Mediation at work

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Conflict at work can arise due to several factors, such as a disagreement about money factors, working hours, holidays, project deadlines, harassment, bullying, working styles, etc. These issues exist in all organizations. Conflict can sometimes be resolved by negotiating matters quickly or it can rise into a major dispute. Communication can become difficult and break down if there is conflict. This of course results in performance decrements.

Conflict can sometimes be a good thing because it allows the opportunity for some things to change, voices to be heard and compromises to be made. This can result in a positive change. Ensuring that the working environment encourages healthy communication will affect the performance of employees. When two individuals, such as an employee and employer are experiencing conflict, then mediation can occur. Mediation is “assistance to two or more interacting parties by third parties who (usually) have no authority to impose an outcome” (Wall, Stark & Standifer, 2001). Mediation is basically used to resolve conflict issues and is used in several organizations around the world. The aim of mediation is to improve the relationship between individuals.

Two main factors have to occur before mediation can take place. Firstly, the individuals who are in the conflict situation should come to a mutual agreement that another person or party is needed to mediate the situation. Secondly, the third party should agree to help resolve the conflict. Another factor would be to consider how helpful the mediation process will be compared to not using mediation. Mediation can be used at any stage and is voluntary. The process explores the feelings of the individuals involved and helps them to resolve workplace difficulties by encouraging communication and coming up with an agreement.

Mediation is useful in improving the relationships between people, it reduces stress as the process is voluntary and it reduces people being unhappy at work. Mediation can be used to avoid tribunal claims and costs can be reduced. It is also beneficial to employees as it generates a culture in the working environment which focuses on managing and developing individuals needs.

Reference

Wall, J. A., Stark, J.B., Standifer, R.L. (2001). Mediation: A Current Review and Theory Development. The Journal of conflict resolution, 45 (3), p. 370-391