

## **TOPIC: TEAM PERFORMANCE & CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

For a team to be effective its composition must suite the type of task that needs to be carried out.

The task will determine the skills required of the team members.

All teams need the maximum participation of all the members.

The focus must remain on the task and not be distracted by the team members' personalities.

Teams do not function automatically. Good leaders build teams according to their needs and take into account the stages that teams normally go through before they start performing.

### **STAGES OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Forming**

Individuals gather information and impressions about each other and the scope of the task and how to approach it.

This is a comfortable stage to be in.

People focus on being busy with routines, such as team organisation e.g. who does what and when to meet each other.

#### **Storming**

Teams go through a period of conflict after formation.

Different ideas from team members will compete for consideration.

Team members open up to each other and confront each other's ideas and perspectives.

Arguments occur and upset the team members.

Many teams fail during this stage as they are not focused on their task.

This phase can become destructive for the team and will negatively impact on team performance, if allowed to get out of control.

This stage is important for the growth of the team.

Some team members tolerate each other to survive this stage.

#### **Norming**

Team members come to an agreement and reach consensus.

Roles and responsibilities are clear and accepted.

Processes, the working style and respect develop amongst members.

Team members have the ambition to work for the success of the team.

Conflict may occur, but commitment and unity are strong.

#### **Performing**

Team members are aware of strategies and aims of the team.

They have direction without interference from the leader.

Processes and structures are set.

Leaders delegate and oversee the processes and procedures.

All members are now competent and able to handle the decision-making process without supervision.

Differences among members are appreciated and used to enhance the team's performance.

#### **Adjourning**

The focus is on the completion of the task.

Breaking up the team may be traumatic as team members may find it difficult to perform as individuals once again.

All tasks need to be completed before the team finally dissolves.

**Characteristics of successful teams**

Successful teams share a common goal as team members are part of the process of setting goals for the group.

Share a set of team values and implement group decisions.

Teams value the contributions of individual members and reach consensus on differences.

There is a climate of respect/trust and honesty.

Team members enjoy open communication and deal with items of conflict immediately.

Teams are accountable and members know the time frame for achieving their goals.

Teams pay attention to the needs of the individual team members.

Successful teams have sound intra-team relations.

Creates an environment where team members are given opportunities to develop so that team members grow and learn from the experience of working in a team.

Regular reviews of team processes and progress may solve problems sooner.

Balance the necessary skills, knowledge, experience and expertise to achieve the objectives.

**Criteria for successful team performance****Interpersonal attitudes and behaviour**

Members have a positive attitude of support towards each other.

Good interpersonal relationships will increase productivity of the team.

Members are committed towards achieving a common goal.

Team leaders give credit to members for positive contributions.

Team members must respect each other's skills and knowledge.

Members must feel free to voice their opinions and ideas.

The group must decide how they will function to achieve the objectives, so every member has a clear idea of what is expected of them.

**Shared values**

The team must work together and help each other to get the task done.

Everyone must be able to trust the others to do their own share and complete their tasks on time.

Team members must be treated with respect and be allowed to freely express feelings and ideas.

**Communication**

A clear set of procedures for team work ensures that every team member understands his/her role.

Effective communication between team members can lead to quick decisions.

Quality feedback improves the morale of the team.

Open communication allows for effective solutions to problems.

Continuous reviews of team progress ensure that team members can act proactively to ensure that targets are met.

**Cooperation / Collaboration**

Clearly defined realistic goals are set so that all members know exactly what is to be accomplished.

There is a willingness to cooperate as a unit to achieve the team objectives.

Agree on ways to get the job done effectively without wasting time on conflict resolution.

All members take part in decision making.

### **Importance of team dynamic theories in improving team performance**

Team dynamic theories explain how effective teams work/operate.

Businesses are able to allocate tasks according to the roles of team members.

Team members can maximise performance as tasks are allocated according to their abilities, skills, attributes or personalities.

Team members with similar strengths may compete for team tasks that best suit their abilities.

Theories assist team leaders to understand the personality types of team members so that tasks are assigned more effectively.

Conflict may be minimised when team members perform different roles.

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

### **Causes of conflict in the workplace**

Differences in backgrounds or cultures or values or beliefs or language

Limited business resources

Different goals or objectives for the group or individuals

Personality differences between groups or individuals

Different opinions

Unfair workload

Ill-managed stress

Unrealistic expectations

Poor organisation or leadership or administrative procedures and systems

Confusion about scheduling or deadlines

Ignoring rules and procedures

Misconduct or Unacceptable behaviour

Intense competition or Competitiveness

Poor communication

Unclear responsibilities

Distracted by personal objectives

Constant changes in the workplace

Unfair treatment of workers or Favouritism by management or Discrimination

Lack of trust amongst workers

**(NOTE: You must be able to identify causes of conflict from given scenarios)**

### **Explanation of causes of conflict in the workplace**

Lack of proper communication between management and workers

Ignoring rules and procedures may result in disagreements and conflict.

Management and workers may have different personalities or backgrounds.

Different levels of knowledge, skills and experience of managers and workers.

Little or no co-operation between internal and external stakeholders

Lack of recognition for good work, e.g. a manager may not show appreciation for extra hours worked to meet deadlines.

Lack of employee development may increase frustration levels as workers may repeat errors due to a lack of knowledge or skills.

Unfair disciplinary procedures, e.g. favouritism or nepotism

Little or no support from management with regards to supplying the necessary resources and providing guidelines.

Leadership styles used, e.g. autocratic managers may not consider worker inputs.

Unrealistic deadlines or heavy workloads lead to stress resulting in conflict.

Lack of agreement on mutual matters, e.g. remuneration and working hours

Inter-team rivalry may cause workers to lose focus on team targets.

Lack of commitment which may lead to an inability to meet pre-set targets.

Constant changes may cause instability

Lack of clarity regarding employees' roles and responsibilities.

### **Handling conflict in the workplace / Steps in resolving conflict**

Acknowledge that there is conflict in the workplace.

Identify the cause of the conflict.

Make intentions for intervention clear so that parties involved may feel at ease.

Arrange a meeting between the conflicting parties and management.

Blame shifting should be avoided and joint team solutions must be found.

Suggest strategies to solve the conflict.

Parties must agree on the best solution to solve the conflict.

Direct the conflicting parties towards focusing on the solutions.

Select the appropriate solution to the conflict and implement it.

### **DEALING WITH GRIEVANCES AND DIFFICULT PEOPLE or PERSONALITIES**

#### **Differences between grievance and conflict**

<b>Grievance</b>	<b>Conflict</b>
When an employee is unhappy or has a problem or complaint in the workplace.	Clash of opinions or ideas or view points in the workplace.
It is when an individual or group has a work related issue.	Disagreement between two or more parties in the workplace.
Examples that can cause a grievance: Discrimination, unfair treatment, poor working conditions.	Examples that can cause conflict: A lack of trust or miscommunication or personality clashes or different values.

#### **The grievance procedure**

An aggrieved employee must verbally report the grievance to his supervisor or manager, who need to resolve the issue within 3 – 5 working days.

Should the employee and supervisor not be able to resolve the grievance then the employee may take it to the next level of management.

The employee may move to a more formal process where the grievance must be lodged in writing or completes it on the business grievance form.

The employee must receive a written reply in response to the written grievance.

A grievance meeting must be held with all the relevant parties present.

Minutes of meetings must be recorded and any resolution passed must be recorded on the formal grievance form.

Should the employee not be satisfied then he could refer the matter to the highest level of management.

Top management should arrange for a meeting with all relevant parties.

Minutes of meetings must be recorded and any resolution passed must be recorded on the formal grievance form.

Should the employee still not be satisfied then he could refer the matter to the CCMA who will make a final decision on the matter.

### **How to deal with difficult employees**

Identify the type of personality which is creating the problem.

A deadline should be set for improving bad behaviour and guidelines for improvement should be given.

Keep communication channels open and encourage employees to communicate their grievances to management.

Identify and provide an appropriate support programme to address areas of weakness.

Understand the person's intentions and why they react in a certain way.

Get perspective from others who have experienced the same kind of situation.

Treat people with respect not as if he / she is incompetent.

Ask someone in authority for their input into the situation.

Don't judge the person, try to understand them.

If you have already tried everything possible and the person is still not responding, ignore them.

You cannot change them, so don't try to rather see where you can use them effectively.

### **How to deal with difficult people and their personalities**

<b>Personality</b>	<b>How to deal with difficult people</b>
<b>Complainer</b>	Listen to the complaints but don't acknowledge them. Interrupt the situation and move to the problem solving process as soon as possible.
<b>Indecisiveness</b>	Guide them through alternatives. Stay in control and emphasise the importance to make a decision. Help them make the decision or solve the problem.
<b>Over – agree</b>	Be firm and don't let them make promises that they cannot keep. Follow up on their actions.
<b>Negativity</b>	Be firm with them and don't let them draw you into their negativity. Listen to them but don't agree with them. Manipulate them into changing their attitude.
<b>Experts</b>	Be firm and assertive. Don't accuse them of being incorrect and don't get caught in their game. Know your facts.
<b>Quiets</b>	Don't fill their silence with words. Wait for their response. Prompt them through the process so that they give input. Restrict the time of the discussion.
<b>Aggressive</b>	Allow them time to speak and blow off. Be firm but don't attack them. Don't allow them to be hostile towards others.

**TOPIC: TEAM PERFROMANCE AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT - ACTIVITY**

1. Identify the stage of team development applicable in **EACH** of the following statements
  - 1.1 Team members question each other's ideas and opinions.
  - 1.2 The team has direction without interference from the leader.
  - 1.3 Team members are comfortable and learn more about each other.
  - 1.4 Team members come to an agreement and reach consensus. (8)
2. Discuss **EACH** stage of team development identified in QUESTION 1. (8)
3. Explain the characteristics of successful teams (8)
4. Discuss the following criteria for assessing successful team performance.
  - 4.1 Interpersonal attitude and behaviour
  - 4.2 Communication
  - 4.3 Shared values/Mutual trust and support
  - 4.4 Co-operation/Collaboration (8)
5. Elaborate on the importance of team dynamic theories in improving team performance. (6)
6. Distinguish between a grievance and conflict at the place of employment. (8)
7. Read the scenario below and answer the questions that follow. (June 2016)

**TREVOR TYRES LTD (TT)**

Trevor Tyres Ltd employs workers from diverse backgrounds. Some workers find it difficult to tolerate others' beliefs and values. Many workers fight over the use of the business's limited resources and some ignore business rules. Management refuses to address the workers' concerns, despite a formal complaint being lodged by some workers.

- 7.1 Quote **FOUR** causes of conflict in the scenario above. (4)
- 7.2 Explain to TT other causes of conflict in the workplace. (8)
- 7.3 Advise the management of Trevor Tyres on how to handle conflict in the workplace. (8)
8. Read the scenario below and answer the questions that follow.

**LELETHU SHUTTLE SERVICES (LSS)**

Lelethu Shuttle Services provide transport services for tourists in Sharpeville. Albert, a well-experienced employee in the transport industry, refuses to take instructions from management. Njabulo, the supervisor at LSS, is always arguing and fighting with the clients.

- 8.1 Identify the types of difficult personalities displayed by Albert and Njabulo. Motivate your answer by quoting from the scenario above. (6)

**Use the table below as a guide to answer QUESTION 8.1**

Employees	Type of difficult personality	Motivation
<b>Albert</b>		
<b>Njabulo</b>		

- 8.2 Recommend **ONE** strategy that LSS can use to deal with **EACH** type of difficult personality identified in QUESTION 8.1. (4)
- 8.3 Name and explain to LSS how to deal with other difficult personalities. (15)
- 8.4 Advise LSS on other ways they can deal with difficult employees except difficult personalities. (8)
9. Explain the correct procedure to deal with grievances in the workplace. (8)