

PROBLEM SOLVING AT WORKPLACE

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INTRODUCTION

When we are at the workplace, we will face many different situations and problems that sometimes we will have to solve in a short time. Anyway, the most important is that we actively work to improve the possible weaknesses.

There are many times where simple situations can become a nightmare if we don't know how to manage them but these have most of the time an easy solution, we just need to analyze the environment, find the root of the problem and be communicative.

In this case study we will talk through few of the biggest issues that are very common and also how to solve and manage these situations properly. By anticipating the situations that can come up and knowing how to communicate effectively we will already have the hardest part of problem solving.

ANTICIPATION TO SITUATIONS

As leaders, our job is to minimize the occurrence of these problems and solve them effectively. Saying that, we need to know that some of those problems won't even happen if we manage and organize the team correctly; while others are unavoidable but still can be worked out if we analyze the situation properly and understand all the factors that intervene in the problem scope.

Take time to analyze the situation and define the problem roots correctly.

Be aware there are some things that you can do nothing about. They're not problems; they are merely facts of life, like natural disasters. Often, what can look like a problem, can also be an opportunity if we know how to use it and we are open to it.

Be open to new opportunities and don't get blinded or stressed when an issue approaches, even if some situations seem too hard, the best way is to relax.

Get advice from other people, even if you will be the person that takes the final decision, they might have a different approach to the situations that might be helpful. It is impossible to have all the solutions even if you are the smartest person.

Encourage collaboration, the job will be easier and it will make your team develop confidence and trust, also, two minds think more than one.

Try to make a simulation of the possible situations that can come up, it will help you realize some stuff that you weren't aware of before and to see clearly and openly.

The more possible solutions you develop, the more likely you will come up with the right one. The quality of the solution is in proportion with the quantity of solutions considered in problem solving, and if one of them doesn't work, then you already have a plan B.

Challenge the definition from all angles. The more analytical you are, the better. Beware of any problem for which there is only one definition. The more ways you can define a problem, the more likely it is that you will find the best solution. For example, if the company isn't prospering as thought, you know that you need to

improve many aspects of the company. If there are not so many clients a good idea would be to get new advertising or offers to attract customers.

Finally, keep a track of the progress. Making a list with the goals accomplished won't just motivate you and the team, but it will also make you see how you have progressed and also what you can still improve or add.

Let's say you are the manager of a big company. First of all, you need to organize the environment, which includes the material needed, the space, and employees. Being aware of what is going to be needed to facilitate the work will not just make us safe several times but also make our team work more effective and easy.

When you hire people, you need to know what they are better at, what motivates them and of course the abilities and experience they have. Knowing that, you can think which position is going to be better for that person.

Being aware about all the possible issues that can come up will give us an extraordinary extra time and will make us be more prepared when the situation requires it.

LACK OF TWO WAY COMMUNICATION

Problem solving requires transparent communication where everyone's concerns and points of view are freely expressed. There are too many situations where getting to the root of the problem is hard as people don't communicate it.

Communication is a fundamental necessity. That is why when those involved in the problem would rather not express themselves – fearing they can lose their job or expose their own or someone else's wrong-doing – solve the problem gets harder. Effective communication towards problem solving happens because of a leader's ability to facilitate a safe and open environment where people can solve their differences through trust in order to find a solution.

After we check all the points of view and everybody have expressed their selves, the team can try to find an easy solution with the guidance of the leader. Even though it looks easy, for some people it can be hard to people to communicate what is going on as they can feel uncomfortable with the situation. In this case scenario, the leader should investigate and analyze the possibilities and challenge the team to reach a solution.

For example, there was a situation where I had to show a new employee how everything worked. She would just stare at me smiling and saying: "Yes", but when i went back to check if everything was going alright, she looked very lost, so I tried to speak with her, until I realized she didn't understand most of what I was saying as her English was really bad. Therefore I searched for someone who spoke the same language as her and we decided to move her to a different position where she didn't have to deal with the customers.

There are other situations where people won't understand each other for the simple reason they won't listen to the other person, or just being that they are too closed in to their own ideas that they think all the others are wrong. It is really important to understand that everybody have their own way of doing the tasks, but also being aware that team work requires adapting and being open to different ideas and ways.

Here are some tips that you should do in order to deliver the information properly:

- Make clear from the beginning of the week how you'll evaluate your employees with individual performance planning sessions.

- Give your employees a copy of their appraisal before the meeting so they may get an idea about what is going on and have their initial emotional response in private.

-Deliver a positive message to your good performers by mainly concentrating on their achievements and strengths during the conversation.

Try to avoid to:

-Offer general feedback; be specific on behaviors you want your employee to stop, start, and continue. General feedback can offend or demotivate the good performers.

-Talk about compensation during the review; but if you must, divulge the salary information at the start of the conversation

-Be unclear or changeable. Use the face-to-face as an opportunity to demand improvement being clear about your needs.

INNEFFECTIVE JOB PERFORMANCE

When you are at work, there are many different aspects that intervene in a job performance. These factors need to be well connected and blended, otherwise we could be doing an amazing individual job, but still ineffective given our incapacity to team work. Also, is not everything about the people is inside, in these factors we need to count the environment too.

In an ineffective performance review, the boss often does all the talking, without knowing the opinion of the team, or without having all the information. Or the team just doesn't share all the information they should. This can happen given an absence of trust or confidence between the team.

To put performance reviews back on track, management must first recognize the stakes. It takes just a little time to discuss the employee's performance and it will affect to the employee thinking and doing for the next full months or years. There is a lot that needs to be put into reviews carefully. Managers should make sure to use the employee's job description and review their performance in the context of a discussion. The manager should ask the employee to share their perspectives on each issue first. And, the manager should first focus on performance strengths before addressing areas that need improvement.

There was a situation where the employees couldn't make a proper team work as everybody was doing the things in their own way without consulting with the team. This situation created a mess at work, because some of the things that need to be done weren't, and they started to argue with each other. So the situation started to be uncomfortable and the problems would just accumulate.

As you can see, this is an organization problem. When there is a situation like this, first of all, the manager needs to organize each task, as employees that are not enough experienced need somebody to organize them. Reuniting the team to talk about how to solve this is the most effective solution. Here some steps to solve it:

- Understanding who is better for each task, as when everybody is doing what they are best at the work is done faster and also the person feels more motivated

- Have frequent meetings with all the team so everybody can share their ideas and talk through the possible issues that come up.
- Make clear which is everybody's position and specific tasks.
- Constructive coaching: giving more detailed information or courses about the tasks or stuff that needs to be done, so people can improve and get new abilities.
- Giving feedback to our employees in a positive way where communication flows both ways.
- Mind our vocabulary; instead of being a destructive critic, positivity will makes us achieve more and everybody will feel more comfortable. For example instead of saying "you are bad at this", we can try: "I will give you some ideas to improve your way of doing this".
- Set goals together; it will motivate the team and will help to organize the time in order to achieve deadlines.

A successful performance review ends with agreement between the employee and manager, and with a jointly designed set of performance objectives going forward. This leaves the employee with a sincere vote of confidence.

CONCLUSION

Anticipating the problems by analyzing, watching all the angles and thinking about all the possibilities and opportunities will makes us safe several time, and also to stop the problems even before they happen.

A good communication with trust and patience will solve most of the possible issues at the workplace as it will help to understand the main issues and the way others see the issue.

Constructive coaching, feedback and meetings with our team, will help us achieve a good job performance.

Even if there are many situations that can come up not just at the workplace but also in the real life, being aware of the situations and trying to solve them we will grow and achieve our goals faster.