Course Learning Outcomes for Unit VI

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

1. Discuss eight types of influence tactics, three consequences of influencing others, and three contingencies to consider when choosing an influence tactic.
2. Identify the organizational conditions and personal characteristics that support organizational politics as well as ways to minimize organizational politics.
3. Elaborate on conflict and its positive and negative consequences in the workplace.
4. Explain the differences between constructive and relationship conflict and the three strategies to minimize relationship conflict during constructive conflict episodes.
5. Discuss the conflict process model and the six structural sources of conflict in organizations.
6. Explain the circumstances in which each of the five conflict handling styles would be most appropriate.
7. Apply the six structural approaches to conflict management.
8. Identify the three types of third-party dispute resolution.
9. Determine strategies that skilled negotiators use to claim value and create value in negotiations.

Reading Assignment

Chapter 10:
Power and Influence in the Workplace, pp. 302-310

Chapter 11:
Conflict and Negotiation in the Workplace

Unit Lesson

Power and Influence

Understanding work preferences of subordinates, co-workers, as well as superiors helps interdependent work processes to be productive**.** There are influence tactics that many people use in the workplace based on the research of human behaviors. Influence tactics such as silent authority, assertiveness, and persuasion can manipulate or gain support from others in the workplace in order to gain power or force compliance with one's agenda. Influences often affect the source of power (such as legitimate power versus coercive power) in an organization. For instance, if a grocery store worker did not like the new dress code policy, then he/she might begin to persuade others based on budgetary concerns (facts) and other shared emotional appeals or logical arguments. The result would be a coalition of sorts that would affect proposed change. When the consequences of influencing others is compliant or furthers commitment, an organization benefits. When the result promotes resistance, the outcome can be negative to organizational behavior and climate.

Conflict can have both positive and negative consequences in the workplace, but a newer concept of conflict is that it propels change. Change can motivate innovative solutions to real problems. The old school of thought about conflict was that it simply prevented productivity. Being blind to the outcomes of what might actually become optimal conflict could leave an organization void of the next new industry-wide need. For instance, if a private school teacher approached the principal with several teacher and parent complaints about the lack of technology and the comparison to a local competitor and the principal just ignored the conflict-based discussion, the opportunity for a school-improvement initiative (one that clearly has buy-in from a select group of talkers) could be lost before it was even considered.

When employees have constructive conflict, they often produce effective synergy toward a common goal and high productivity. Conversely, relationship conflict which should be dealt with separately is based on adversarial and/or distorted perceptions rather than lateral work-based communication. Two colleagues who have had a personal issue outside of work find it difficult in this way to communicate constructive and relationship conflict.

Conflict management must consider the process of conflict including, quite simply, differences in opinion. If there are two departments who want to increase employee satisfaction within a hospital, but they differ in how to gain the satisfaction, management might need to recognize why the departments differ in their workplace practices or opinions.

In this unit, we will also discuss various research-based conflict handling styles that are proven to motivate people or teams in conflict to take action toward resolution or a win-win attitude (McShane & Von Glinow, 2013). A manager of a copy company who helps two employees with a procedural disagreement might promote each employee to have a less forcing style and a more compromising style in order to find a procedure that meets each person's goals. There are also strategies and third-party dispute resolution structures that organizations can use.

Reference

McShane, S. L., & Von Glinow, M. A. (2013). *Organizational behavior* (6th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw Hill/Irwin.

Suggested Reading

Click here for the Chapter 11 Presentation in PowerPoint form. Click here to access a PDF version of the presentation.

Using the CSU Online Library, locate and read the following article. *Look for this article using the Academic OneFile Database:*

Armstrong, D. E. (2012). Connecting personal change and organizational passage in the transition from teacher to vice principal. *Journal of School Leadership, 22*(3), 398+.