

**Leading and Implementing Workplace Change
(BMSW6103)**

Assignment: Change Management Portfolio

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Authorised Extended Due date: 25/08/22**

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Introduction

In this essay I will highlight the importance of organisation power and politics using a real live case study, 'Post Office Strike'.

The Post Office Strike has taken place due to the workers who have walked out overpay dispute. Cutting the long story short, the strike has led 114 Crown Post Offices that will close for a 24-hour period, while sub-post offices will have no cash deliveries or collections (BCC ,2022). Employees have gone to the Communication workers Union regards to this and they are in support of the employees and are angry over the Post Office managers who had been insisting on a pay freeze for 2021 2022 and a 2% rise for the following year despite the company generating a profit for the last two years during the pandemic (BCC ,2022). Furthermore, I will discuss how effective a stakeholder analysis can be in an organization and give my resolution to the Post Office Conflict using Thomas Kilmann Conflict Model.

1.Organisational Power and Politics

Organisational power and politics work together in a workplace and cannot be ignored as they move parallelly together to achieve organisation or department goal (Zaleznik,1970).

Organisational Power refers as control, possession of authority and the one who makes the decision-making process. Power is required to structure organisations and articulate the goals. Positive impacts of power include leadership responsibilities and reduction of bureaucratic obstacles. Negative impacts of power are bully bosses and manipulator who give false hope. Within an organisation there are formal, Informal, and personal power all based on individual's position, special characteristics, or knowledge (Zaleznik,1970).

Formal Power

Coercive power refers to an Individual position within an organisation. Coercive power within an organisation allows a manager to force an employee to follow an order as per their contract terms and conditions, if does no obey employee is threatened to receive punishment as per company procedure. For example, termination of contract, demotions, disciplinary, no end of year bonus, pay cuts etc (Merchant,2013).

Legitimate power refers to an Individual position within the organisation's hierarchy of authority where the ultimate decision is made. For example, CEOs, presidents, and monarchs.

Reward power refers to an Individual position such as a manager who can give reward employees to perform for results or progression. Rewards can be tangible such as bonuses, wage increase, Monetary awards, certificates, and gifts. Intangible rewards can be recognition, Praise, promotion in status and positive feedback (Merchant, 2013).

Informal or Personal Power

Referent power refers to an individual Characteristics power where they have the power over the Team or followers, due to respect, admiration, and level of identification (Merchant, 2013). For example, mass leaders, widely respected people such as Diana, Princess of Wales, and celebrities.

Expert power refers to an individual who has an Expertise or a skill set that other employees of the organisation do not possess (Slideshare, 2022).

Information power refers to an individual who has Knowledge and information that other employees don't have or not readily available (Slideshare, 2022).

Organisational Politics refers as to achieve changes within an organisation that benefit the organisation or individuals within the company by networking. Organisation politics are also

classified as behaviours employees use within an organisation to achieve positive outcomes. Types of politics within an organisation can be such as attacking and blaming, controlling information, forming coalitions, cultivating networks, creating obligations, and managing impressions (Merchant, 2013).

In the case of Post Office, managers have been insisting on pay freeze for 2021-22, despite the company generating a profit for the last two years during the pandemic from the efforts of their key worker employees (BBC,2022). Here managers of the Post Office are using their Coercive power and Legitimate power. Managers are using Coercive power to force employees to work on low pay despite how well the business has done during the pandemic and knowing living cost rising at 7% a year. In my opinion Managers within the Post Office are being unethical and causing destructive to the company reputation which such behaviour. In this case Legitimate power has also been used as the overall decision regarding pay comes from the hierarchy who have authorised this. Managers within the organisation who have the reward power are not supporting employees with any reward for their hard work during the pandemic which has demotivated employees, has decreased job satisfaction and decreased in overall productivity hence the employees have taken the step to strike using help from the Communication Workers Union (Allred, 2000). This would be employees using politic power as they are networking with Communication Workers Union. In my opinion I believe the employees are being ethical and doing the right thing due to the current living cost rising and why should they suffer in silence as this situation is impacting individual employees financially and can cause those employees to having anxiety and stress.

The strike is damaging the post office reputation and will cause financial loss however power and politics needs to be balanced in an organisation by always taking an ethical decision and when this is not the case, managers using Coercive power, Legitimate power and not rewarding employees instead forcing employees to work under such low pay in today's market is not acceptable (Merchant, 2013).This would be destructive for employees and the organisation. This type of behaviour decision from managers changes the attitude of employees and effects employee's concentration and spoils the ambience in a workplace which has created the strike. The strike has a negative impact on the company reputation and has created noise where media and public are gossiping and pointing fingers at the organisation. Closer of 114 branches of the Post Office will have an impact on the 11,000 branches that were not covered by the strike as this will demotivate other Post Office employees who were not aware of this and may choose to join the strike (BBC,2022). The other 11,000 branches will be impacted by public views and may receive complaints or get request from many customers to close account due to media. The employee morale of the other 11,000 branches would be low, negative vibes, work concentration will be affected and

decrease in overall productivity of the work. The strike will also impact the other branches who would be busier than usual and may not have enough staff to provide an efficient service. Closures of the 114 branches will create a back log of work and no staff to action the workload, which will create complaints from customers, and this will disrupt the business (BBC,2022). Action of a strike will support and help the Post Office employees to obtain a fair pay rise with the government legislation, this is the power of the politics over organisation power. Therefore, it is important for the Post Office to revisit their decision and be ethical and contribute to a balanced set of interest for the organisation and its employees to settle this matter. I believe best way to settle the matter by introducing a reward system for the Post Office employees for pay rise and career progression, this will motivate, put trust back in the employees and will help improve the quality and reputation of organizational life in the market.

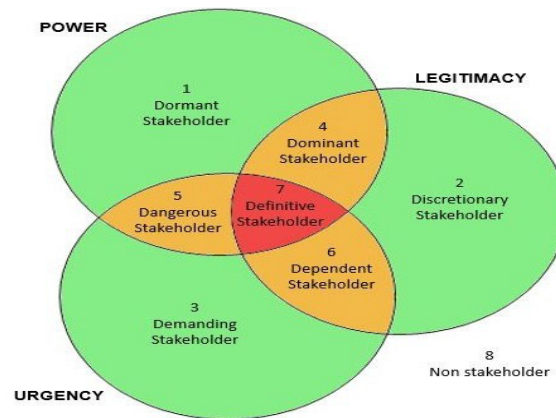
2.Stakeholder Analysis Model

Stakeholders give business practical and financial support. A Stakeholder analysis is a process of identifying the people before a project begins; this would involve grouping the people according to their levels of participation, interest, and influence in the project; this helps to determine how best to involve and communicate each of these stakeholder groups throughout. Organisations use stakeholder analysis as it helps to uncover and remove multiple barriers to successful implementation of their plan. Other advantage of stakeholder analysis allows win support from stakeholders for the organisation decision or project.

2.1Stakeholder Salience Theory

The concept of stakeholder salience was proposed by Ronald Mitchell et al in 1997.

The 'salience' theory refers to the prioritization and attention managers give to competing stakeholder claims (Mitchell et. al, 1997, p.854). A stakeholder salience model diagram is a Venn diagram comprising of three attributes which are power, legitimacy, and urgency. The intersection of circle shows stakeholders with multiple attributes (Mitchell et. al, 1997, p.854).



The benefits of the salience model provide you with better insight into your stakeholders within an organisation and helps to identify the stakeholder's interest, potential risk, and misunderstandings. Also, controls negative stakeholders and saves resources, time, and effort to complete a project (GreyCampus, 2022).

Power allows stakeholder to impact an organisation, there are primary stakeholder (employees, suppliers, consumers) and secondary stakeholder (Media, Special Interest, Groups). for example, in the case of the Post Office the key workers who are the primary stakeholders within the organisation have the power to impact the organisation with their behaviour by conducting a strike. The key workers have the power to refer to third party outside the company for support regards to their pay dispute, in this case this would be 'Communication Workers Union', and in doing this the primary stakeholders (key workers) are influencing the secondary stakeholders such as the Media who are not interested in the financial transactions but have a moral interest.

Legitimacy is the stakeholder's relationships with the organisation, for example in the case of the Post Office stakeholders are the employees of the organisation and are key workers who process everyday task therefore their role is very important within the organisation for business to run smoothly on a daily basis and if the key workers are disruptive this would highly impact the business financially and have an impact on the customers of the Post Office (GreyCampus, 2022).

Urgency are the claims made by stakeholders on the organisation and requirements call for immediate attention. At this stage organisation would need to firstly; establish any requirement is time-specific or if mere fulfilment is important. For example, in the case of the Post Office the urgency would be to resolve the issues to stop the employee strike. Here Post Office would require to mere fulfilment to stop the strike and get workers back into work so daily task can be fulfilled for the interest of the organisation, its customers and rest of the employees within the organisation (GreyCampus, 2022).

Stakeholders are divided into seven groups; the highest priority is given to the definitive stakeholder group because this group has all the attributes. Next highest priority is given to dominant, dangerous, and dependent stakeholders due to having mix of any two attributes. Finally, the lowest priority groups are discretionary, demanding, and dormant as they have one attribute however, they need to be monitored as they can change their salience (Mitchell et. al, 1997, p.854).

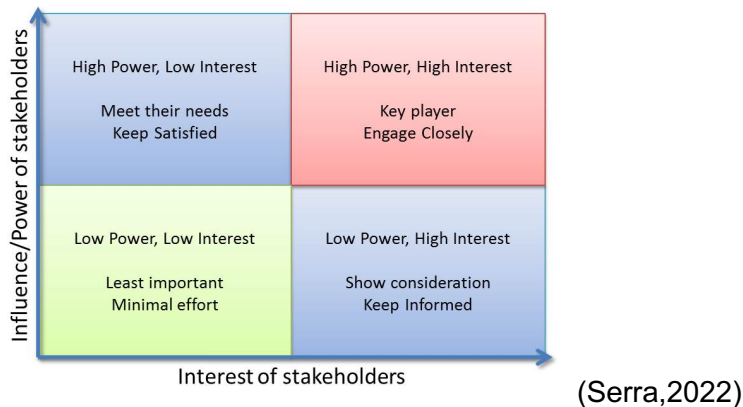
In the case of the Post Office, the employees within the organisation who have raised the strike would be demanding stakeholders in my opinion due to fact theses stakeholders have a high urgency but low power and legitimacy. However, theses stakeholders can influence other stakeholders if their requirement are not met such as the social media, investors, customers of the Post Office and other branch employees within the organisation (Mitchell et. al, 1997, p.854). Moreover, Post Office employees also would fall into being dependent stakeholder due to high legitimacy as they have an interest in the company and are key workers who have a contract with the company and have contact with the public on daily basis. Dependent stakeholders have high urgency but low power due to their job title when not within management level.

In the case of the Post Office the Definitive Stakeholder which is known as the core stakeholders which would be the Postmaster who are the individual branch managers who had insisted on the pay freeze for 2021-22 for key workers (BBC,2022) and the Hierarchy management within the organisation who have authorised this with the Postmaster (Branch Manager).

Limitations for the stakeholder Saliency model would be it takes a lot of effort and is time consuming as all three attributes need monitoring closely as they can change at any stage. The size of the project would be on a large scale compared to a small scale due to all the departments that would need to be involved in the project so the project can be successful (GreyCampus, 2022). In my opinion the model can impact its effectiveness nevertheless the model lets you focus on the important stakeholders rather than waste time on the less important ones. The benefit of this it allows to eliminate any risk within the project decision.

2.2 Power- Interest Matrix

Power -Interest Matrix model allows you to put all the stakeholders in order of power they possess and to what level of interest they are likely to have or show in an organisation (Serra,2022).



High power- High interest: These stakeholders have the power of authority and are the decision makers for the success of a project. For example, in the case of the Post Office these would be CEO, Directors, Management, Government and Regulators. The Post Office CEO and management would have the power to stop the strike by fulfilling employee demand or meeting halfway through. Also, the Post Office is owned by the government, through the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and UK Government Investments (UKGI), however, the Post Office Ltd Board has responsibility for the operations of the Post Office (Booth,2022).

High power – Low interest: These stakeholders need to be always updated with all stages of what's happening. These stakeholders have low interest however if not kept updated accordingly and if become unhappy they can use their power in a negative way which can impact the project/organisation. For example, in the case of the Post Office these would be Managers, Shareholders and Regulators. Due to the noise of the strike employees have created the regulators would have the high power to get involved to monitor if employees are being paid accordingly to living cost considering the Post Office net profit. Shareholders don't have direct power to stop the strike as the strike is having a negative impact in the market position therefore, they have the power to request for their funds invested with the Post Office back which would impact the organisation stock market (Booth,2022).

Low power – High interest: These stakeholders can be very helpful regards to the details of a project therefore it is important to keep them appropriately informed, so no major issues arise after (Booth,2022). For example, in the case of the Post Office these would be Employees (Key workers), Customers, lenders, suppliers, distributors and Media. Depending on the employees' position within an organisation if you are not within the management then you would have low power to modify system processes however those employees have a high interest in the organisation due to the effort they put in daily and work hard to meet targets to generate company profit. By return those employees want reward so their hard

work is getting recognised. During the pandemic all the key workers within the Post Office organisation worked hard and giving them no reward would be the reason for holding a strike which shows even though they have no power due to the high interest they have in the organisation they are capable of using their own power outside the organisation such as media and union to support them to get the rewards they believe they have worked hard for. In my opinion management to avoid such incidents when conducting a Power- Interest Matrix for this area, is the most important due to employees, customers, lenders, suppliers, and media fall in this category and without these people the business cannot run smoothly (Serra,2022). If disappointment any of those people, it has a knock-on effect on the business daily running and market position. Therefore, it is important when conducting a Power-Interest Matrix for this area every area is carefully reviewed by having a good size team to establish what motivates these people the most of all and what financial or emotional interest they may have so the correct decision can be taken by the hierarchy management (Serra,2022). Suppliers and Lenders have no power however they have high interest due to the contracts they have with the Post Office which can impact their organisations financially. The services post office offer is Transfer Money Abroad, Buy Travel Insurance, Book Airport parking, Low interest Loans and many more are the suppliers/Lenders which the Post Office have a contract with these third-party companies to generate profit.

Low power- Low interest: Those stakeholders that have no interest or power are least important therefore no energy or time is required with these people however minor monitoring is required here in case any change of movement with these people. For example, in the case of the Post Office this would be the Local Communities and other Businesses. Strike can impact the local community regarding traffic, noise, other business operating in the area could lose business due to the disruption around media and strike. Local communities' public daily life plans can be impacted due to Post Office cash machines not being in use. ATMs (cash machines) provide essential financial services to individuals by giving access to cash, balance and account information and some other limited functions (Booth, 2022). Considering some Post Office branches act as an alternative to bank and have their ATM within 2km instead of other bank ATMs (Booth,2022), with the strike the public who had no interest or power regards to Post Office will get impacted and will have difficulty to withdraw their cash as they desire or need. The below figures show access to cash for any of bank, building society, including Post Office branches or ATMs, in Oct-Dec 2021, which means if Post Office ATMs and branches that are closed due to the strike this will hugely impact those stakeholders who don't have an interest or power and their change in negative behaviour can impact the organisation position in the market.

- 95.7% of the UK population were within 2km of a cash access point – and 4.3% were not
 - 99.7% of the UK population were within 5km of a cash access point – and 0.3% were not.
- (Booth,2022)

Power- Interest Matrix for the Post Office

High power – Low interest	High power- High interest
Shareholders	CEO Board of Directors Government
Store Managers	Management
Regulators	
Low power- Low interest	Low power – High interest
	Key Workers (Employees)
	Customers
Local Community	Media
Other	Distributors
Businesses	Lenders
	Suppliers

As explained above I have allocated all the contractual stakeholders and community stakeholders in the above Power- Interest Matrix for the Post Office. CEO, Board of Directors, and Government are the most important stakeholders for the post office in terms of making decision as they do not require authority or support from any third parties, they would make the best decision considering organisation reputation and capital. The most

impacted by pay rise are the key workers however their behaviour of a strike will mostly impact the customer of the Post Office, especially the elders as most of the users for post office are elderly people and those on low incomes make greater use of cash and banking services (Booth,2022). Also, Venerable groups and remote rural residents make most use of a post office for informal community services like support and information or as a place to meet their residents and friends (Booth,2022). Moreover, the strike highly attracts media which benefit's the employee's to meet their demand however this highly impacts the stock market position which has a knock-on effect to all the stakeholders of the Post Office. Overall I would like to say the critical stakeholders are the stakeholders who have high power and high interest such as the CEO, Directors and the government who own the business and the amount of capital they have invested in the business nevertheless in my opinion I would say the critical stakeholders are the key workers and the customers of the Post Office, without the key workers the everyday task will not be completed and without customers there is no business.

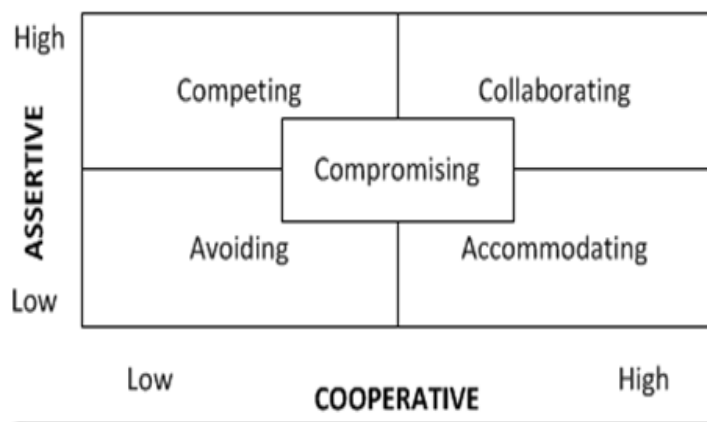
The implications of the Power-Interest Matrix model can be favouring own interest in a process by management who have power rather than focus on the actual need and want of internal employees, this is where majority of the conflicts arise. It also has been said the implications of the Power-Interest Matrix model for stakeholders can be more of a block progress therefore all stakeholder's importance is not analysed thoroughly to the level of interest they may have in an organisation.

3.Thomas Kilmann Conflict resolution model

A five-category model for classification was first introduced by Blake and Mouton (1964). This scheme was then reinterpreted by Thomas (1976), (Riasi & Asadzadeh, 2015).

The Thomas Kilmann Conflict resolution model allows you to measure a person's behaviour in conflict situations (Quality Gurus Inc, 2022). A conflict is when two people in a situation are incompatible. The model organizes five conflict management styles; Competing, Collaborating, Avoiding, Accommodating and Compromising based on two dimensions Assertive and Cooperative (Kilmann & Thomas, 1977). Assertive is when an individual tries to satisfy their own concerns, this can be used positively or negatively depending on the situation and Cooperative is when an individual tries to satisfy other people's concerns by understanding another person's point of view and feelings (Quality Gurus Inc, 2022). By putting assertive and cooperative together we are trying to find an acceptable solution that satisfies both individuals concerns.

Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode



(Kilmann & Thomas, 1977)

The five conflict management styles use different approaches to managing conflict. All the approaches have its own strengths and weaknesses and depends on the situation which approach to use. Conflict can arise between two people due to perceptions, ideas, values, motivations, or desires.

Avoiding

This is when you totally avoid the issue. In this case an individual exhibits nether assertive nor cooperative behaviours (Riasi & Asadzadeh, 2015). Sometimes avoiding a conflict can be the best practise in situations when you have no authority over the other person, and totally disagree with them, or the atmosphere is emotionally charged (Quality Gurus Inc, 2022). By avoiding them you are not helping the other person reach their goals either. In the case of the Post Office, avoiding would not be ethical as the longer a strike goes on for the more it will impact the business financially, employee's, stakeholders, and customers.

Accommodating

This is when you accept the other persons request instead of arguing to lose to win. This approach is taken when the other persons idea is better, or they are an expert.

Accommodating the other persons request could mean you are going against your own objective or outcomes however if it is a case to build future relations with the other party then this approach can be effective. The negative of this is you may start to lose control over your own agenda (Quality Gurus Inc, 2022). In the case of the Post Office, I believe it will be in the interest of the board of Directors to accept the employee request due to the fact the

strike is damaging the business reputation in the long term in terms of new stakeholders and struggling to recruit potential employees to fulfil key worker job roles. Financially Post Office can accommodate this due to the profit they had made during the pandemic. In November 2020, the government announced the Post Office would receive a £227 million investment for 2021/22 (Booth, 2022), which proves they are able to meet the demand of the employee strike.

Competing

This approach is used when we strive to achieve your objectives and do not wish to negotiate with the other party. Here the individual exhibits assertive due to own concerns and has non-cooperative behaviour (Riasi & Asadzadeh, 2015). However, behaviour needs to be conducted in a well manner so other party cooperate and support your approach. This approach can be seen as a win-lose approach. In the case of the Post Office this approach can help to meet the demands of the employee strike and the boards of directors then approaching the government to help with the funding of the future projects for the Post Office.

Collaborating

This style is used when both parties involved in the conflict collaborate with each other to satisfy the goals of both parties. Here both individual exhibits both assertive and cooperative behaviour to a high degree (Riasi & Asadzadeh, 2015). When collaborating high level of trust is involved and everyone gets together to synthesize all the ideas to achieve the same goal so it's a case of Win-Win. In the case of the Post Office, it is important for the board of directors to collaborate with the employees, Communication Workers Union and the Media to find a best resolution for both parties so it's a win-win.

Compromising

This approach is more needed when a temporary solution is required and uses moderate level of assertiveness and cooperativeness (Riasi & Asadzadeh, 2015). This is a case of lose-lose due to the fact neither party can achieve what they really want due to cultural differences or team dynamics however agreeing to a temporary decision requires a lot of assertiveness and cooperativeness. In the case of the Post Office a temporary solution would be required with immediate effect to calm the strike for few days whilst board of directors and government make an overall decision in the interest of employees and the business. A temporary solution for the Post Office would be key workers to resume back to work so the pay freeze can be amended by the board of directors however not promising what the outcome will be, by doing this Post Office are not falling into the trap of having to

compromise as an easy way out. This will calm the situation supporting the employees for hope in the change of pay freeze. In another words Compromise is taking the middle road between opposing views. Regards to the Post Office for the overall decision they can agree to specific terms. Also, since the Post Office is showing disagreement, they would need to show flexibility when compromising (Riasi & Asadzadeh, 2015).

Overall, in my opinion regards the Post Office case I would suggest the best approach to resolve the conflict would be to use the collaborating approach by unfreeze pay and increase a percentage of pay for the employees as they are the key workers and without them the daily task will be left outstanding which will eventually have a huge impact on the customers who will complain for dissatisfaction of service level provided, and take the matter to the ombudsman, who will then fine company as the complaints would be withheld in favour of the customers. This approach uses high level of assertive and cooperative behaviour and meets both parties' objectives and needs. Here both parties are willing to be flexible and the strategy gives the positive feeling of a win-win case as both parties feel they have gained out of the conflict (Riasi & Asadzadeh, 2015). Also, keeps the trust, engagement, and creates a positive morale as all working towards a shared goal. Here the Post Office board of directors and government need to attempt to balance power so all can work together. The cause of the conflict could be the case of cultural differences hence the behaviour approach taken by the key workers; therefore, the Post Office management need to adapt new perspective so it can create opportunities for all employees within the organisation and give easier solutions without having the need to go on a strike in the future. This could involve rewarding key employees for their hard work.

Conclusion

Discussing organisation power and politics, I believe power wins over politics due to authority then again there needs to be a fair balance between both as both are needed in an organisation for it to run smoothly or disputes can arise such as the Post Office Strike (Zaleznik, 1970).

The Salience model helps you manage your stakeholders effectively by focusing on important stakeholders therefore reduces wasting time on less important stakeholders however the process can be very lengthy therefore it is time consuming and costly. Post Office is funded by the government therefore more likely due to the cost involved this Salience model would not be appropriate for this organisation.

The Power-Interest Matrix stakeholder model analyses to help remove barriers and anticipate potential problems in an organization, I believe this model will help the Post Office establish the level of interest the key workers have within the organisation (Bordone, 2000). This will help the Post Office board of directors to make fairer decision regards to the employee strike. Board of directors making a fair decision will keep employees motivated, engaged, and will reduce employee turnover in the long term. A fair decision will allow the organisation to be trusted again by employees, customers, suppliers, and shareholders.

The Thomas Kilmann Conflict resolution model, I strongly believe will help in today's market to resolve conflicts in organisation as the model helps to establish the best approach to use in certain situations. There are always conflicts in an organisation due to organisational change, cultural differences, team dynamics or individual differences therefore it is important to be always ethical and professional when resolving conflicts in a workplace. If conflicts are not resolved this leads to change in behaviour of employee's motivation towards work as the example I have used in the essay, 'The Post Office Strike'. Referring to the Post Office Strike, I believe the best approach would be collaborating approach favouring key workers by increasing key workers' pay. Meeting key workers strike demand would be in the interest of the organisation regards to share market, reputation and avoiding high employee turnover. Also, this will help the void media attention. Post Office financially have made a profit during the pandemic (BBC, 2022). Moreover, the reason for my conflict resolution would be due to the fact in November 2020 in the House of Commons, the government announced the Post Office would receive a £227 million investment for 2021/22. This includes a £50 million network subsidy payment and £177 million to invest in the future of the network. The £177 million investment funding is made up of a £125 million equity injection and £52 million loan (Booth, 2022). Therefore, considering the huge amounts of investments government has invested it will be only fair for key workers wage to be

increased and a reward system to be put in place to show appreciation for the employees' contribution to the success the Post Office has reached in today's market. Reward system highly motivate employees to work hard and help career progression.

Recommendation

My recommendation to resolve the Post Office strike would be for the organisation to use the Thomas Kilmann Conflict resolution model and use the Collaboration approach to meet the demands of the key workers. I would recommend the board of directors to analyse the importance of stakeholders using The Power-Interest Matrix stakeholder model as this will help to eliminate risk and helps to understand the power of individual stakeholders.

Organisational power and politics work together therefore I would suggest Post Office to use Reward Power which is formal power to recognise key employees hard work, which will help them career progress well as able to earn more with incentives and bonuses (Riasi & Asadzadeh, 2015).

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