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Choosing to use Cross Cultural Conflict Resolution for Your Meeting

Introduction to Cross-Cultural Conflict Resolution (CCCR)

All organizations have within them situations of conflict. The energy used for the conflict is energy that is not available for getting the work of the organization done. There are many reasons for conflict. People engaged in conflict are usually fixed in one perspective. They rarely ask each other genuine questions, nor are they prepared to really listen to each other. They also tend to lose contact with their own whole self, rendering voiceless a part of themselves and they are thereby unable to participate fully and effectively in efforts to resolve the conflict.

Negotiation and most mediation provides a temporary solution but does not have the effect of SOLVING the conflict.

In our many years of experience of working with situations of conflict, we have also found that the group that is visibly engaged in conflict within an organization is often NOT the group that is the root cause of the problem. Often the conflict is present because of a bigger issue within the system.

The following two step approach is highly effective in resolving conflict and achieving REAL resolution.

Step One: hold an Open Space Technology meeting or a Whole Person Process Facilitated meeting regarding an important business/organization challenge.

Step Two: hold a Cross Cultural Conflict Resolution meeting for the group that self identifies in Step One that there is a conflict and that there is the will to do something about it.

Prior to holding a conflict resolution meeting, we recommend that another approach be taken to assist in conflict resolution including getting at the root cause of the conflict. The approach that we recommend is to engage a highly participatory meeting process, either an Open Space Technology meeting or a Whole Person Process Facilitated meeting to which the whole organization or representatives of the whole organization are invited. The topic of the meeting SHOULD NOT be the conflict. Instead, the topic should be a business issue or opportunity that there is real passion for.

What usually happens is that the organization has the benefit of achieving good solutions and action planning for a current business challenge AND inevitably, during the meeting, while the participants are working on something together, much of the conflict resolves without any direct intervention to do so. Any remaining conflict that is not self-resolving is likely to be identified, conflict resolution is agreed upon as an action plan emerging from the meeting, and the will is developed to do something about the conflict. This is a critical point – the establishment of the will to do something about the conflict. No conflict resolves if the will to do so is not present.

A highly effective Cross Cultural Conflict meeting is possible once the people have self identified that there is conflict and that they want to do something about it. The meeting should be held with all involved in the conflict, as quickly after the Step One meeting as possible while the will to solve the conflict is high.

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