

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN BUSINESS: WORTHY INVESTMENTS

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"Life is the process of solving hundreds of problems and conflicts. Man can't avoid them. He can only make decision about the problem or to leave it to others. " (B.Vul, American social psychologist)

We live in the society and sometimes it is very difficult to avoid the conflict. They accompany us everywhere: at work, in family, public places or in a transport. Business conflicts make a special type with a variety of reasons to emerge: from small quarrels between partners to a complete elimination of the enterprise and personal hostility of all team members. Therefore, the problem of conflict solution, prevention and management is very topical for corporate authorities.

As for business, a conflict is considered by academics and managers as a positive phenomenon. It is a sign of a company and people development and arises when the team or the organization starts being differentiated, when personnel management becomes more difficult.

Practically all businesses, even very big, grow from rather simple ideas. But there can be the different visions, absolutely different strategy and ways of implementation of this simple idea. At the start-up stage all companies are quite similar – they are not differentiated, they solve similar problems, to hundreds of companies in the world. Soon the time of differentiation comes when a company hierarchy becomes complicated and a company activity become diverse. At this moment conflicts can arise.

Accumulation of dissatisfaction by an existing situation and increase of claims of the parties usually becomes a source of a conflict situation. There are three potential consequences of the conflict:

- it becomes a permanent feature in the team
- it is completed with the victory of one of the parties
- it ends with a compromise

From the psychological and sociological perspectives conflicts can be classified in the following way:

- intrapersonal - members of the conflict are the psychological characteristics of one person
- interpersonal - for example "supervisor - subordinate"
- intergroup – personal conflicts (household quarrel, clash of political beliefs, different attitude towards moral values) and professional (disputes between the administration and the union between the leaders and performers).

There are three types of participants in a conflict and three types of human behavior in a conflict situation:

- interlocutor with the position: bad peace is better than a good war
- thinker with the position: let your opponent thinks that won
- Practitioner with the position: attack is the best defense

Options of an outcome of the conflict: when you or your subordinates are under conflict you should choose one of the following ways out: escaping from a solution, finding a compromise, staying in confrontation, searching cooperation

Methods of conflict management:

A manager should timely take measures for the psycho-prophylaxis of conflicts using observation, individual interviews, questionnaire-test methods for determining the adverse

social roles of individual employees, the availability of psychological marginalization, negative leadership.

After determining the cause of the conflict a manager should make a complete information model of conflict.

To overcome the conflict between employees a chief should hold a conversation with opponents a view to:

- find out both strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment officer and his opponent of his actions in the conflict, as compelling and distant from the truth or obviously distorted estimates members of the conflict each other's actions;
- support fair judgments of the employee concerning his actions and actions of the opponent;
- pay attention to the inadequate moments in stated estimates and self-assessments;
- push the subordinate to necessary correction of his position at the conflict.

Thus, the head can recommend both parties to look at each other through the eyes of the opponent. It can lower an emotional intensity, prevent from extreme behavior and lead to finding the way out. Another way is to organize joint conversation with participants of both sides of the conflict. In summarizing part of conversation the head has to unite all constructive statements of both opponents and recommend them the ways of solution.

Let us look closer at the example from one small Russian company: Valentina, having a higher education degree worked as a laboratory assistant, getting a small salary. Valentina often came late at work, left earlier, and performed her duties without zeal, believing that for the money she earns they should thank her for coming to work. She liked almost complete lack of responsibility, but was not satisfied with a low salary in comparison with other employees. Gradually, the problem became aggravated, the claims emerged that the employee practically did not come to work, did carry out duties. The girl refused to work for that kind of salary with so many responsibilities. The head of the department couldn't raise the salary on his own and the accompany authorities refused to interfere with the conflict. The conflict escalated and ended with Valentina's firing. The head could not find the candidate for Valentina's position for the whole year. The authorities had to raise the salary for the position, they also developed a compensation package for those making a contribution in rising a company productivity. The following year the company demonstrated higher profit.

Thus, the company authorities learned a lesson from the conflict: lack of responsibility of one employee creates problems for the whole department, but without the conflict, the problem of low work morale and low salary would not have been resolved.

The conclusion can be the following: investment in conflict management is the one of the best that the company can make for its development.

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