Dealing with Difficult People

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Who Are These People?
Today’s Objectives

• Define Difficult People
• Explore Conflict
• Engage in Conflict Resolution Group Activity
• Consider Strategies to deal with Difficult People

BREAK

• Group Activity
• Discuss the Generation Conundrum
• Identify Effective Communication Tools
• Review Benefits of effective communication
• Wrap-up summary
• Close with a group affirmation activity
Dealing with Difficult People...

Speak too forcefully and you’re considered overbearing;
Speak too soft and you’re considered a push over.
According to Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook COO and author "Lean In"

"Women still face real obstacles in the Professional world"

- Blatant and Subtle Sexism
- Gender Discrimination
- Sexual Harassment
- Have to prove themselves to a far greater extent than men do.
Women are hindered by barriers that exist within

“Ourselves”

We internalize the negative messages we get throughout our lives

Its not “womanly” to be Ambitious, Aggressive, or have Authority
Long-term consequences of these internal obstacles create...

“Difficult People” and “Conflict” with co-workers
Lack of self-confidence based on fundamental assumptions

Boys are “leaders”- Girls are “Bossy”
Not speaking out when confronted with “Difficult People”

(social cues that defines appropriate behavior for girls)
Likeability and success are positively correlated for men and negatively correlated for women.
How do we dismantle these obstacles that inherently generate conflict in the workplace; and engage effective communication strategies to deal with the “difficult people” it manifest?
Let’s start with defining “Difficult People”

What does it actually mean to you?

Adverse impact on work environment; “1000” fatal injuries each year.

www.dol.gov/oasam/hrc/policies/dol/workplace
In General
Difficult People Are:

Anyone who exhibits negative behavior with most people, most of the time.

For our purposes,

Someone exhibiting negative behavior toward you, or me
Constructive or Destructive Conflict:

Group Activity
Which was easier to discuss and why?

What surprises did you find when the entire group reported out?

How do you think most people at work feel about conflict?

What are the lessons you learned from this activity?
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<tr>
<th><strong>SODAS</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Situation</strong></td>
<td>Assess the circumstance, likelihood of reoccurrence, a scale of 1-10 severity.</td>
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<td><strong>Opportunities</strong></td>
<td>What chances have you had to address the situation</td>
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<td><strong>Disadvantages</strong></td>
<td>If not addressed what would happen</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Advantages</strong></td>
<td>If address, what would happen</td>
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<td><strong>Solutions</strong></td>
<td>Formulate an action plan/ take a stand</td>
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Strategies to deal with Difficult People

- Challenge assumptions
- Take responsibility for your own feelings
- Clarify the problem
- Maintain perspective, how important is the person to your work
- Try to understand the other persons point of the view
- Share your perspective with them on the problem
- Change the way you interact with the person
- Consider your options
Take A Stand

When the conflict goes beyond attitude and the behavior has resulted in verbal abuse, threats, or intimidation tactics

• Report to your supervisor or union representative

• Don’t make jokes about it

• Don’t let your antagonist make you feel guilty

• File a Grievance, seek employee assistance, (if possible) request a departmental transfer, file a compliant with the Human Rights Commission, seek legal counsel.
Break
15 Minutes
Group Activity

Describe a time when you were confronted with a Difficult co-worker (or work situation), How you handled it.
The Generation Conundrum

• As a manager, Project Leader, or Senior Staff, you may lead up to four generations.

• Each bring a distinction set of ideas, behaviors, attitude, motivations, and expectations.
Traditionalist 1945

- One lifetime career
- Respects Authority
- Prefers one-on-one Communication
- Adheres to Rules
- No Praise Necessary
Baby Boomers 1946-1964

- Like Title Recognition
- May Question Authority
- Team Players
- Work-a-holics
Millennials 1981-1999

• Entrepreneurial – work is a means to an end
  • Very Social
  • Crave balance between Work and Life
  • High Expectations of the Workplace
Generation X 1965-1980

• Enjoy Freedom and Flexibility in the workplace
  • Prefer E-mail communication
• Constantly Re-evaluating their Career Path
FOUR PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATION

• Everybody communicates verbally and nonverbally, consciously and unconsciously.

• Every individual is a product of his or her own culture.

• All communication is culture-bond.

• There are numerous communication styles within, racial, gender, and ethnic groups.
• Be mindful of your own communication style and your co-workers

• Recognize what’s going right

• Encourage employee input and engagement

• Reinforce strengths

• Clarify expectations and objectives (honest/fair evaluations)

• Be specific about needed improvement in a timely manner

• Always extend appropriate privacy
Be a Good Listener
(use your **Ears** more than your **Mouth**)

- Most conflict arise from poor listening.
- When involved in communication, give the speaker your attention.
- Do not interrupt, so their message is not misconstrued.
- Make eye contact, repeating their words will ensure your understanding.
- If you are not, your body language may give you away
The Heart Hears, before the Head Listens.

• Tone of voice can change the entire meaning of your words.

• If you have an issue with someone, it is obliviously better to talk with the person directly than to talk to others.

• Address person by name

• Ask questions to verify what you heard and gives speaker chance to clarify their thoughts.
Digital Communications

• Sometimes communications via email, or text message is not the most effective form of communication.

• Complicated messages reduced to text lose much of their meaning.

• Face-to-face meetings ensure that people understand what you are communicating, and you can gauge body language to get a feel for how well the message has been received.
Best Prevention Strategies to reduce Workplace Conflict

- Address Quality of life issues
- Open timely communication
- Maintain mechanisms for complaints and concerns
- Allow employees to be express in a non-judgmental forum that includes timely feedback to the initiator.
Benefits of Good Communication

• Improves employee morale
• Increases performance and productivity
• Avoids unnecessary competition within the same department
• Employees work together harmoniously
• Helps develop a workforce able to effective communication with customers, vendors, and business partners.
Summarize Today’s Objectives

• We Defined Difficult People
• Explored Workplace Conflict
• Discussed The Generation Conundrum
• Reviewed Effective Communication and Prevention Strategies
• Benefits of good communication
“The most common way that people give up their power, is by thinking they don’t have any”

Alice Walker"
Express Yourself!