

PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION MAKING (BMSK4004_LON)

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Introduction

An unfavourable environment in the workplace is the major cause of concern for the employees and the management as it enhances the level of stress and adds the unhappiness factor within the employees. Various employees working within the organisation have entirely different view about the problems taking place. Some consider it one-sided whereas, this is not the case as such problems are generally of a bigger nature. These problems should be solved by appropriate problem solving and decision-making approaches (Leon-Perez *et al.* 2015). In this report, the complex issues in workplace and their effect upon the workplace will be highlighted. I had the opportunity to work in Bright Star Financial Limited, as an intern whereas the complex issues

prevalent will be highlighted and solutions to solve them will be analysed by making a plan, reviewing, and monitoring techniques adopted.

Complex problem in the workplace

While working as an intern in Bright Star Financial Limited, the main problem that I pointed out was the interpersonal conflict that existed among the various employees working within the organisation. This problem caused each member of my team as well as other team members to suffer a lot. I was given the responsibility to manage a team of 10 individuals. There were around 5 employees in my team, who came from different cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds, which caused a problem while communication as they often instead of communicating in the business language, rather preferred to explain tasks in their own language. This gave rise to problems in understanding the tasks allotted to other members as well and therefore it caused delay in delivering appropriate results. Around 2 employees in my team were experienced employees of the organisation, therefore they communicated in the same business language but they used certain terms and terminologies which not at all understandable by me. Being new in the organisation, many of my team members and I were not at all familiar with the jargons and abbreviations, which were used by the experienced employees. This gave rise to conflict among the various member of the team causing reduction of work performance. One employee in my team had the problem of hearing impairment and he was unable to grasp the content of any kind of information shared to him, which caused problem while he delivered any task results at the end of the day as he had even problem of understanding too. Many employees within my team had personal conflicts which each other, which lead to conflicts, anger and commotion within the workplace. Others being new were very shy and they had problem in communicating with the other members of the team and solve any issues that are arising in the path of their work. These problems though are individually small in nature, but together they are giving rise to a major and complex problem in the workplace. Being the manager myself, I am personally facing problems in handling these as such issues if not solved now, will give rise to serious problem in the future course of time.

Scope of the chosen complex problem

Interpersonal conflicts though causes various problems to the employees within a concern and as well as the workplace but they have a variety of scopes. If better and proper handling of such

conflicts is done, it will help in improving the culture of the organisation and aid in participation of even the unwilling members of the team. The performance of the staffs and enhancing the performance of the organisation can also be done very easily by means of this process. The solving of such conflicts will result in better teamwork and improving the policies and methods by means of which the performance of the employees can be managed better (Kim *et al.* 2017). This will cause in reduction of various complains and grievances that arise on a day-to-day basis within the workplace. If continuous conflicts remain within the organisation, it will help the manager and the employees to gain more skills so that they can handle any such similar situation in the future.

Impact of the chosen complex problem

The interpersonal issues arising among the various team members in an organisation are posing a serious problem to the organisation in which I am presently working. Such conflicts have affected the productivity level as the employees involved in the conflict spend a lot of time in participating in the conflict, rather than focusing on their work. The concept of job insecurity factor also rises in the minds of the employees as the work places get affected by the feeling of mistrust and suspicion. The employees who however keep themselves aloof from such conflict fear for their life and even leave the workplace before time. Many employees are affected psychologically and emotionally by means of such continuous conflicts existing within the organisation (Hur *et al.* 2016). Ample amount of time and resources are being wasted as the employees indulge themselves in spending time in doing conflicts rather than emphasizing upon the work allotted to them. The rate of absenteeism is also increased as the employees engaged in such conflict may avoid coming to their work in order to save themselves from such commotion. Such conflict even causes the rate of employee turnover to increase much higher as many employees who are peace loving tend to keep themselves away from such situations and hence, continuous conflicts daily may force them to leave the organisation and join any other organisation. The conflicts if not managed at the grass root level, can lead the organisation to even loose funds by paying court fees and compensation claims and they may lose enough time in carrying out and managing such cases in the course of time (Gilin Oore *et al.* 2015).

Information to aid decision-making process

An organization runs successfully with the right decision and the proper execution of it. The success of a manager depends on the effectiveness and the quality of the decisions taken by him or her. It is a constant duty of a manager to make effective decisions to solve different kind of organizational problems. Making correct decision and solving problems in a proper way are the continuing process of examining situations or problems, exploring alternatives, selecting choices, which are followed by taking effective action. This process of making a right decision entirely depends upon the availability of the accurate information to the exact people at the proper time (Edwards, *et al.* 2016).

The authority of the Bright Star Financial Limited should keep in mind the effectiveness of the process of making decision and take actions accordingly. The authority can go through the following steps for making decision to enhance the progress of his concern:

Define the problem: According to Libby, (2017), the first and foremost part of the process of decision-making is the proper identification of the problem, which is effective for the following parts. The problem must be defined properly as it helps every other steps taking afterwards in the process of decision-making. Identification of the problems is the only way through which a manager can detect the true problem against a situation. The most common symptoms of an organisation is the underlying problems which create obvious troubling situation which are indication of something wrong in the organisation but they do not make out the original reason of the problem. The symptom of a successful manager is the ability of not only exploring the problems but also to reveal the factors causing the symptoms.

Collect relevant information: It is important to gather all the relevant information about the problem before making a decision. This step includes both inner and outer assessment, as the inner assessment is a process of self-assessment that will help to develop the self-instinct. Another process of collecting information is to collect information from various kinds of outer sources (Mosier, *et al.* 2018).

Identification of the alternative: Violette, *et al.* 2015, says the next step of the process of decision-making is the identification of all the potential ways of action or alternatives. There are enough

scopes of exploring new alternatives, which can be collected through additional information. In this step, a manager can list all probable and advantageous alternatives.

Evaluation of the evidences: The ultimate result of all the alternatives can be predicted and the need of the identification of every step is an important part of the process. Adopting difficult internal process for solving a difficult problem has the higher potentiality to receive the ultimate achievement. All the alternatives should be placed in the priority list based upon the value system (Reyna, *et al.* 2015).

Choice of alternatives: After exploring all the alternatives, the selection of the proper alternative solution to solve any industrialized problem is very much important. There can be a choice of more than one ways also (Ulibarri, 2018).

Taking action: After all the possible findings, the action for solving the problem is to take the proper action to fight the industrial process of solving the problem. Perfect problem needs a perfect solution to deplore and to run the business properly (Edwards, *et al.* 2016).

Review of decision and its consequences: It is the final step of the decision making process. In this step the most important part is the evaluation of all the steps for progress. If the process of decision does not work in the identification necessity, all the chains are have to be repeated for solving any problem of the concern (Libby, 2017).

The authority of Bright Star Financial Limited should follow all the above-mentioned steps to meet an immense success in their business.

SWOT Analysis

This analytical tool helps in identifying the internal strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and the external opportunities and threats. They are:

Strengths

- Good portfolio of products available for the customer base
- A skilled workforce in place with good expertise
- Presence of strong dealer network

Weaknesses

- Interpersonal conflict amongst the employees hampering organisational culture
- High attrition rate
- Lack of communication between management and the employees

Opportunities

- The core competencies of organisation can be used to enhance the product portfolio
- Technological advancement will give opportunity for enhancement of work
- Low inflation rate will help in bringing more stability in the market

Threats

- Rising level of pay scale can pose a great threat for retaining workforce
- Lack of communication can increase more internal conflict
- New Regulations being made post BREXIT can pose threat for certain products
- Shortage in skilled workforce can pose a threat to steady growth

Alternative solutions to the chosen problem

There are various types of alternative solutions by means of which, interpersonal conflict can be managed easily. These are as follows:

- **Deal with the problem-** Many employees tend to avoid the conflict arising and may even quit their jobs rather than solving the interpersonal conflict at work. The ignorance and avoidance of such work may give rise to stress, anger and resentment (Sexton and Orchard, 2016). Only when we learn how to manage the conflict, we can be happier and healthier both mentally and physically. This will aid an individual to become a better individual and good team member and will get more respect and self-esteem in the future course of time.
- **Thinking it deeply-** Prior discussion of such problem with any friend or family will help in addressing the exact issues to the individual who is causing such conflict. Proper planning and making a strategy and detailed examination of the issue will aid in resolving the problem efficiently and effectively (Brett, 2018).
- **Face-to-face conversation-** Face to face communication with the person who is the main source of conflict will help to solve the issue well. The use of e-mail, social media and letters are impersonal and causes misunderstanding (Keashly *et al.* 2016). Therefore, use

of gestures and body languages will aid in understanding the non-verbal issues and the problems that are causing such conflict to grow.

- **Use of third party-** If the situation of conflict among the employees within the organisational boundary, goes out of hand, in that case, a third party like a supervisor or even a manager can be appointed by the organisation itself, who can listen to the facts of both the sides causing such conflict. He will also analyse the chief cause of such conflict and try to resolve it as soon as possible (Babalola *et al.* 2018). He should not be partial and should remain firm in his views so that such conflict can be mitigated soon.
- **Apologizing-** If the employees who are the root of such conflict acknowledge the fact that they are guilty and resolves such issues, such interpersonal issues can be solved easily. Even if the problem is not created by the individual, sometimes if acknowledgement of the fact of guilt resolves such issues, they must do it to avoid growing of such issues (Elgoibar *et al.* 2016).
- **Improvement of skills of communication-** The interpersonal conflicts arising in the workplace can only be solved if the individual has effective skills of communication, which will aid them to solve the issues well. Such employee must communicate with the individuals causing such conflict so that he can make them understand well and find out the root cause of such conflict.
- **Avoiding conflict initiators as much as possible-** The avoidance of the individuals who causes such conflict should be done as such individuals will drag others into the problems. One should understand when he can move away from confrontation and ignore the criticism and harmful comments of others (McKenzie, 2015). One cannot totally avoid conflict initiators, however, they can deal with such individuals in a professional manner, which will help to develop relationships and remove such conflict easily. It will also aid in the creation of the concept of empowerment of the employees, which in turn will create a favourable and productive work environment for all the employees within the organisation.

Decision making technique

Decision making technique involves an analytical process that results in the selection of a particular possibility among several options available. In circumstances when the problem itself is conflict management, then it is obvious that it is connected with decision making so that

collaboratively the most feasible solution can be arrived at. In the opinion of Mardani, (2015), as most decisions involve some amount of emotional component as well, the decision makers need to take special care that they do not affect the needs of the people who would be affected by the decision. The decision-making involves few problem-solving techniques so that the best solution can be arrived at. Usually, there are a set of process steps that are followed in doing the above. In the words of Prenzel and Vanclay, (2014), some of the steps that are followed are inspection of the problem, outlining of the issues, arriving at alternative options through brainstorming, choosing the simplest method for resolution of the conflict and finally implementing the chosen method. On the contrary according to Kaner,(2014), however, this method is not full proof as it is assumed that an ideal outcome exists, which is not in reality. Another flaw is that the decision-making involves emotions of the people taking it.

The core focus in any conflict management is reduction of the effect of people's emotions and makes them think rationally (Pettigrew, 2014). The solution choices that are usually taken for conflict management are as follows:

- ***Forcing or Directing:*** In the words of Brinkschröder, (2014), in this method the superior usually forces the decision on the team and his subordinates as he has the autonomous power to do so.
- ***Accommodating:*** In this method, the dispute or problem in hand is attempted to be resolved by negotiating the matter between the two parties who were involved in the dispute.
- ***Problem solving Collaborating:*** In this method, a decision is taken with collaboration of everyone and the solution is conventional. The outcome as a result is much more acceptable by all concerned (Prenzel and Vanclay, 2014).
- ***Compromising:*** This method is more based on the concept of give and take. Each side surrenders something so that they can come to a solution. The options that are available are limited by the extent to which the dispute has taken shape.
- ***Withdrawing/Accepting:*** In this method, the dispute is not settled necessarily but time is given so that the emotions involved can be controlled.

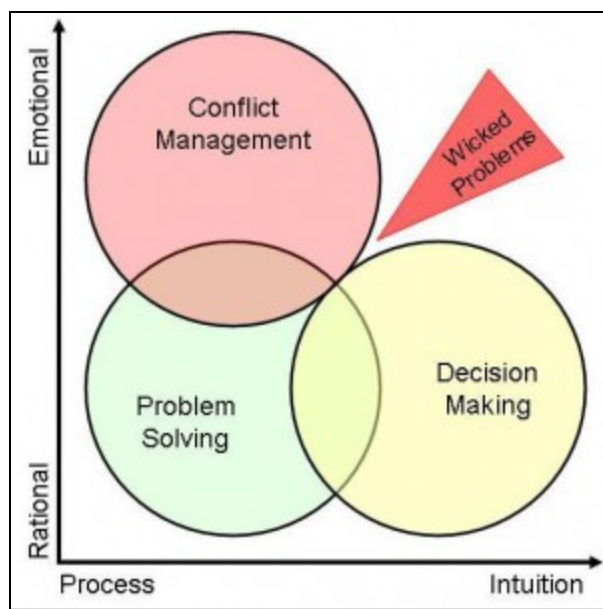


Figure 1: Conflict Management and Decision taking connection

(Source: Pettigrew, 2014)

Any of these methods or approaches can be used to resolve the conflict that has come up depending on the nature of the conflict. Once any of the methods are applied, the problem or issue needs to be solved entirely. As stated by Sherif, (2015), moreover taking the right decision is also dependent on some other factors like availability of relevant data and the emotional quotient of the employees involved in the conflict.

In this particular case, the issue that has come up is the interpersonal conflicts between employees in Bright Star Financial. Interpersonal conflict is a multi-featured phenomenon and hence a very well structured plan needs to be chalked out to deal with it. To mitigate the issues the method or technique that needs to be applied is a combination of techniques. The method that needs to be followed is that a decision initially needs to be taken collaborating with everyone who was involved in the conflict. This helps in giving everyone a scope to voice their opinions and brings out a solution that is acceptable for all. Then the final decision of the solution is discussed with the management of the organisation and is forced upon all the concerned employees. This is so because some amount of power need to be executed in order to manage the conflict efficiently. After the decision has been taken and is been conveyed to all, the next step is to implement the decision for conflict resolution.

Plan for implementation

Based on the decision that was taken the action and the implementation plan needs to be implemented. After collaboration followed by direction a set of established ground rules need to be established which has to be adhered to by everyone. Then a common goal needs to be set so that the plan can be developed around it (Young et al., 2016). For example, the common goal can be well being and satisfactions of the clients irrespective of the size of the business that they are giving. A shared mission also provides a platform to bring everyone to follow one common thought process. This also rules out the option of any personal grievance from the team members. Now implementation of the plan involves the following steps.

A mail detailing all aspects of the solution needs to mail across to all employees who are part of the organisation of Bright Star Financial. Then, develop a dedicated team who will take care of the solution decided. The team should comprise of members across all departments (Barsky, 2014). This team should be briefed about all the aspects that it needs to work on and the deliverables that is expected from this. This team also needs to review the changes from time to time so that there can be option of continuous improvement in the future. Then again, implement the improvements from time to time.

It is important to take note of the quantitative change that has been undergone because of this implementation. This should then be conveyed across all departments and all levels of employees so that they can get motivated and start resolution of conflict even at an individual level. This practice would help in building a better work culture built on collaborative work. The team should also be reshuffled from time to time so that everyone in the organisation gets to work on this particular project, as it will give him or her better understanding of how implementing a plan needs to be done to earn success out of it.

Communication plan to stakeholders

Stakeholder Communication Plan for Bright Star Financial Limited

<i>Stakeholder</i>	<i>Information</i>	<i>Key issues</i>	<i>Communication medium</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Format</i>
Project managers	Project progress, risks, solution , plans, approach and issues	The issue in Bright Star Financial Limited could be miscommunication in teams, which could raise conflicts. Even, there could also be issue of poorly defining the objectives and goals of the project.	Formal meeting or email	Weekly or required	Formal meeting agenda or through adhoc
IT manager	Technology, resourcing , Tactical and operational plan	The main issue could be due to the new security threats, causing due to the system, or the skill gap of the IT manager, having low level of productivity for Bright Star Financial Limited.	Formal meeting or email	Weekly or required	Formal meeting agenda or through adhoc
Steering committee	High-level information, funding requests, schedule change, accomplishments, issue of escalation	The issue that may arise could be irresponsibility lying with the scope of the project, with budget and strategy. There may also be issue regarding benchmarks for meetings while progressing on the tasks set by the company.	Formal meeting	Monthly	Powerpoint pre-read 2 days before meeting

Business manager	Business needs, baseline changes, progress of the project and resourcing	Issue could arise regarding performance. It could also be regarding the financial management that could work for better customer service for the company.	Formal meeting or email	Weekly or required	Formal meeting agenda or through adhoc
Media	Define reports, take feedbacks,	Issues could arise due to improper interpretation of taking messages to the global financial market, or inaccurate data, which could defy customers.	Formal meeting or email	Monthly	Formal meeting agenda or through adhoc

Table 1: Communication Plan for Stakeholders

(Source: Learner)

In order to draft the Communication stakeholder plan of Bright Star Financial Limited, it is vital to list out the key stakeholders that would update on the project work. Still, for the medium of the project, it is necessary to analyse the long-term projects for the company, so that it could be effective. That certain area should not cause any kind of financial overrun or any delays. For this stakeholder plan, it is decisive that scope for the project that will have better training initiative. Thus, this stakeholder plan for Bright Star Financial Limited consists of Project managers, IT managers, Steering Committee, media and Business manager (Elgoibar *et al.* 2016).

Monitoring and review techniques

Monitoring techniques of Bright Star Financial Limited include records of the projects, formal surveys that are conducted during the project, interviews of the employees, directly observing

aspects, focus group conversation and other planning of work. The review methods systematize, plan and synchronize all actions in a network map (Jain, *et al.* 2019).

Sim, *et al.* (2018) says, to review the progression of discussions, the planned achievements and objectives, the authorial concern of Bright Star Financial Limited should use information against its yearly operational strategies. They must be ensured that the working agent should keep exact records for the further assessment of the process. The achievement of a plan, should be clear about systems and structures are required should be involved in the assessment.

The place and time of the completion of a plan should be assumed first and the management committee should be informed to evaluate the further progress of the concern. The following information should be known to the management committee of a concern at the time of reviewing the progress of strategic aims and objectives:

They should be ensured about the activities in between the parameters of the approved strategic aims. They should be well known about the activities, which are constant with the clear vision, mission and values of the organisation (Bekas, *et al.* 2016). For some charitable organisation, collected information should be shown about the communal advantage of charity. They should be informed about the inner review and outer changes, there may be requirement of adjustments for the strategy of the organisation, and that can affect their capability to accomplish their objectives.

Tools that are used for project management continue to develop according to the abilities and client boundary. The common way of more incorporated method and information administration systems is the user interface. Project information portals are being integrated more and more with the implement of project management tools (Li, *et al.* 2017).

Conclusion

It can be concluded that a better communication plan is developed. The mode of interaction with company's higher authority with that of stakeholders is done through formal meetings. Further, it can be idealized that the meetings for the stakeholders should be conducted in weekly basis, for Bright Star Financial Limited, since feedback can be easily receivable. The key aspect is to conduct response from Project managers to business managers, so that a task can be easily done with good liability.

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