

Conflict Considerations – we all need a plan

by Richard Lannon — “Be SET – Structured, Engaged, Trained”

Recently, I was reminded that only 10 percent of conflict is extreme and 90 percent of conflict is acceptable. While working with a client I noticed some needs that were not being met. Those unmet needs evolved into a conflict between several people on the team. It was interesting to observe what took place. Mostly it was a flight situation. The people in the conflict situation simply left the area. This is not a bad thing – sometimes you just need to “get out of Dodge”. When it comes to conflict we all need to make some common considerations.

First, conflict has a positive place in our lives. Conflict is natural and depending on our disposition we might fight/flight or fend/befriend. We are wired that way.

Second, 7/8 of conflict happens beneath the water. Think of conflict like the iceberg in the ocean, 7/8 of it is underwater. For individuals, the portion underwater has to do with our history, values, culture, beliefs and feelings and all the other stuff that is happening in our lives.

Third, 1/8 is above the water. This is where we observe people’s behaviours. The above the water iceberg represents the actual conflict event that occurs among individuals and teams.

Conflict thinking is often broken down into four levels. These include:

Position: This is the level that is about facts, data, and information. At this level a person or team takes their position.

Standards: This level is about policy and procedures that do not necessarily fit the individual or team culture.

Somewhere a change was mandated without regards to the people impact.

Objectives: There is a lack of alignment in the organization, team and individuals goals and priorities. People are confused and are not sure what is important. There are conflicting interests and generally poor leadership.

Culture: The culture level is about values, beliefs and attitudes. This is the level where individuals, teams and organizations interest lie. This level is that deeper under-the-water level that should be understood and taken into consideration. This level can represent a real challenge.

We all need at least one approach to conflict resolution. The following 10 steps are an approach used in dealing with one-on-one conflict. If engaged correctly can go a long way to resolve conflict.

1. Present the issue without emotion, blame, or judgment
2. Ask for the other person’s point of view
3. Explain your point of view clearly
4. Clarify and define the issues in terms of both your needs
5. Create a joined plan with which you both agree
6. Brainstorm and discuss possible solutions
7. Select the best chance of meeting both your needs
8. Develop a realistic plan of action and determine who will do what by when, where and how
9. Implement the plan, follow it and make a commitment to the plan
10. Evaluate the success of the solution based on the joint objective

During the conflict resolution discussion do your best to stay neutral in your emotions. That does not mean divorce yourself from your emotions. It simply means recognize your emotions and know that how you feel is alright and it is alright for the other person too. Each party needs to acknowledge their emotions, be willing to describe the situation and express how they feel. In turn, they need to specify clearly what is expected and consider the consequences of individual, team and organization behaviours.

A lot of conflict resolution is about acknowledging and settling the emotions through collaborative problem solving to satisfy the various stakeholders’ interest to the greatest degree possible.

*Richard Lannon aligns the enterprise and technical skills to common business objectives. Working with professionals, he identifies what is important, establishes direction and builds skills that positively impact the bottom-line. He provides the blueprint for clients to be structured, engaged and trained. That is why his clients call him the **setability expert**.*

Suite 144 Shawville Square
132-250 Shawville Blvd. SE
Calgary, Alberta, T2Y 2Z7

PHONE: 403-630-2808

EMAIL: richard@braveworld.ca

WEB: www.braveworld.ca

Richard Lannon
Structured, Engaged, Trained

BraveWorld Inc. ©2008 (www.braveworld.ca)