
Self-Assessment And Conflicts Resolution

Every week throughout the semester our class has been asked to complete several self-assessments and miniature simulations. Many of these self-assessments pertain to specific skills that are crucial not only in the workplace, but also in our day to day life. For instance, a number of the assessments focus on self-awareness, ethical leadership, teamwork, motivation, and creative problem solving. Of course, these self-assessments were not designed to measure how much we've learned throughout the semester, rather they were designed to reflect our strengths and weaknesses concerning workplace performance and are derived from morals, beliefs, and values (Brown, Sitzmann, & Bauer, 2010). Likewise, the miniature simulations actually place you in a real-life scenario in which you are part of the Human Resources team and have to make a series of ethical decisions to help the organization be successful. No doubt, these assessments and simulations are not easy, thus challenging your problem-solving abilities as well as your belief system. Indeed, several of the assessments indicate that I'm proficient when it comes to certain areas of management, including communicating effectively, motivating others, teamwork, and solving problems creatively. Yet, some of the other assessments show areas in which I'm weak and need improvement, such as managing interpersonal conflict, strategies for handling conflict, gaining power and influence, and avoiding stressful situations. Therefore, throughout this essay I will be taking a closer look at each of these weaknesses, interpreting the results, and developing a strategic plan on how to turn these weaknesses into strengths.

Interpersonal conflict in the workplace usually pertains to disagreements and negative emotions amongst co-workers, which typically leads to low levels of productivity and high levels of turnover (Lawless & Trif, 2016). Furthermore, the Managing Interpersonal Conflict assessment assumes that most conflicts are centered around three separate but closely related aspects and measures a person's ability to manage conflict by combining the total from each of these aspects. First, is the ability to initiate a complaint or how well a person goes about presenting a problem to others, which can be important because it plays a role in how others react to the problem and how long this problem will persist before a resolution is found (Pearson, 2019). Second, is the ability to respond to criticism or how a person goes about responding to the initial complaint, which can either contribute to a prolonged issue or a quick resolution (Pearson, 2019). Last, is the ability to successfully mediate a conflict or assisting others in the process of working through issues on their own (Pearson, 2019). Although this assessment gave me a combined score of 135, which put me in the normal range for being able to manage interpersonal conflicts, it also shows that I need to improve when it comes to being able to initiate a complaint. In addition, Lawless and Trif (2016) indicate that there are several different approaches a manager can use when dealing with conflict. For example, when handling a complex issue and a long-term resolution is needed a collaborative approach is recommended, thus finding a solution that benefits both parties, basically making it a win-win for everyone involved (Lawless & Trif, 2016). Besides that, another way to deal with an interpersonal conflict is by using the accommodating approach, which involves one party giving up their side of the argument in order to save the relationship between parties (Lawless & Trif, 2016). Of course, one of the most successful ways of managing a conflict is the compromising approach, which requires both sides of the party to have a give-and-take attitude toward the issue until both parties are satisfied and the issue is resolved (Lawless & Trif, 2016).

Following this further, conflict resolution skills and the approach a manager decides to use play a critical role in the outcome of a conflict, which if not handled correctly could possibly damage the reputation of the organization, hamper productivity, and lead to a loss of employees (Walker, 2009). According to the Strategies for Handling Conflict assessment I tend to be proficient when utilizing the collaborative, accommodating, and compromising approaches, but need to improve when it comes to applying the forcing and avoiding approaches (Pearson, 2019). In fact, this assessment measures a person's ability to manage conflict in each of these strategies and then combines the total to rate whether that ability is high, normal, or low, which my overall score was a 62, thus placing me in the low category (Pearson, 2019). No doubt, using the forcing approach usually leads to a win-lose situation and is rarely effective when trying to resolve a conflict (Lawless & Trif, 2016). However, this approach may be necessary when a quick decision is needed or when you need to put your foot down and stand behind your decision (Lawless & Trif, 2016). Obviously, the avoiding approach is typically seen as running and hiding from the conflict, hoping that it will just go away on its own (Lawless & Trif, 2016). Nevertheless, this approach may be useful when dealing with relatively small issues, where in the grand scheme of things ignoring the problem won't hurt anything, thus avoiding any unnecessary confrontations (Lawless & Trif, 2016).

Certainly, these approaches are effective tools when it comes to successfully resolving conflict in the workplace. Yet, it is important for managers to recognize how these approaches are influenced by a manager's ability to display power and influence in the workplace (Dirik & Eryılmaz, 2018). Moreover, power and influence in the workplace can motivate employees to work toward accomplishing organizational goals, which inevitably results in a more positive sense of job satisfaction (Dirik & Eryılmaz, 2018). According to the Gaining Power and Influence assessment not only does a person's position in the workplace play a role in portraying power and influence, but their personal characteristics and attributes are also closely related to this ability (Pearson, 2019). In fact, this assessment measures several of these personal characteristics, such as expertise, effort, and interpersonal attraction, as well as a manager's ability to be influenced by negative outside sources (Pearson, 2019). Indeed, after taking this assessment the results show a combined total of 156, which put me in the normal ability range for being able to display power and influence in the workplace, but also shows that I need improvement when it comes to being able to resist being negatively influenced by outside sources, thus suggesting that I find new ways to protect myself from these influences or at least be able to identify these influences and minimize them (Pearson, 2019). Unquestionably, the assessment that opened my eyes and left a lasting impression on me is the Style Under Stress assessment, which focuses on how likely a person is to avoid conflict, mainly by remaining silent and hoping the issue resolves itself (Pearson, 2019). This assessment also looks at a person's tendency to handle conflict by resorting to violence as well as their ability to be effective during crucial conversations. Granted, my overall score for being able to effectively handle a crucial conversation was good and shows that I have the ability to listen to others, make the conversation safe, and move toward a positive action plan (Pearson, 2019). On the other hand, this assessment also shows that I have a high tendency to avoid and withdraw from conflict, but when forced to deal with a situation I have the ability to remain calm and tend to handle the issue without resorting to violence (Pearson, 2019). Of course, there are several negative impacts that can result from avoiding workplace conflicts, such as a lack of teamwork, camaraderie, and productivity (Trudel & Reio, 2011). In some incidences not being able to successfully manage workplace conflicts have led to violence or even resulted in the organization eventually going out of business (Trudel & Reio, 2011).

In conclusion, these assessments have truly become an asset, essentially bringing to light several of the skills and abilities in which I have acquired and use successfully as well as the ones I need to add to my toolbelt and learn to improve upon. Many of these abilities that I have been found to be proficient in, such as teamwork, motivating others, and communicating effectively are largely due to the prior workforce experience I've acquired over the last couple decades. Whereas, many of the skills and abilities that I've been missing and need to improve upon, such as strategies for handling conflict, conflict resolution, and gaining power and influence in the workplace are a direct result of always wanting to avoid conflicts and confrontations at all costs. However, these assessments have shown me that avoiding a conflict doesn't mean that I'm a bad manager, it just means that I was unaware of the tools I need to properly handle these types of issues, such as the collaborative, accommodating and compromising approaches. Thus, my plan to become a more effective manager and successfully handle conflicts is by first understanding that learning how to properly use these tools will take a lot of practice and be a continuous process. Therefore, it will take time, patience and the courage to stop avoiding conflict. Thus, taking the bull by the horns.

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