their relationship with the shareholders or owners of the firm. The stronger the connection between the manager and the owners, the more the manager's authority and influence increases.

There are several forms through which this power manifests itself:

Professional expertise – It is based on the specialized knowledge and experience gained by the manager in a certain field (be it technical, economic, legal, etc.), which allows him to efficiently solve essential tasks for the organization.
Informal power – It is conferred by the manager's real position and status within the organization, the information he has, the network of relationships with important stakeholders and the authentic leadership capacity.

In any motivational endeavor, the success of a manager depends directly on the degree to which these dimensions are developed. For motivation processes to have the desired impact and contribute to achieving the organization's objectives, it is essential that managers have a solid and balanced set of skills and influence on all these levels.

At the same time, for managers to be able to effectively coordinate teams and achieve the organization's objectives, it is essential that the positions they occupy in the hierarchical structure are clearly defined, with well-established attributions and responsibilities. This gives them the formal authority to mobilize employees and drive the work toward desired outcomes.

More decentralization, and more precisely, adapted as the organization grows, and a detailed and coherent description of each managerial position, designed based on a "golden triangle" of the organization (competences, responsibilities, authority), are key conditions for effective management.

Especially for middle and senior managers, acting on behalf of and with the clear support of the owners is a significant advantage.

Since the final decisions on the direction and development of the company belong to the owners, their open support greatly increases the managers' ability to motivate other members of the organization.

When managers have the authority directly delegated by shareholders, their motivational impact is even stronger. Also, the manager's professional expertise becomes decisive especially in situations where employee motivation depends on the management of technical or specialized tasks

3.2. Managing dialogue and difficult discussions

Effectively managing difficult dialogues helps to create a healthy and productive work environment. Moreover, the ability to approach conflicts constructively is vital in maintaining organizational harmony.

There are several essential techniques including training managers in empathetic communication and active listening, which involves identifying and understanding employees' feelings and perspectives before reacting (Stone, Patton, & Heen, 2010).

A second technique is the establishment of clear procedures for dealing with conflicts and difficult situations, including the creation of formal and informal conflict resolution mechanisms (Fisher, Ury & Patton, 2011).

The last technique specified in the study is the regular organization of feedback sessions and informal discussions to prevent tensions, which favors the anticipation and early resolution of problems before they escalate (Scott, 2004).

3.3 Conflict Management in Organizations

Within modern organizations, conflict is an inevitable reality, which, if not managed correctly, can affect productivity, morale and organizational climate.

Effective conflict management is thus essential for maintaining a positive and stimulating atmosphere in the workplace. Organizational conflict is a divergence or misunderstanding between individuals or groups within the organization, due to the incompatibility of their objectives, values or perceptions.

The main types of conflicts include interpersonal conflicts that arise between two or more people, for personal, professional reasons or differences of opinion.

Intra-group conflicts can also be specified here: they arise within a working group, usually due to lack of effective communication or internal competition.

Another category of conflicts are intergroup conflicts, which occur between different groups in the organization (e.g., conflicts between departments or teams) and finally, organizational conflicts that arise as a result of organizational changes, unclear goals, or competition for limited resources (Robbins & Judge, 2017).

3.4. Causes of conflicts in organizations

Among the main causes of organizational conflicts are limited resources, identified by competition for insufficient financial, material or human resources.

Divergences regarding objectives, namely the lack of alignment of personal and organizational objectives is also another cause, followed by poor communication with a risk of misinterpretation of messages, ambiguous communication or lack of transparency. Personality differences and different work styles are also causes of conflicts in organizations, incompatibility between employees regarding values and approach to tasks.

A final cause that should be highlighted here is inefficient organizational structures and processes, identified by rigid hierarchies, bureaucratic processes (Fisher, Ury & Patton, 2011).

3.5 Conflict management strategies

Choosing the right conflict management strategy always depends on the specific situation and the type of conflict that has arisen. Here are some of the most common approaches:

a) Avoidance

This strategy involves postponing or not directly addressing the conflict, being especially useful when the dispute is minor or when an immediate confrontation is not justified.

b) Accommodation

Accommodation involves satisfying the desires or demands of the other party, being appropriate in situations where maintaining a good relationship is more important than winning the conflict.

c) Compromise

Through compromise, each party agrees to give up something to quickly reach a middle ground solution that is acceptable to everyone involved.

d) Competition

This tactic occurs when one of the parties wants to impose their point of view at any cost, appealing to the authority or influence they have.

e) Collaboration

Collaboration is generally the most productive strategy, involving the active involvement of all parties to find a mutually beneficial solution. This method is based on open dialogue, empathy and the desire to reach a beneficial outcome for all (Rahim, 2017).

3.6. Stages of effective conflict management

For a conflict to be managed truly effectively, it is necessary to take some essential steps, each with its clear role on the way to resolution.

The start of this process is to understand the exact source and nature of the conflict, to identify the real reason that led to the tension and what kind of conflict we are facing.

The next, and perhaps most important, step is active listening. This means that each party is listened to carefully and empathetically, without prejudice or interruptions, so that everyone feels truly heard.

Once the opinions have been heard, it becomes much easier to clarify the problem, formulate it in a way that everyone understands and establishes what it is about.

Further, the discussion opens to alternatives, participants are encouraged to come up with as many solutions as possible, without rushing to conclusions.

In situations where direct dialogue is not enough, it may be necessary to involve a mediator, i.e. someone impartial to help the parties communicate effectively and negotiate a middle way.

In the end, all that remains is for the solution found to be put into practice and, equally importantly, monitored in the short and long term, to see if the expected results really appear and the conflict does not reappear in another form (Wilmot & Hocker, 2017).

3.7. The importance of communication in conflict management

Communication plays a fundamental role in overcoming conflicts in the workplace. Most of the time, the key lies in the way the messenger manages to convey the messages: how clearly and precisely it is understood, so that there is no room for misinterpretations.

However, communication is not just about talking, but also about really listening.

When a manager actively listens to others with patience and empathy, they create the necessary space for everyone to feel understood. It is equally important to express their emotions and concerns in a constructive way, without accusing the person with whom the discussion is taking place.

Only in this way does the discussion remain productive, and in addition, during any conversation, honest feedback helps to clarify what he wanted to convey and prevent possible misunderstandings in the future. All these strategies, used together, make communication a reliable ally in conflict resolution (Scott, 2004).

4. Practical plan for dealing with difficult conversations for managers

Conflicts occur when there are differences or perceived differences across these areas.

Further, the study presents a detailed plan with introspective questions for any manager in a difficult situation. The first person will be used very often, thus highlighting the fact that this can be considered a tool for those who need help in managing conflicts.



Figure 1. Dealing with difficult conversations steps

When a conflict arises, the first dialogue we should have been with ourselves. Before initiating any difficult discussion, it is worth asking ourselves some honest questions: What, in fact, is the problem that troubles me? What assumptions have we already made about the situation or about others? What are the certain facts and what is more about my interpretation? What really bothers me and why? What emotions are related to this context? Can there be differences of opinion, priorities or values that fuel the conflict? And finally: what could happen if I choose to have this conversation or if I avoided it?

There are a few tools that can turn difficult discussions into more constructive and less tense experiences:

1. Create a safe space for dialogue:

It is important that both participants feel that they are pursuing a common goal, that there is mutual respect and empathy. If you feel that your message was not understood correctly, clarify immediately – explain what you did not want to convey and rephrase what you wanted to say.

2. Really listen: Be curious, not judge. Try to discover what is not said directly, not just what is verbalized. Ask open-ended questions like, "Tell me more about this..." or "Help me understand better..."

3. Adopt the "Yes, and..." Be aware that everyone sees the world in their own way – all perspectives can be valid. Express your own point of view clearly but also be willing to listen and accept the other's opinion.

4. Recognize your personal stories and filters: Each of us has an inner story that influences our reactions, sometimes automatically, even unconsciously. Try to differentiate between the real impact and the intentions behind the facts, before drawing conclusions.

5. Use the first-person message: Start your statements with "I" and avoid using "you", as accusatory formulations can generate defensiveness and tension.

6. Take responsibility: Focus on what you can control, not blaming others. Being responsible means acknowledging both what you have done and what you have not done. By applying these principles, you will notice that difficult discussions can become opportunities for clarification, connection and even progress in relationships at work or in personal life.

Here is a sample flow of actions you can take to prepare for and lead a difficult conversation.



Figure 2: Flow of actions to lead a difficult conversation

Before any important discussion, it is essential to prepare carefully.

Start by answering a few fundamental questions: What are the real facts? What assumptions did you make? What don't you know yet? Also reflect on why this discussion matters to you and be prepared to explain its importance. At the same time, recognize where there are differences in perception, thinking or emotion between you and the other.

Think about the outcome you want but also stay open to new perspectives or ideas that may arise during the conversation.

1. Establishing the framework of the dialogue

Start the discussion by clearly stating what topic you want to address. For example: "I would like to talk about...". Illustrate with a concrete example what you observed ("I heard that..."), explain what concerns you ("I'm worried about..."), emphasize why the topic is important to you, and avoid starting with predetermined assumptions or solutions.

2. Exchange of perspectives

Invite the other person to express their point of view: "I would like to understand how you see the situation."

Be curious and listen actively: "Tell me more about it." Explain how you perceived things and check if you understood correctly: "I see things differently – do I miss something?" Summarize what was discussed and remember why this dialogue is meaningful.

3. Solution generation

After both parties have expressed their views, it's time to formulate what you want to happen next. He stresses the importance of shared responsibility for a good outcome ("I want us to reach a mutually agreed solution because..."). Listen to the other party's reactions and proposals and show empathy: "I understand that this could mean an extra effort for you or your team..."

4. Establishing a concrete plan

Determine the next steps together: clarify the roles, determine what you are going to do and get agreement on the next steps. For example: "I'll come back to this topic at our next meeting." Don't forget to appreciate each other's time and involvement.

5. Maintaining trust and credibility

Follow through on your promise and ask for feedback on how the process went and what progress was made. Constantly monitor the results to ensure that the discussion has the desired effects.

6. Practice to become better

Choose a difficult conversation in your life and practice the role, preferably with a partner who can give you honest feedback. You can role-play, alternating positions, to learn how to approach any delicate discussion openly and effectively.

5. Conclusion

The success of a modern organization depends largely on its ability to motivate employees, build and maintain a healthy organizational culture, and effectively manage inherent dialogues and conflicts.

The implementation of the strategies presented contributes significantly to the development of human resources and the overall performance of the organization. Conflict management is crucial to the success of any organization.

Through proactive and strategic approaches, conflicts can be transformed from threats into opportunities for organizational development and learning.

Also, organizations that manage-to-manage conflicts effectively gain significant competitive advantages by improving team cohesion and fostering a positive and performing work climate.

In the modern organizational environment, success depends largely on how employees are motivated, the quality of the organizational culture, and the ability to effectively manage inherent dialogues and conflicts.

Applying these strategies can lead not only to the development of human resources, but also to an increase in the overall performance of the organization.

Effective conflict management not only prevents tensions but can turn challenges into opportunities for development and learning.

Finally, organizations that deal with conflicts with maturity and openness will always have a competitive advantage, based on team cohesion and a healthy and productive work environment.

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