

# Innovative Tools for Conflict Management by Organisational Leaders

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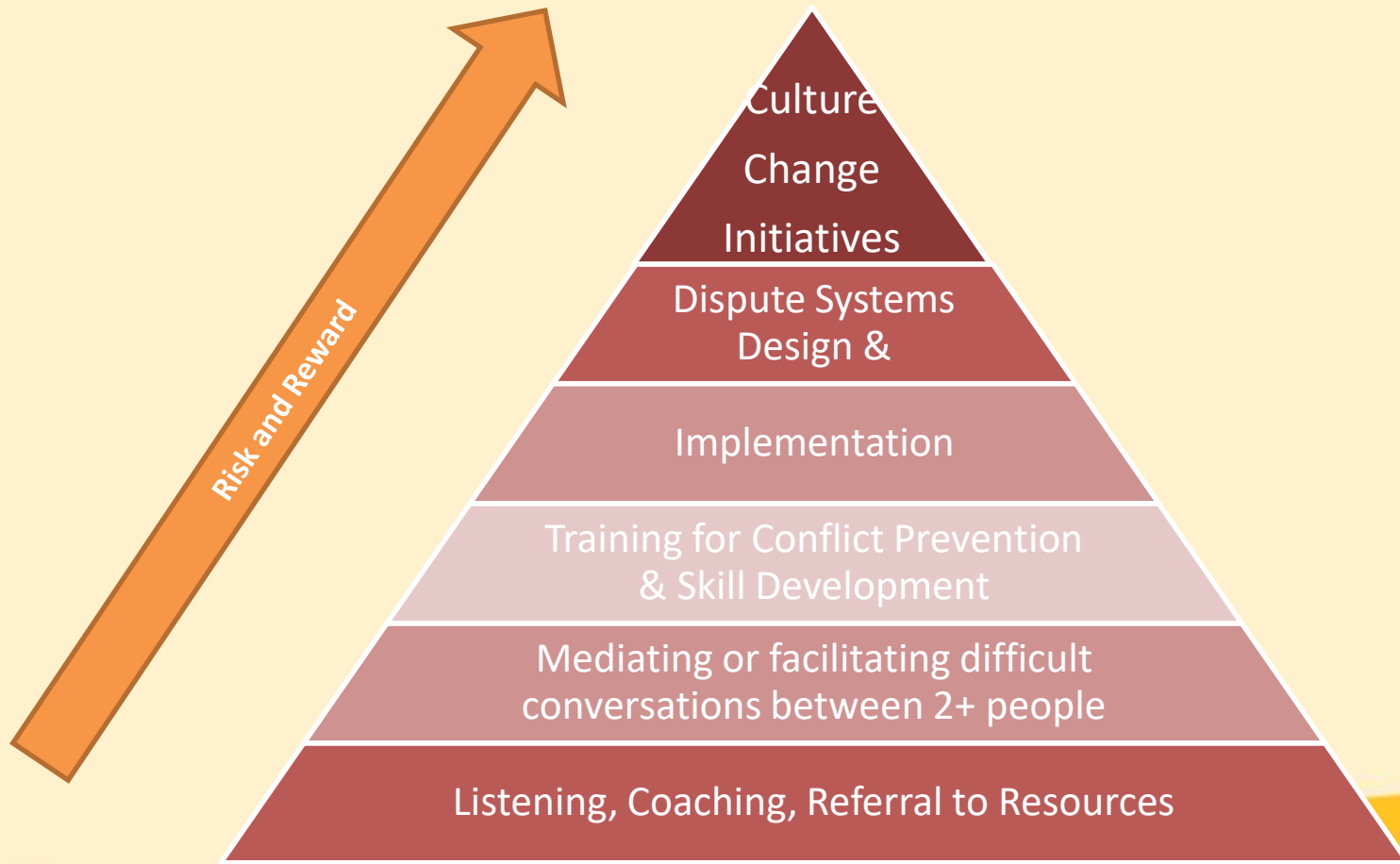
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# The Costs of Conflict in Organizations

- **How much time is spent dealing with conflict at work?**
- “The typical manager spends 25% of his time dealing with conflicts” (Bass & Bass, 2009, p. 319).
- 42% of the average manager’s time (Watson & Hoffman, 1996)
- Fortune 500 executives devoting 20% of their time explicitly to litigation (Watson & Hoffman, 1996)
- Hiring & training to replace an employee = between 75-150% of his annual salary (Raines, 2013).
- Reducing turnover rates has been shown to improve sales growth and workforce morale (Allen, 2008, p. 5).
- Happy customers require happy employees.

## Hierarchy of Organizational CM Tasks



# To Minimize Risk/Maximize Rewards

1. Build coalitions of support:
  - President/CEO, HR, Legal, Unit Leaders
    - Spur collaborative projects related to conflict prevention and + change.
2. Create Shared Understandings to Reduce Conflict (Project Aristotle)
3. Coach/Teach specific skills: Example = Delegation Task Matrix

# Specific Tasks to Build Coalitions of Support

- A) Don't wait until the crisis comes.
- B) Interest-based negotiations:
  - What do they need/want?
    - Reduce negative press/protect Brand name
    - Reduce litigation
    - Improve mission accomplishment (teamwork, engagement, etc.)
  - What are your shared interests?
  - How can you help each other?
  - Communicate boundaries/concerns
  - 3) Who benefits from status quo?

## 2) Create Shared Understandings to Reduce Conflict

- Common Conflict = Dysfunctional Teams
- Project Aristotle: Google's Study of Teams
- **“What Google Learned From Its Quest to Build the Perfect Team: New research reveals surprising truths about why some work groups thrive and others falter”.**

# Improving Team Performance: What we thought we knew

- **Q: Does spending bonding/social time outside of work improve teamwork?**
- **A: Sometimes**
- **Q: Do teams of similar backgrounds or identities have fewer conflicts?**
- **A: Sometimes**
- **Q: Do teams that work face-to-face have fewer conflicts than virtual teams?**
- **A: Sometimes**
- **Q: Do teams with flat (collaborative) organization have less conflict than hierarchically organized teams.**
- **A: Sometimes**

# What makes great teams?

- Conflict comes from unmet expectations.
- High performing teams have shared expectations of each other.
- How? Meta-communicating & Consensus on Norms
  - Intent before content
  - Communicating about how we will communicate
  - Agreements about how the work gets done, rewards get distributed, decisions get made, problems get resolved.



# Qualities of High Performing and Dysfunctional Teams<sup>1</sup>

## High Performing Teams

- High performance, team based results
- Highly motivated team

- Poor performers are managed and held accountable
- Same standards for everyone

- Aligned on common objectives
- Clarity on direction and priorities
- Highly engaged team members

- Confront problems & issues quickly
- Develop practical solutions
- Get input from team, minimal politics

- Safe environment to speak-up
- Team members help each other
- Leverage strengths for the team

### Results

- Poor performance and results
- Team turnover

### Accountability

- Missed deadlines and key deliverables
- Poor performance is tolerated and creates environment of resentment, hopelessness

### Commitment

- Ambiguous direction and priorities
- Revisits discussion again and again
- Absenteeism

### Constructive Conflict

- Go around problems
- Do not confront tough issues
- Lack of transparency drives confusion

### Trust

- Hesitate to ask for help
- Conceal weaknesses from others
- Dread meetings and avoid team

## Dysfunctional Teams

# Teach/Coach on Specific Skills

- Common Management Challenge: Delegating
- 5 Conflict Modes Applied to Common Sources of Conflict: Avoiding, Accommodating, Compromising, Collaborating, Competing
- Avoiders=Avoid delegating to avoid conflict
- Competers= Avoid delegating to retain control. Don't delegate effectively. Sabotage.
- Managers MUST delegate effectively

# Delegation Matrix



# Critical Leadership Steps for Culture Change

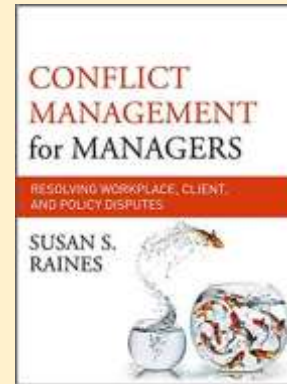
- **1) Articulate a clear vision.**
- **2) Be the change you seek: Lead from the front, stay connected with the front lines.**
- **3) Build a coalition of support for change inside and outside the organization.**
- **4) Engage in radical transparency and visibility.**
- **5) Align everything with the new culture: Practices, products and brand.**
- **6) Empower customers and employees to participate in this effort.**
- **7) Avoid reorganizing or bringing in all new managers. This may delay culture change.**

# Bottom-Up Culture Change

- 1) Don't wait for someone else to make your work-life better.
- 2) Each of us shapes the organizational culture every day.
- 3) Set and communicate boundaries respectfully.
- 4) Negotiate shared cultural expectation in your work unit.
- 5) Use the power you *DO* have.
- 6) Invite leaders to join-in.
- 7) Communicate strategically both inside and outside the organization.

# Conflict Management for Managers

- 1<sup>st</sup> Edition 2013



- 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition: Rowman & Littlefield 2019.



- Available on Amazon.com