Strategies for Resolving Conflicts Within Organizations

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For every business firm, the inevitability of conflicts is a reality that beckons. Conflicts often originate from multiple sources. For example, they could be between employees of equal ranks in the office, a junior and a senior, or the company and its clients. It is imperative that the management and supervisors in any enterprise view conflict as inherently harmful and devise several mechanisms to suppress it at every opportunity. By contrast, the business can view a business conflict as inherently positive and leverage the conflict to gear towards a positive change in the business environment. That notwithstanding, various organizational conflict resolution methods present themselves for any firm that grapples with conflicts.

Conflict Resolution Approaches

Grievance Procedure:

Some companies choose to employ grievance procedures as the prime method to handle conflicts in the business. Herein, the firm establishes an official grievance procedure for its workers (Ingram, 2018). The employees at every level of the industry are assured that their voices are respected and will be heard in the event of a conflict. The management promises to respond promptly and reasonably to the issues the staff brings forth. The merit of this form is that it eliminates terrible feelings of bitterness and resentment (Ingram, 2018). It also guarantees open and quick handling of conflicts.

Positive Perspective:

A positive perspective is applied in some firms. Here, the company views conflict as a form of the natural growth process that can positively influence the business (Ingram, 2018). Enterprises are assured that disputes are assets to the company if handled meticulously and adequately. A positive perspective aids the organization in taking lessons from mistakes and identifying the areas that need appraisal. The method also increases the chances of innovation.

Equal Voices:

The equal voices procedure offers the conflicting parties a fair platform for airing their grievances. In this method, employees are treated equally regardless of their positions in the company (Ingram, 2018). If the participants cite marginalization, they tend to be defensive, creating a predetermined outcome. The resolution goes beyond offering the affected parties equal chances of speaking and also includes giving the aggrieved sides equal weight to their presented arguments.

Facts Finding:

Fact finding includes focusing on the roots of the problem while ignoring the superficial effects of the issue during the assessment of the conflict. The assumption is that as much as aggrieved parties may claim the widespread effects of the company's policies, there are deep underlying causes (Ingram, 2018). In-depth assessment of conflicts helps create long-term solutions to the organisation's problems.

Resolution Participation:

Some firms prefer using the resolution participation method to solve conflicts. All the factions are involved in the drafting of the solutions. According to the Management by Objective (MBO) theory, employees' commitment is high to the goals that they generate. The same logic applies to resolving conflicts (Ingram, 2018). All the aggrieved sides actively draft solutions and recommendations at the negotiating table. The ultimate goal is to unite the warring parties.

Example of Conflict: Fox News Channel

Fox News has grappled with the exploitation of its employees in the recent past. It is worse because the exploitation was sexual, with female employees accusing the company's former chairperson, Roger Ailes, of sexual harassment. The nature of the conflict herein is exploitation carried out by a senior employee against a subordinate. The scandal placed Fox in an awkward position to defend its already tainted image.

In April 2017, Roger Ailes, who was the Fox News Channel commentator, was accused of sexual harassment, inflicting reputational damage on the broadcasting giant. The victim, Julie Roginsky, a political commentator and a contributor at the news house, claimed that Ailes made several sexual advances towards her. She said that the accused further penalized her after she rebuffed his advances. In July 2016, Ailes was sacked from Fox News due to sexual harassment scandals. Aside from that, over 20 women, including former Fox News employees Laurie Dhue and Megyn Kelly, filed similar complaints against Roger Ailes.

Facts Finding as Applied in Fox News Channel

Fox News Channel adopted fact-finding as a method of conflict resolution. Herein, the company decided to suspend and later sack Roger Ailes to pave the way for an investigation in 2016 (Redden, 2016). Following his sacking, the giant broadcasting firm ignored the effects of Mr Ailes's behaviour and dug deep into the inquiry by interviewing the affected female employees. The company's ethical committee was tasked with an investigation into the allegations.

A meeting was held between Ms Roginsky and Fox News Network's executives. The convention came following Mr. Ailes' departure from the firm (Holpuch, 2017). Roginsky raised concerns about the case and later proceeded to a public trial followed by a civil jury based in New York City.

Merits and Demerits of the Conflict at Fox

The conflict was advantageous to the organization because it exposed the weaknesses within the firm that must be addressed. The accusation of Mr Ailes proved that female employees were at risk of being sexually exploited by not only their seniors but also male employees. Positively, the conflict exposed Fox News by illuminating the areas that need rectification and improvement. Resultantly, Fox has been able to come up with anti-discriminatory rules that eliminate any form of exploitation of junior employees. Additionally, the company has created an environment protecting all employees as they discharge their duties. According to Ingram (2018), conflicts must be viewed positively as improvement points because if handled correctly, they benefit the firm. In future, it might be difficult to implicate Fox News because of the mitigations it has taken to curb exploitation of its staff.

By contrast, the conflict tainted the image of Fox News Channel. When the news of the sexual exploitation of female workers came out, the firm grappled with opposition and criticism from not only female viewers but also the global audience. The company's image was negatively perceived because of the accused, Mr. Ailes (Redden, 2016). Aside from that, conflicts inculcate legal concerns in the business. The reaction of the Fox News employees was to sue Mr. Ailes. According to Holpuch (2017), Julie Roginsky filed a lawsuit against Roger Ailes, followed by 20 other women, some former Fox News employees, filing similar suits. In fact, Billy O'Reilly, the co-president of the firm, had to offer $13 million as a settlement to five women who were victims of Mr. Ailes's sexual harassment (Holpuch, 2017). The finding placed Fox News in reputational and financial problems.

Alternative Approach

I am convinced that equal voice was the best method that Fox News could have used. In this approach, the company would have brought Ms Roginsky, Mr. Ailes, and other complainants to a hearing table within the company. Herein, all of them would have been given a fair opportunity to address their issues regardless of their positions in Fox News. The method would show that the

victims are equally respected in the company. Besides, it would help prevent a public portrayal of the negative image of the firm.

In summation, firms grapple with conflicts in the organization. The treatment and handling of the dispute differ among institutions. Fact-finding, equal voice, resolution participation, positive perspective, and grievance procedures are the central mechanisms that most companies use. In light of this paper, conflicts are avenues for growth for a business organization if approached with positive constructivism.

References

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