IMPORTANCE OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS AT THE WORKPLACE

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ABSTRACT

Managing interpersonal relations is proving to be a huge challenge for the employees. Although the primary reason for the job hopping is said to be money; many employees leave organizations getting frustrated with either boss or colleagues. This cycle just doesn’t seem to end. After all how many organizations an employee is going to leave getting tired of daily fights? Such situation ends up as loss for the employee who leaves and also for the organization which may lose its valuable human resource. Employees must realize that keeping good interpersonal relation is very important to get job satisfaction and also to succeed in the organization.

INTRODUCTION

In a market where product life cycles are getting shorter and innovation is the only way to succeed in the market, organizations know importance of quick and sound decision making. Organizations want to take benefit of synergies of team work. For the employees it is important to have team orientation, being social and adaptive than being dominant and adamant. In one of surveys conducted, it was found out that those who are asked to leave the organization, 80% of the employees are those who have bad interpersonal relations and only 20% employees are asked to quit due to poor performance. Human resource means knowledge and skills of employees but it also means perceptions, values, beliefs and attitudes of employees. Due to the natural make up people have different values and beliefs and where 2 or more than 2 individuals get together, it is all likely that there may be disagreements which may result in conflicts. By traditional view, conflicts were considered as avoidable and primary reason for conflicts was considered to failure of management. However modern view
realizes that the conflicts are inevitable and conflicts within levels in fact result in improved organization performance. The function of management is to control the level of conflicts. So is the responsibility of the employees also not to drag the conflict too far. These conflicts should be issue based and should not turn individual conflicts of egos. Employees should be flexible enough to appreciate good suggestions by the other and be diplomatic in criticizing those ideas which they genuinely find useless.

MEANING OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

An interpersonal relationship is an association between two or more people that may range in duration from brief to enduring. This association may be based on inference, love, solidarity, regular business interactions, or some other type of social commitment. Interpersonal relationships are formed in the context of social, cultural and other influences.

IMPORTANCE OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

Some employees know the importance of healthy relations at the work, whereas the other egoist employees find their progress in the career hard as such employees are normally avoided by their fellow workers and superiors avoid giving them any major responsibility due to their tantrums thrown every now and then.

In one of the organizations, 2 candidates were equally looked as deserving the top most post of the organization. When the employees of the organization were asked about their choice, with unequivocal voice they preferred the one who always helped them in their work by always being cooperative over the other employee who at times was hostile towards feelings and work of other employees. Good interpersonal relations can work as a tie breaker when both the candidates are found to be equal in terms of performance parameters.

Employees spend large part of his life on job and to make this time fun and happy, he / she should be able to deal with everyday people at job successfully. However it’s a skill and can be achieved with lot of tact and good professional mannerisms.

IMPORTANT TIPS FOR GOOD INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

Treat people with dignity: It absolutely does not matter whether the employee works on high or lower rank of organization. His work contributes to the success of the organization. Organization too is like a family and each person should be treated with respect and dignity.

Leave the attitude ‘I am like this only’ at home: Most of the employees cover up their bad attitudes saying this is what they are. With this attitude of everybody organization will turn into a mess. Lot of flexibility is required on the parts of the members to accommodate the other persons working with him. Arrogance or casualness will not work for long under the excuse ‘this is what I usually behave’. Such employees may get paid back in their own coins after a while and may find themselves isolated at the work place.

Communication is the key: What matters most is the communication. After all work can’t be done unless you tell somebody to do what work is do done, how it is to be done. However use of the words, “Thank you”, “Sorry” or “Please” is brushed away, taking people for
granted that it was their work and why they have to be said thanks for. These words are not formalities but they are the expressions of heart which show lot of humility of an individual. Verbal or non verbal communication actually conveys personality and considerations for others. Being honest and humble can create lot of goodwill and trust for an employee among his colleagues.

**Don’t create enemies at the workplace:** Practicing empathy makes relations better. Employees should be able to understand each other’s problems or concerns. Attitude of cooperation always helps in winning people. Adamant, negative or problem creating behavior always bring employees in the wrong lime light hampering his / her way in the career. If one can’t create friends, at least enemies should not be created. People with high egos just create enemies at the workplace.

**Do not treat your office as your home:** Although it is said ‘my organization is my second family’, employees should understand lot of professionalism is required at the work place. Organizations have their own culture and it is important for any employee to understand what are the DOs and DONTs at the workplace. Too much casualness, informality may not be liked by the colleagues. Although most of time professional friends turn into personal friends, still it will be advisable to draw a line as personal friendliness makes things difficult while dealing with individual on professional front. Office is not a place to take out frustrations regarding personal life. Neither is the house. Keeping personal and professional lives apart although is challenging but still it should be tried with all efforts.

**Display professionalism:** This is something which makes employee look committed to his work and it shows employee is not only sincere about his work and the organization but he/ she loves it. It is an undeterred attitude of an employee for the completion of his work no matter what difficulties he goes through. Some of the things which are considered a part of professionalism are as follows:

1. Smile on the face to show you are a pleasing and accessible person.
2. Following protocols in matters of dress up.
3. Sophistication in written and oral communication.
4. Clean and neat arrangement of desktop, cubical or cabin with properly stacked files and papers.
5. Maintaining personal hygiene.

Some of the things which are considered as negative at the workplace are as follows:

1. Not attending office phone calls quickly and talking on phone loudly.
2. Always gossiping.
3. Talking loudly.
4. Always busy with personal phone calls.
5. Keeping mobile phones with loud and weird ring tones. Special care must be taken regarding this during meeting times.
6. Talking all the time on domestic matters.
7. Spoiling office place with food, trash of papers and not cleaning up.
8. Peeping into somebody’s computer.
9. Talking in a language with other person which is not understood by the rest of the people present.
10. Using colleagues’ things without permission.
HOW TO TACKLE DIFFICULT PEOPLE

Work place is made up of people and like there are cooperative employees there are difficult employees with whom one can find problem to get along. Such people exist in all the work places. There is no one type of such difficult people. The meaning of who can become a difficult employee to handle depends on self-esteem, self-confidence and professional courage.

All sorts of dysfunctional approaches exist among employees. Some just talk and will never listen what others are saying. Some are stubborn and will ensure that only their suggested solution be implemented. Some coworkers are cynic about everything of which they were not a part of, some are whiners, complainers and problem creators. They may be jealous of power, privilege and the spotlight the others enjoy; some even try to deliberately spoil views of others. The compulsion that these difficult people bring is that you must settle issues with them as early as possible.

WHY IMPORTANT TO ADDRESS SITUATION

Like a wound, if not looked after, rather than situation getting better, it may get bizarre. Unaddressed conflict keeps boiling just below and comes to the surface like a volcano.

At the first, behavior of difficult people makes one feel immensely surprised and to leave to thinking what must have be the reason behind such behavior. To live with such behavior for long time is not a good choice. After a while a person starts losing his patience and calm. Anger, pain, humiliation, fear and concern about making the situation worse are legitimate emotions. It’s always better to address the difficult person early while having control over emotions.

Keeping things the way they are rather than dealing with difficult person directly and complaining it to another fellow worker or boss may earn the person who is actually suffering a tag as difficult person rather than settling the issue. People may find this employee an immature professional who doesn’t know to solve interpersonal problems. This stamp gets hard to wipe and can be detrimental for the career progress. In the worst scenario the organization may get tired of dealing with such “high maintenance” employee and are replaced with more professional and cooperative employees.

DEALING WITH THE DIFFICULT COWORKER

Self- Analysis: Employee facing behavior of difficult person first should start for looking for problem inside out. Most of the time, we don’t find any problem within us. It’s better to ask oneself some questions like is there any problem in our own behavior? Try to find out are the other fellow workers too experiencing the same problem or it is only you who is overreacting.

Open up with trusted colleague: Employee can talk about his / her experience with his / her trusted colleague and try to get suggestions regarding what can be done to solve the problem

Talk directly however privately with difficult person: One can talk with the difficult person and tell the person your experience with “I” focus i.e. narrating your experience rather than getting into blame game. One can tell the difficult person how you are getting affected
due to his behavior. It may be a case that the he / she may be completely unaware of the things. Give the other person a chance to put his side also. Be a good listener. On the opposite side they may be aware of it and may doing it deliberately. Try to find out exact situation. During the course of discussion, try to reach to some agreement or solutions. Make the person realize how adversely situation can affect both.

**Keep track:** Find out has there any change in the behavior? Has it got better or situation has escalated? If it has turned worse, figure out can another talk will help or not. Or you should deal the person head on.

You can confront your difficult coworker’s behavior publicly. Deal with the person with gentle humor or slight sarcasm. However remember, confronting somebody publically should be within limits. A person who has already been branded as “difficult” to deal will not lose anything in the confrontation. However the person confronting him can also come in the wrong picture in this public sagging.

**Assume as if you are meeting the person first time in life:** If above all efforts fail, meet every day with the difficult person as if you are meeting him/her for the first time in life; forgetting previous day’s experience and removing all the biases. That may help to ease the interaction.

**Avoid the person as much as possible:** Still the difficulties persist, try to avoid the person as much as possible. Be aware of organizational needs and your own responsibilities but still it is possible to avoid difficult person. Withdraw from voluntary work where both are part of. Get into assignments where difficult person is not working and has no role to play even indirectly. Avoidance is an option but try to see organization as well as your own career needs.

**Seek superior’s intervention:** One can seek the intervention of the superior if the problem persists.

**CONCLUSION**

Maintaining interpersonal relations at the workplace is of lot of importance. Job satisfaction as well as career progress depends upon good interpersonal relations. Cooperative behavior always gets reciprocated response. Although there are difficult people at the workplace with whom everybody has a problem to get along, with some tactical approach one can still find solution to the problem without jeopardizing organizational as well as self interest.

**REFERENCES**


