



Collaborative Problem Solving in Labor Relations

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A close-up photograph of a person wearing a white button-down shirt. Their right hand is extended, with the index finger pointing towards the screen of a smartphone held in their left hand. The background is blurred, focusing attention on the hands and the device.

Agenda



Best Practices

Best Practices

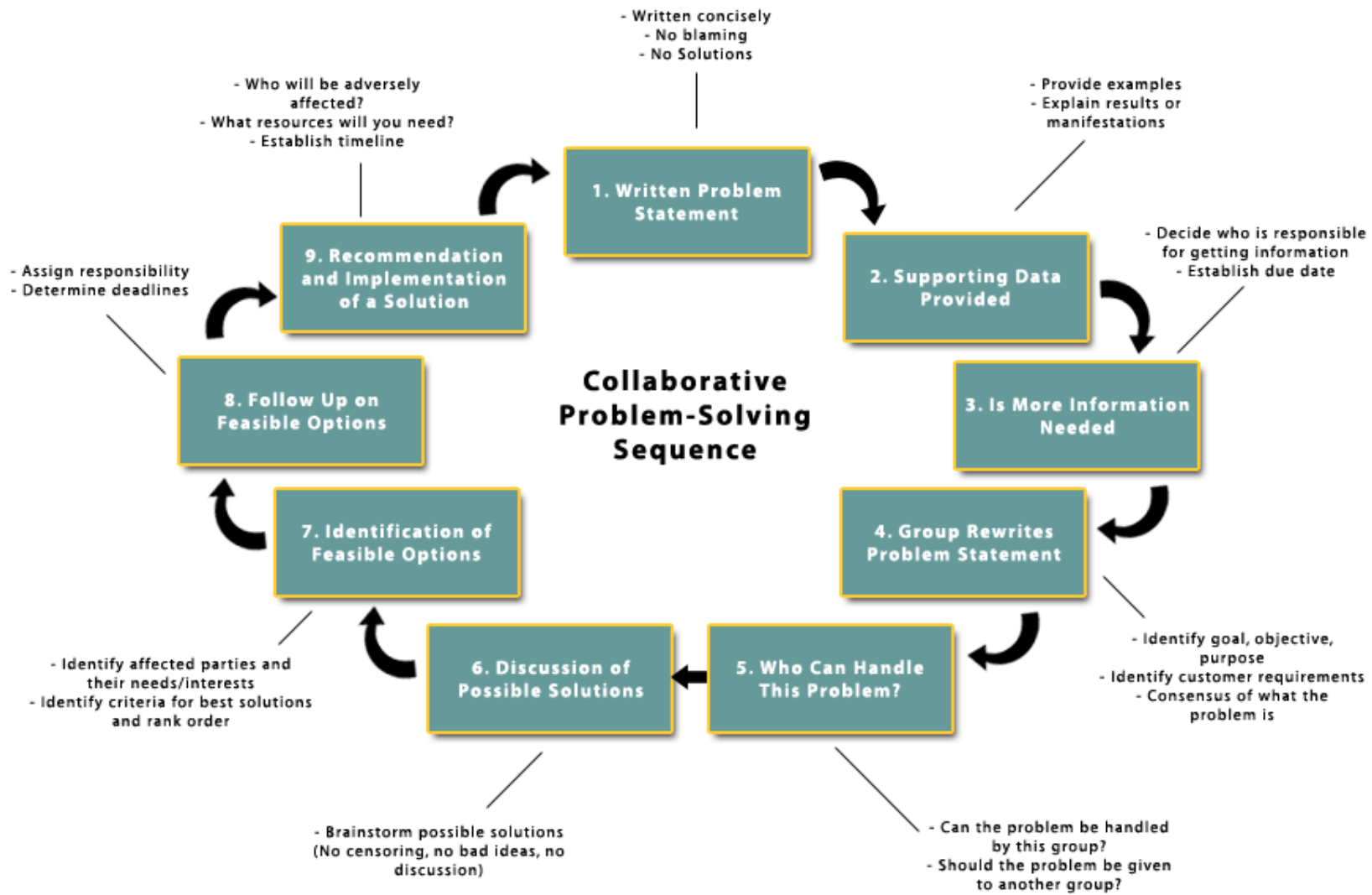
Collaborative problem solving is the shared objective.

Communication

1. Monthly meetings, topics, agenda items in advance
 - a. Union officers
 - b. President
 - c. Ground rules
2. Anticipate union concerns
 - a. Changes to working conditions
 - b. Job security, policy changes
3. Understand what has worked well in the past
 - a. Separate meeting may be needed
4. Talk in person, phone next, email last
5. Do what you say you will do
6. Recognize your union partners

Learning and development

1. Build supervisor awareness of collective bargaining agreements.
2. Win Win Negotiations
3. Financial status of the organization
 - a. How are positions budgeted?
4. Benchmark similar institutions
5. Ask for the business rationale of proposals when bargaining; “why is this good for your members”
6. Your practice becomes the policy regardless of the CBA
7. Competitive compensation





Avoiding Grievances

Avoiding grievances

Grievances are a time consuming, negative interaction.

1. Follow the CBA
2. Notify union president of matters that would concern them ex. meeting with a member, acting positions, selection decisions, probationary periods, etc.
3. Involve union officers in business decisions ex. reorganization
4. Communicate early and often
5. If you get a grievance, recommend mediation before it goes to arbitration
6. Use the Five step decision making process



Lessons Learned

Lessons learned

“Good judgment comes from experience. Experience comes from bad judgment.”

-Dr. Kerr L. White

1. Talk to people to understand their sensitivity points before introducing new programs ex. attendance policy, apprenticeship program
2. Post positions internally first, offer to help internals interview
3. Post positions with degree “or equivalent education and experience” unless required by an accrediting body
4. Recognize that union presidents talk to each other. When one asks for something others may ask for the same thing ex. list of temporary employees, hours worked, length of service
5. Keep track of problematic contract language to propose corrections next time CBA is up for negotiation
6. Ask supervisors for feedback on contract language
7. When bargaining, start early, have a timeline
8. If you are going to make an exception, make it for a long term employee in good standing ex. return to prior position if unsuccessful in promotion to a different union



Resources



Resources

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CUPA-HR

cupahr.org > Knowledge Center > Toolkit > Unions

Prior webinars, PowerPoint presentations and general information

Department of Labor

<https://www.dol.gov/general/workcenter/labor-management-partnerships>

[Five step decision making template](#)

The five steps are defined in pages 14-18

Q&A



Thank You

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Five Step Decision Making Template

Step one:

What is the “why” for the decision/program/procedure/process/service that is being recommended or implemented?

Prompts

- Why are we doing this?
- What issue are you hoping to address?
- What outcomes do we desire from this?
- What groups are being served/supported by this? (There are many different types of groups we serve including students, employees, community members, businesses, non-profit organizations, state and federal government, gender, religion, socioeconomic level, race, culture, educational level, disability, sexuality, etc.)

Five Step Decision Making Template

Step two:

How will this decision/program/procedure/process/service impact different groups that have a history of being negatively impacted by what is attempting to be addressed? How will you protect them from harm?

Prompts

- What are the intended outcomes or impacts for all groups identified in question 1?
- What are the possible unintended consequences or impact for all groups identified in question one?
- How does this address the needs of all the different groups identified in question 1?
- Will this decision cause any unintended harm to an identified group in question 1?

Five Step Decision Making Template

Step three:

Will this decision/program/procedure/process/service eliminate or at best begin to close the gap on the historical issue that is attempting to be addressed?

Prompts

- What data points, research, best/promising practice allows you to know whether this is the case or not?
- How will you know definitively that the historical issue is eliminated or the gap is closing?

Five Step Decision Making Template

Step four:

Are representatives of groups listed in question one helping to develop, communicate and implement the decision/program/procedure/process/service especially those in question 2 that have a history with being negatively impacted? If not, how will you get their voices and perspectives into the conversation before the decision/program/procedure/process/service is developed, communicated, and implemented?

Prompts

- Are there gaps in representation of groups in decision-making?
- What different strategies will be used to bring new voices to the table to share their perspectives?
- Who will implement the best strategies that will engage and gather the missing groups' voices and perspectives?

Five Step Decision Making Template

Step five:

Have you set data goals for the decision/program/procedure/process/service that reflects change to the access, retention, completion, and/or workforce statistics for the employee and/or student groups in question one? If appropriate, have you set data goals for the impact this decision/program/procedure/process/service will have on community groups listed in question one? Is the data required to document change already being collected by MCC or will new data sets need to be prepared and tracked?

Prompts

- What are the goals required to show results and outcomes for the groups listed in question 1?
- What data will be needed to measure progress and outcomes for the decision/program/procedure/process/service?
- Is the data needed already available in Institutional Research?
- How will data progress and outcomes be tracked? (daily, weekly, monthly, annually, etc)
- How will data be gathered that is not available in Institutional Research? What strategies will be used to create alternative measures for these types of data needs?