

STEMCELL TECHNOLOGIES INC

Evaluation of STEMCELL's Conflict Resolution Training Program and Methods

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Masters of Arts in Dispute Resolution

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Executive Summery

STEMCELL Technologies Inc. is a multinational biotechnology company with over 750 employees in eleven countries. The Vice President of the Human Resources department, the client, was interested in knowing how managers and executives were utilizing the current conflict resolution methods and what their opinion is on the training they received. The current conflict resolution methods are a compilation of techniques taught to supervisors, managers and executives. The following methods are taught; interest-based negotiations, the Thomas-Kilmann Mode of Conflict Resolution, and leadership training. Training begins as soon as an employee is promoted to a position and each role has its own unique training program.

The purpose of this project was to analyze the current conflict resolution training methods and training program in place at STEMCELL Technologies Inc. to understand manager and executive perceptions of their preparedness to deal with disputes as part of their daily responsibilities. The interviewees for this project also provided an assessment of received training and whether they had any recommendations for the further development of the conflict resolution training program.

The researcher used a literature review to provide an academic overview of the topic, along with analysis of interviews with users of the existing conflict resolution training methods and training program to form recommendations for client consideration based on available company resources.

The project had some key parameters. The study focused on disputes rather than conflicts and only on disputes that the interviewees faced. Interviewees consisted only of employees who were located at the Vancouver B.C head office branch. The interviewees were all experienced managers who were managing large groups, as they would have had a greater chance of dealing with disputes between their direct reports. A total number of fifteen employees were interviewed, twelve managers and three executives.

The interview questions were aimed at understanding the managers' duties and responsibilities, whether they had dealt with any disputes, what actions they took, whether or not the issue was resolved, whether their training was efficient, and finally whether or not they had any recommendations. The data was gathered and analyzed with an emergent coding technique, and the codes and sub codes were categorized and put into themes and quantified. Data analysis revealed several key findings that shaped a number of recommendations.

The recommendations are based on the resources available, the feedback and suggestions made by the interviewees and the researcher's own findings and assessment. The client can implement at least two initial changes that will ensure that employees are able to refresh their memories on the training they had received. Those who have attended the training more than three years ago

can be invited to audit their conflict resolution training again when they have time. This, along with a reference sheet, will ensure that managers are able to refer to the material whenever they need to. These two steps should assist managers in remembering their training material and in being prepared to deal with issues that come up in their day-to-day activities.

Another two recommendations could be implemented. These are more expensive; they are also the ones that require a longer commitment to be made by the client. Creating a conflict resolution course and employing an external consultant to administrate the conflict resolution program are an alternative two options. Both will require extensive research to be done by the client to find suitable candidates that can work in the company or to provide adequate support as a consultant. However both these options would address the concerns over support to managers during disputes/conflicts and will provide the specialized conflict resolution training to which some managers would like to have access.

Overall, this research project is aimed at providing the client with an overview of one small part of the general training and development program. Having provided this information, the researcher encourages the client to consider the options and to seek further analysis of the program as necessary.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 STEMCELL

STEMCELL Technologies Inc. (STEMCELL) is a leading research-oriented life sciences company based in Vancouver, British Columbia (BC) focused on tissue culture media and cell separation products. The company is a private corporation started by Dr. Allen Eaves in 1993 as a spin-off of the Terry Fox Laboratory at the British Columbia Cancer Agency. Dr. Eaves is the sole shareholder through the Eaves Family Trust. STEMCELL's operations support three broad product lines:

- culture media for stem and progenitor cell research
- cell separation systems for isolating various cell lines
- other products and services such as antibody production, a contract assay service, and cytokine distribution

STEMCELL's vision as outlined in this project is:

To have STEMCELL products in all research labs around the world, facilitating discoveries in life sciences.

STEMCELL's mission as outlined in the project is:

To advance the pursuit of scientific knowledge by supplying high quality, innovative reagents, tools, and services that enable life science research.

Innovative: We nurture creativity and drive innovation

Quality: We strive to meet the highest standards

Responsive: We move quickly to advance basic and clinical research

Integrity: We are truthful and ethical in all our dealings

Collaborative: We work with researchers to advance scientific knowledge

A list of corporate goals underlying the company's vision and mission appears in Appendix A.

While Dr. Eaves is the sole shareholder of STEMCELL, an executive body manages the various departments of the company. Appendix B provides an overview of the company structure and the different vice presidents and directors. At the time of writing the company had ten departments, each of which is headed either by a vice president or director depending on its size. Executive team members are responsible for all issues that occur in their particular departments, and work together to coordinate all interdepartmental processes. The executive team reports only to the president. More importantly, executive members receive regular updates from their managers regarding any disputes or conflicts that arise.

The company has grown exponentially since its founding, and currently has offices in eleven countries worldwide and over 750 employees. A STEMCELL world map is included in Appendix C, which outlines all of the international locations of the company. Since its inception

the company has enjoyed a 20 per cent yearly growth rate, with the exception of 2012 due to the global economic downturn. In addition to hiring full time, permanent employees, STEMCELL also employs consultants, co-op students three times a year, and summer students once a year.

STEMCELL offers its employees a very diverse workplace that includes various cultures as well as gender equality in most departments. Of STEMCELL's eleven offices worldwide, the headquarters in Vancouver, British Columbia is the most culturally diverse. Among the more than 600 employees who work in Vancouver BC there are people from the United States, South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. The main reason for this cultural diversity is that all employees are hired first and foremost based on their qualifications. Managers and the Human Resources department actively seek suitable candidates from all over the world. Many positions are posted worldwide, and some candidates for senior positions are flown into Vancouver to be interviewed by a panel. The company also provides assistance with immigration needs to ensure that employees are able to work in Canada for the long term. These efforts are essential if the company is to gather the best minds in pursuit of its mission, and remain competitive in the international biotechnology community.

1.1.1 Three Main Departments

STEMCELL currently has ten departments that can be categorized into two groups: those that produce, manufacture, and sell products, and those who provide services to employees (Human Resources, Finance, and Information Technology). In order to keep this project manageable and relevant, the researcher will focus on the three main departments that employ the largest numbers of people: Research and Development (R&D), Operations, and Sales. Currently there are 188 employees in R&D, 194 employees in Operations, and 102 employees in Sales.

All three of these departments work together to ensure the company remains competitive and credible in the biotechnology community. Managers at all levels must be able to work with all of the employees who directly report to them, or their direct reports, and with other departments to reach the goals set by the Executive committee. More importantly, executive committee members must be able to work both with their respective departments and with the heads of other departments. The continued growth and wealth of the company requires collaborating, compromising, and negotiating, among other things. For this reason, managers enrol in various training programs concerned with conflict resolution, which prepare them for their responsibilities.

The mandate of the R&D department is to provide every lab in the world with cutting-edge technologies and products that forward stem cell research into various diseases. The department includes tissue and platform teams that research new product developments. There are currently twelve platform teams, each consisting of one senior scientist and a team of scientists, research technologists, and associates. The goal of each team is to provide a full complement of reagents and tools spanning the entire laboratory workflow for both academic and life sciences customers in accordance with overall company strategy and planning. Meanwhile, the product marketing teams conduct strategic market analysis to provide the scientists with direction on what products to produce and what new areas to begin researching. The R&D department also includes a

business development section that takes care of intellectual property rights and licensing patents for all new products.

The Operations department is responsible for the end-to-end supply chain, which encompasses developing new and scaled-up manufacturing processes (Process Development), sourcing and procuring raw materials (Procurement), managing manufacturing schedules and inventory levels (Planning), manufacturing and packaging products (Manufacturing), testing to ensure quality standards (Quality Control), and receiving, preparing, and shipping orders (Customer Service and Distribution) around the globe. Members of the Operations team focus on delivering high quality products and services to both internal employees and external customers in a fast-paced, collaborative environment.

The final department examined here is Sales, where employees work to fulfill STEMCELL's mandate to have STEMCELL manufactured products in every lab both in Canada and globally. All Sales representatives must have a science degree, and receive training in all STEMCELL products. Twice a year Sales reps meet during a "Sales Week" in either Vancouver, Europe, or the Asia Pacific region to discuss new products, strategies, and training, and to share ideas and experiences. Not only do these training sessions ensure that representatives are up-to-date on all new products but also that there is continued sharing of information between representatives and managers. As the frontline ambassadors for STEMCELL Technologies, sales Representatives engage daily with leading scientists from all around the world to help push ground-breaking research forward with STEMCELL's products.

1.1.2 Corporate Operations Meeting

As STEMCELL continues to grow and accumulate more employees, maintaining clear and open internal communications becomes more and more important. Due to the size of the company, the President is no longer able to directly supervise, control, and maintain each department and therefore must rely on senior managers and executives to provide information. Two meetings take place every week to facilitate information sharing.

First, the Executive team meets weekly with the president and all operations managers. This Corporate Operations meeting allows the group to review processes currently in place, explore strategies to increase productivity, review new corporate goals for each fiscal year, consider updates on revenues, and discuss the future direction of the company. The various department teams give updates on the direction their group is headed. For instance, senior R&D scientists share the new products and scientific discoveries that they have made with the greater group. Each presenter has a slide template that they fill out with their portfolio, revenues, activities, challenges, issues, and any successes and advances. This is an especially important meeting because it gives the tissue teams an opportunity to share new products they have been working on and allows them to create new interdepartmental teams to achieve other goals set by the company. The purpose of this meeting is twofold: to ensure open communication between all departments so that everyone in the company is aware of changes, issues, and other operational challenges; and to keep all departments accountable to the greater group for their actions. All decisions are made in executive committee meetings.

1.1.3 Executive Committee Meeting

While a single shareholder owns STEMCELL, company decisions are rarely made without consulting the executive team. The Executive Committee, consisting of the president, vice presidents, and directors, meets once a week after the Corporate Operations meeting to review any issues that arise, and to review and sets corporate goals. This meeting also serves a fact-finding function for all attendees. For example, the Vice President of Human Resources brings job requisitions to the committee for approval. Information discussed during this meeting is strictly confidential and not shared with the greater company until such time as a decision has been made. While the Executive Committee meeting is democratic in the sense that all members can voice their opinions, the president has the right to make final decisions.

The purpose of this meeting (and of the Corporate Operations meeting) is to ensure that information is shared, and that all executives (and managers) are on the same page with goals and policies to maintain the continued growth of STEMCELL. During these meetings, STEMCELL's Conflict Resolution Model (CRM) is assessed and changed. This process will be discussed in the conceptual framework section of this project.

1.1.4 Managers

The next level of employee below the executive team is the manager. STEMCELL has a large number of managers in all departments and at all levels, but they are not always responsible for the same tasks. For instance, some managers approve vacations or deal with the administrative needs of their employees, while others oversee several employees and are responsible for leading, managing, coaching, developing, and evaluating through regular one-on-one and team meetings. For the purpose of this project, the researcher interviewed managers who directly supervise five or more employees for reasons addressed in the methodology section.

1.1.5 Current Conflict Resolution Methods (CRM)

An adequate and suitable CRM is essential for a growing company for several reasons. First, a suitable CRM ensures that age, gender, culture, religion, etc., are understood and taken into consideration when conflicts arise between parties. As STEMCELL grows and accumulates employees from many different countries company diversity will increase. Second, a suitable CRM directly affects all STEMCELL employees, but especially those in North America, the largest number of whom is located in Vancouver. Here, new and experienced managers are trained for their roles and given the necessary skills to deal with all kinds of issues that may arise in their jobs, including how to resolve disputes and conflicts. Third, proper training in CRM ensures that managers and executives can pass on their knowledge to other employees, and more importantly, set the tone for how STEMCELL as a company deals with conflict.

Like all multinational companies, STEMCELL faces disputes and conflicts, both internally between employees or departments and externally with outside parties. As the company continues to grow, the number of executives will also grow both through internal promotion and external hiring. As more individuals join the team they will bring their own opinions on how disputes and conflicts should be managed and resolved. Therefore by having and continuously

maintaining a CRM and training program STEMCELL is ensuring that all managers and executives deal with conflict in a uniform manner.

The current training program that teaches managers and executives how to deal with conflict in the workplace has also evolved over time. In the beginning, conflict resolution was a minor topic taught to managers as part of the larger training program offered to STEMCELL employees. As the company has grown, the training program has changed to meet the evolving needs of the company. The training and development coordinator in the Human Resources department has implemented more courses and options for managers and executives. While conflict resolution is still not a stand-alone course, the training program has evolved to provide managers with a more in-depth approach to resolving disputes and conflicts in the workplace.

When an employee is promoted to manager, they are enrolled in a manager's training program, which is taught over several months. This program instructs managers in on a variety of issues that they will face in their roles as leaders, such as recruitment, onboarding, leadership, and of course, conflict resolution. All managers have the option of approaching the human resources department any time they are faced with a difficult situation that they cannot resolve on their own.

STEMCELL's current conflict resolution methods are the following; interest based negotiations, the Thomas-Killman conflict modes and leadership skills. All three of these techniques are taught to every manager, supervisor, and executive during their initial training program. For the purposes of this study, and to make it easier to refer to how conflict is resolved at STEMCELL, the researcher will refer to these skills together as a conflict resolution methods or CRM.

1.1.6 Leadership Skills

First, the CRM is partly leadership skills training where managers are encouraged to use open dialogue to discuss issues so that employees can voice their concerns. In this way, managers can deal with disputes before they become deep-rooted or turn into open conflicts. The following is a list of steps that managers are taught to take when confronted with a dispute:

- Convey seven habits (abundance mentality, think win-win, seek first to understand, then to be understood, synergy – frame the 'conflict' as an opportunity)
- Lencioni Model – healthy conflict leads to commitment, accountability, and results
- Tuckman Model – forming, storming, norming, performing
- Consider the Killman Conflict Modes of the parties – remind yourself of ways you can structure conversation so each person can fully participate
- Assess levels of trust (convey character/style competence)
- Imagine yourself facilitating an energizing debate!
- Have a conflict resolution method in mind

In essence, managers are taught to manage disputes through actively listening and techniques like acknowledging feelings, using open-ended questions, probing, paraphrasing, and summarizing. While such techniques are utilized to settle disputes, should a conflict arise managers are encouraged to bring it to their superior's attention. The definition of dispute and

conflict will be discussed in later sections, however for the moment we will categorize a dispute as being a small disagreement between two parties that can be easily resolved and a conflict as a deep rooted issue that requires further analysis and a more comprehensive solution. If the conflict were to escalate further, the manager could approach an outside person to assist with resolving it. The mediator or third party could be a senior manager or vice president, or an external person hired to assist with resolving the conflict. It is important to note that currently no issues have arisen at STEMCELL that have required external intervention.

1.1.7 General Conflict Resolution Methods

The first method that managers are taught is interest-based negotiations. This method is derived from the book *Getting to Yes* by Roger Fisher and William Ury. Figure 1 illustrates the interest based negotiation model that is shown to attendees during the conflict resolution training classes. Managers are asked to look beyond positions and issues to discover underlying interests that the parties have in common. Managers are not expected to read this book. Rather, an instructor provides a brief overview and PowerPoint presentation followed by an exercise to practice the technique.

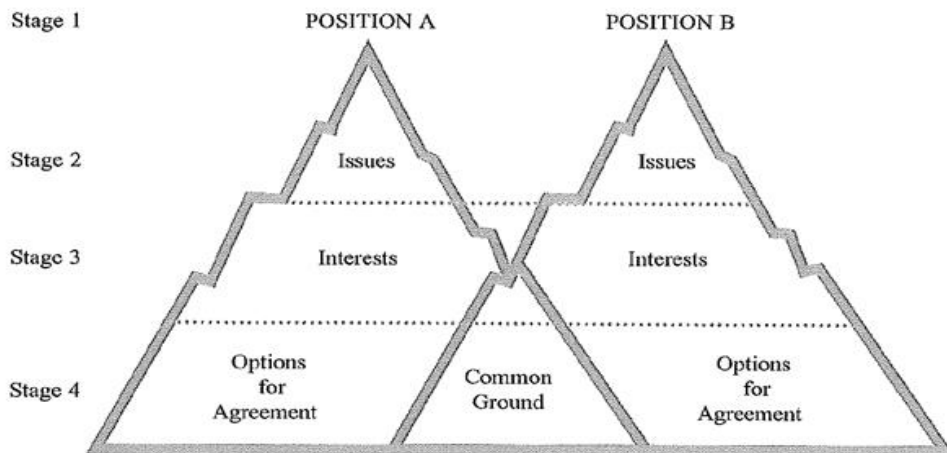


Figure 1: Interest Based model of negotiations

The second method of conflict resolution taught to STEMCELL managers is based on the Thomas-Kilmann conflict mode instrument. Figure 2 illustrates the model that is shown to attendees during the conflict resolution training classes. Participants are asked to answer thirty questions in order to identify their “conflict handling mode” (Schaubhut, 2007) out of five categories. Each mode is explained in the presentation. Since managers and executive are expected to begin their new duties and responsibilities right away they have no extra time to take any exams prior to attending their training. They do have the option of taking the test at a later date, but they are not required to discuss the results with the instructor. The only information that trainee managers receive is what each category means and how it interprets their conflict resolution style.



Figure 2: Thomas Kilmann Model

The final training on conflict resolution that managers receive comes from an external, Vancouver-based consultancy called Kwela Leadership and Talent Management. New managers are invited to attend one of two sessions that take place either on a Monday or Friday. The instructor spends two hours with a group of 10-12 managers, and reviews the material from the last class before starting the new material. Managers are able to ask questions about issues they may be facing and about the material from the previous workshops. This training is only offered to managers who are responsible for managing other managers, namely executives and directors and all senior managers. Supervisors and lower level managers do not receive this training.

For instance, in one training session the instructor dealt with negotiating win-win outcomes and dealing with conflict. During this presentation, managers were shown the two graphs, which the instructor explained, followed by several exercises. These activities are designed to teach active listening, paraphrasing, and four competencies; managing conflict, empathy, self-awareness, and patience.

1.1.8 Why Conflict Resolution?

Conflict resolution is by no means a new phenomenon. While conflict resolution is primarily referenced in the legal field, it is becoming more and more popular as a conceptual device in the workplace. In the beginning of the 1970s, employers turned to alternative dispute resolution, particularly mediation and arbitration, to resolve workplace disputes (Lipsky & Avgar 2006). These new approaches were welcomed as less adversarial ways of dealing with conflict. They ensure that relationships are not broken or damaged beyond the point where people are no longer able to work together. Furthermore, conflict resolution of this sort is less expensive than the traditional court method of settling disputes. Companies can now spend less time waiting in court and less money on legal fees. Finally, conflict resolution methods often look past the issues and attempt to understand the attitudes, cultures, and values behind a conflict. This perspective is

extremely important, because understanding underlying issues often helps to explain a person's rationale for dealing with conflict in the way they do. Moreover, with growing companies now recruiting foreign employees, understanding the different values and cultures that people bring with them will be very beneficial to managers and human resources departments.

1.2 Client

The client for this project is the Vice President of Human Resources (VP of HR) at STEMCELL. She has the ability to research the CRM and bring any findings before the Executive Committee for suggestions/approval. The client has been interested in analyzing the current CRM, however, she has not been able to allocate any time to this project due to other priorities. This project will give the VP of HR a chance to investigate whether the current CRM is sufficient for the needs of the company. While there is no pressing issue with the current CRM that this project needs to address, after engaging with managers in a variety of departments, Human Resources employees have come to realize that not all managers utilize their training, and some do not find it beneficial. Therefore, this project will offer the client a chance to better understand the impact that the current CRM has on company employees and whether there are ways to improve the methods or the training.

1.2.1 Human Resources Department

The Human Resources Department at STEMCELL is focused on providing all employees with the tools necessary for a healthy work environment. Business Partners, senior members of the HR team, provide training, hold performance meetings with managers, work with departments to recruit employees, and take care of confidential employee files. For this current year, the HR department aims to continue these tasks and provide additional administrative support while creating policies, processes, and programs that align with its vision, mission, and corporate goals. These are as follows:

STEMCELL HR Vision:

- To build the greatest place on earth to work for people passionate about life sciences

STEMCELL HR Mission Statement:

- We know our business and partner across STEMCELL to attract, align, develop, and engage a team that lives our STEMCELL values

When this project began, Shelley McCloskey was vice president of Human Resources. McCloskey holds a Masters of Psychology degree from the University of British Columbia and had been working at STEMCELL for five years. Since her appointment, McCloskey saw vast growth at STEMCELL and implemented many changes to ensure the HR department provided support for the needs of the company. These needs included basic administrative requirements, advertising employment opportunities both internally and externally, onboarding new employees, training new managers, and providing support for managers dealing with disputes

and conflicts. Unfortunately, she left the company to join another business venture in December 2015.

In December 2015, Helen Sheridan joined STEMCELL as the new vice president of Human Resources. Ms. Sheridan began her career at Crystal Decisions in Vancouver, where she spent seven years as HR Director during an accelerated growth period. More recently, Sheridan was Global Head of Talent Management at Finning International, a parts and service supplier for heavy equipment and engines with over 14,000 employees globally. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Victoria and a Masters degree in Leadership and Organizational Development from Saybrook University. At STEMCELL, Ms. Sheridan plays an instrumental role in leading the HR team as well as working closely with the senior management group as they continue to expand both within Vancouver and globally.

An organizational chart of the Human Resource department is included in Appendix D.

1.3 Problem Definition

The researcher is a Human Resources administrator responsible for all of the administrative needs of the HR department in addition to assisting the vice president.

This project resulted from the researcher's discussions with the HR team regarding the methods that managers utilize to deal with disputes and conflicts. Through discussions of case studies during team meetings it became clear that there were many small disputes within the company, some of which had the potential to escalate into conflicts if not addressed. However, the researcher's primary concern was whether managers felt adequately trained to deal with issues as they arose within their teams; whether they felt a need for more internal and/or external training to deal with the issues they faced. She was interested to understand the complexities of relationships between departments, and how conflicts between departments were addressed. Finally, she wanted to know managers and executives' opinions of the existing training program, and whether they had any recommendations for improving it. These questions form the parameters of the current project.

To achieve these aims, the researcher studied the current CRM, including the managers' training program, attended several management tutorial sessions, completed a literature review on the subject of CRM, and interviewed fifteen employees at the company to understand the current CRM's impact. The literature review encompasses the necessity for, and effectiveness of, an adequate and suitable CRM, the role of culture in conflict, and steps that other companies have taken to resolve disputes and conflicts. This work forms an especially important knowledge base for making recommendations to STEMCELL for the future of its CRM.

In order to understand the impact and use of CRM and conflict resolution training the researcher conducted interviews with managers and executives with several years of experience. Over the course of three weeks, fifteen employees were contacted (twelve managers and three executives). The interviewees were given the chance to express their opinions on the training that they received, any conflicts they had faced during their time at STEMCELL, and whether they had

any suggestions for the CRM program. These interviews revealed several interesting trends that are discussed in the data analysis section.

1.4 Parameters

There are several parameters of this project that need to be noted. First, the literature review displays a North American focus. No articles from any other continent are reviewed for reasons given and discussed below. Second, the researcher only interviewed employees in managerial and executive roles. Service level employees rarely deal with conflict and are not expected to deal with conflict, therefore, interviewing them would not help to answer the research questions. Third, the project distinguishes between dispute and conflict in its focus on company disputes. Fourth, to ensure the scope of the project remains manageable, the researcher focuses on the Vancouver, BC location of the company. Finally, this project is geared towards meeting the unique and practical needs of this very young company rather than making broader ideal-world recommendations.

1.4.1 Interviewees

As managers and executive members are trained to deal with disputes and conflicts, it is expected that they would be the best group to judge whether the current CRM is adequate and suitable. Therefore, this project focuses on their experiences in order to understand how the CRM can be improved to reflect the conflict resolution challenges these two groups have. This parameter, along with how interviewees were selected, is further discussed in the methodology section of the project.

1.4.2 Defining Dispute and Conflict

For the purposes of this report, it is important to draw a distinction between a conflict and a dispute, because these terms have very distinct definitions. A dispute is defined as a short-term disagreement that can be easily resolved by dealing with the specific issues of concern. A conflict, on the other hand, is a long-term disagreement that is serious and sensitive in nature and requires a solution that addresses deep-rooted issues (Spangler and Burgess 2012).

It is important to emphasize that this project will focus on strategies for resolving disputes within the company rather than conflicts, because at the time that this project was written STEMCELL did not have any outstanding conflicts either within the company or with external parties. Regardless, in order to ensure the scope of the project remained manageable, the researcher focused on daily disputes that the interviewees faced and not conflicts. Many of the issues that the company faces, however, can be categorized as disputes. These include performance issues, manager-employee disputes, and process-based disagreements and interdepartmental disagreements on a variety of subjects that will be discussed in detail below. Therefore, the company utilizes the current CRM more as a dispute resolution mechanism than for resolving conflict. The model is nevertheless used to train managers and supervisors on how to deal with

disruptions ranging from basic, small-scale disputes all the way up to large scale conflicts that may require the involvement of other managers and/or an external expert.

Even so, whenever a dispute becomes a conflict the matter is brought to the attention of senior levels of management and even the executive member. In such cases, the manager is no longer solely responsible for handling the conflict. The group (manager, employees, HR members, and the executive) will utilize the same CRM to resolve the issue.

1.4.3 North American Focus

This project focuses on the North American operations of the company for several reasons. First, STEMCELL was established in Vancouver, BC and is, therefore, a Canadian registered company. The executive and the president are located in Vancouver, and all business decisions regarding the company's growth, expansion, and well-being are made there. Therefore, any changes to the CRM will be decided in Vancouver and applied to the current management training program there and then to the other locations. Second, each STEMCELL office located in a different country would require a CRM and a training program tailored to local cultural and legal needs. The researcher has not looked at how disputes and conflicts are resolved at any other location, and therefore the project findings are not applicable to any other location. Third, as the researcher is Canadian and only has knowledge of North American CRMs, the project does not focus on any other locations.

1.4.4 Needs of STEMCELL

STEMCELL Technologies is a unique company that requires a unique CRM and training program. The reasons are twofold: (1) STEMCELL is a new international company attempting to establish its own culture and business ethic; (2) the client is seeking practical and readily applicable solutions for its CRM and training program needs.

Currently, STEMCELL is twenty-three-years-old, and the vast majority of its employees are relatively new hires. Being a new company, STEMCELL lacks the historical foundations that many other companies enjoy. As a result, it has a fairly new work culture that the president and the executive team are attempting to maintain and promote amidst near constant change. This culture is one of openness, communication, and collaboration in the pursuit of STEMCELL's vision and mission. While this culture will eventually become more permanent and well-known both domestically and internationally, for now there is much work to be done to enforce and promoting it. This need, combined with the fact that the company is growing globally and at an exponential rate, makes its requirements unique.

1.5 Research Question

The purpose of this project is to analyze the current conflict resolution methods that STEMCELL utilizes and recommend improvements to better serve the organization with a view to addressing the following questions:

1. Is the existing CRM adequate for a company that is growing both in Canada and internationally? Does it reflect the values and business practices of STEMCELL?
2. What do managers and executives think of the current training program?
3. What recommendations do managers and executives have for improving the current CRM and training program?

1.6 How will the project address the Research Questions?

STEMCELL is a growing company that is investigating practical business changes that can be implemented over a short period of time. This project provides STEMCELL with exactly what it is seeking – an overview of the current CRM. The following project illustrates the interdependence of the three largest departments in the company, and the complexities and responsibilities of each. These qualities dictate the importance of maintaining a productive and supportive work environment, and therefore the need to provide managers with effective tools to address disputes and conflicts.

The project addresses the research questions through an extensive review of existing conflict resolution methods (literature review) and in-depth interviews with company employees. Once completed, the researcher transcribed the interviews for analysis. An emergent coding was used for this project, and a variety of codes and sub-codes were found. Through data analysis, the researcher found several themes that are discussed in the results portion of the project below. Furthermore, these data were used to make recommendations that are categorized according to the resources that their implementation requires.

While the current CRM assists managers and executives with dispute resolution, this project aims to provide some solutions to several outstanding issues. Therefore, the researcher makes several recommendations for amending the CRM. These recommendations take into consideration the time and resources needed to carry out these changes. They also consider the suggestions of interviewees, and while they take into view ideas drawn from the literature review, they are driven primarily by these suggestions. As managers and executives are the primary users of the CRM and are trained to deal with any conflicts that arise, their opinions are essential for any changes to occur.

2.0 Conceptual Framework

The original conceptual framework for this project relied on a top down approach to the implementation of a CRM in a private sector corporation, within which the executive committee must approve of any new CRM prior to any changes being made. This approach ensures communication between different levels in the organization and even across the organization, so that everyone is aware of the issues/challenges/ideas related to improving the current system.

In Appendix E, a flowchart illustrates the hierarchy of STEMCELL. The president is ultimately responsible for providing the direction of the company, and his decisions set the tone for all employees, from members of the executive team to the hired research associates. Decisions on policies and procedures are made by the president in consultation with the executive group, and then introduced to the rest of the company. Managers are expected to implement any changes, and to utilize their training to report on flaws and issues they witness, and suggest further changes to the executive committee. The framework allows both groups to be involved, and have the opportunity to voice their opinions on significant matters.

However, midway through data analysis the researcher recognized a subsection to this conceptual framework that illustrates the use of the CRM, the tools and materials the interviewees would like to have, and the issues they face. Therefore, the researcher decided to add this framework as a subsection to the original, because it explains the cycle within which the CRM is created, used, and changed according to the employees who use it the most.

Appendix F shows where this the sub-framework fits within the organizational structure of STEMCELL beginning with the company's culture that dictates what the CRM looks like, who is trained in it, and the resources that are available to employees. The remainder of the cycle illustrates how managers utilize the CRM to resolve disputes and what kind of supports they need or would like to have at their disposal. Finally, the cycle ends with CRM user recommendations and how these suggested changes help further change STEMCELL's CRM to better suit its needs.

The two charts can be viewed in Appendix E and F.

3.0 Methodology

The research strategy for this project relies on two qualitative methods, a literature review and in-depth interviews with managers and members of the executive team.

3.1 Literature Review

Academic articles on biotechnology companies and conflict resolution models form the backbone of the literature review. The researcher used the University of Victoria library's online database as well as academic books to provide the necessary reference information on North American and international companies and their conflict resolution models. Search terms including "conflict resolution," "dispute resolution," and "organizational development" were used to gather articles. Further keywords such as "biotechnology companies" narrowed the results down to ensure appropriate articles were found. Finally, the researcher checked all reference lists in the articles to find further resources. This final step was very useful as it ensured that all articles were appropriate to the project and helpful.

As a result, the literature review surveys academic knowledge on conflict resolution and focuses on the definition of conflict within organizations. There is an extensive literature on the subject that discusses how companies like STEMCELL can define, understand, and find resolutions to their conflict challenges. While this project focuses on disputes, it is important to understand where and how conflicts begin, because many conflicts are the result of unresolved disputes.

This literature review also focuses on prevalent conflict resolution methods used in international companies with specific focus on North America. As STEMCELL is a Canadian owned and operated company, it is important to compare it to other North American companies to see how its CRM fairs. CRMs are becoming more and more popular as companies like STEMCELL realize the necessity of providing their employees with mechanisms to use when faced with disputes in the workplace. However, while CRMs are created and implemented with the intention of assisting employees, not all CRMs are created equal, and the literature shows the qualities that make a CRM successful.

Articles on non-North American companies provide alternative CRMs that may be more suited to STEMCELL. These articles are utilized in the recommendations section of this paper.

Furthermore, the literature review explains the concept of cultural fluency and the importance of understanding the different points-of-view that people bring with them into disputes/conflicts, and how conflict resolution involves learning and understanding these cultural influences (Bercovitch & Foulkes, 2012). The literature review provides a basis for understanding why a conflict resolution model is important and beneficial to a company's success. Overall, it provides a stepping stone for investigating STEMCELL's current conflict resolution model and potential improvements to it.

3.2 Interviews

The interviews aimed to understand the current attitudes of employees at the management and executive levels to STEMCELLs existing conflict resolution model. Managers and members of the executive team were given the opportunity to express their views on the challenges they face in their work and on disputes/conflicts to which they have been party.

The organization is structured such that there are ten members of the executive team and more than 58 managers throughout the company. While there are approximate seven hundred and fifty employees worldwide who carry out STEMCELL's daily operations, this project focuses on the executive and managerial level at the Vancouver head office.

Another purpose of conducting interviews was to understand whether managers and executives were capable of, or assumed that they were capable of, dealing with disputes and conflicts.

Though executives and managers perform different tasks, both are ultimately responsible for any disputes and conflicts that arise in the company. Each group has immense responsibilities both to the company and to its employees. Each provides guidance, training, and direction in line with company goals. Please note, all other service level employees are not responsible for, nor are they expected to deal with, any of the above.

The number of interviewees was limited due to two factors. One, since all policies, procedures, and decisions are made at the Vancouver headquarters the interviewees were selected from the employees located here. This also ensured that the project kept its North American focus.

Second, this project has not received any funding from the client, and needs to be completed in a timely fashion. The number of interviews must, therefore, remain small and focus on those managers and executives who have the most experience with the CRM. To ensure that the scope of this project remained manageable fifteen employees were interviewed.

3.3 Recruitment

The number of interviewees also depended on how many managers were willing to participate. Managers were selected based on their experience and the number of employees they supervise. Consideration was given to those who supervise five or more employees based on the assumption that a larger group would be more diverse and therefore there to experience disputes.

Human Resources provided a list of managers from all departments who supervise a minimum of five people. The managers on the list were contacted via email to set up times and places for interviews. The researcher arranged to meet participants at STEMCELL's Vancouver location most convenient for them (1618 Station Street, 570 West 7th Avenue, and 750 Pender Street).

Participants were divided into two groups – those with experience and those without – because those with experience were more likely to have developed their own methods of resolving conflicts. In many cases, those without experience were new to their positions and had only recently gone through conflict resolution training, but had no experience settling disputes between employees.

The organizational structure of STEMCELL includes a total of ten vice presidents and directors who are in charge of its numerous departments, three of whom were interviewed for this project. Executives were approached for interviews based on the size of their department, the nature of their work, and the diversity of their employees. For instance, the R&D department hires scientists from around the world based on skills and research, and therefore has significant cultural diversity that may affect conflict resolution. The Sales Department is one of the highest stress environments in the company since it is responsible for generating revenues year after year. Finally, the Operations Department is one of the largest, including a variety of different departments gathered together. Many of its employees are new graduates just starting their careers in the biotechnology industry. Cultural, generational, and gender differences are high in each of these departments, and therefore it is assumed that all three will experience high numbers of disputes/conflicts.

Human Resources's list of potential interview candidates included 25-30 managers out of which twelve were selected, thus eliminating the chance of interviewees being recognized based on their answers. The researcher contacted each candidate to request assistance. No one, neither the vice president nor other members of the HR team, know who was on the final list of interviewees for the project. The vice president of Human Resources understands the necessity for confidentiality. The raw data were not shared with her so that interviewees could feel free to describe their experiences without fear of exposure.

Each interview lasted 30 to 45 minutes. The researcher ensured that the managers selected for interview had adequate experience, and also that there was adequate cultural, gender, and age representation among the candidates on the final interview list. As the existing literature reveals, a person's conflict resolution style is influenced by their age, gender, and ethnicity (Hillman, 2014). Therefore, it was important that the candidates were not only selected for their experience but also for these other influences that could factor into how they managed disputes and conflicts.

Final interviewee numbers also depended on which managers were able and willing to participate. As time is valuable, interviews were at the convenience of the participant, and the researcher made every effort to ensure that the process was quick and confidential. The list of interview questions is provided in Appendix G. They were designed to gain perspective on:

- a manager's duties
- whether a manager had been involved in resolving disputes among their subordinates
- what managers remembered of the original conflict resolution training they had received as part of their training and their opinion on the CRM
- whether they found this training helpful/useful or not when dealing with conflict in practice over the course of their employment

- their perspectives on the existing CRM and its application as part of their employment duties
- any suggestions for change/adjustments to the CRM and the CRM training
- any comments or questions they had regarding the project

The interviewer gave the participants the chance to express their views on how they believe STEMCELL's CRM should change. This opportunity was important because any changes would require the assistance and approval of the people who utilize the CRM. The Human Resources team at STEMCELL is just one group in a vast organization, and therefore the input of other employees is needed to change the existing CRM or even create a new one tailored to the needs of employees. A suitable CRM is one that is learned and constructively utilized by employees as opposed to learned and forgotten.

Both the recruitment email and the participant consent form outlined the steps taken to ensure that interview answers would not be made public at any point. Participants were also reassured that their continued employment was not contingent on their participation, and that this project was purely to analyze the current CRM and not their performance.

The in-person interviews were conducted once the University of Victoria Ethics Board granted approval.

3.4 The Participants

The following provides a general description of the participants interviewed for this project.

First, every attempt was made to interview an equal number of men and women, however, due to scheduling conflicts the final count was five men and ten women.

Second, the participants represent a variety of ages. For instance one interviewee was 65-years-old and another only 27-years-old. The ages of managers were more diverse than those of executives, ranging between 30 and 60-years-old. In the executive group all three of the interviewees were above the age of 40.

Third, participants came from a variety of departments. In the managerial group an attempt was made to interview managers from as many different departments as possible. Three interviewees came from the R&D department, four from the Sales department, and at least one from each of Marketing, Quality Control, Manufacturing, Product and Scientific Support, and Supply Chain Operations. Managers in other departments such as Business Development, IT, and Finance were also contacted, however, they were unable to find the time to participate.

Fourth, the interviewees had diverse work experiences. Approximately interviewees had been employed at STEMCELL for twenty years. On the other hand, one interviewee had only been with the company for two years and had been recently promoted to the managerial level. The remainder of the interviewees had been with the company anywhere from 4 to 18 years. In the case of the newly promoted manager, the researcher decided to include an individual who was both young and ready for the responsibilities of managing a team in order to provide a point-of-

view different from those of other interviewees who were older and more experienced. The researcher believes it is important that a broad spectrum of opinions appear in the research.

Because it was unclear what issues participants would raise in the interviews, an emergent coding system rather than an a priori coding system was utilized to quantify that data (Flick, Metzler, & Scott, 2014). The interviews were both taped and transcribed by hand.

In February of 2016, a total number of eighteen interview candidates were contacted for interviews and fifteen responded. In the beginning the recruitment email was sent to six people, however, there were few responses and the researcher had to make a few adjustments. The researcher changed the recruitment process slightly by approaching the remaining employees individually about participation in the project. A suitable time was set for both the parties to meet at either the Station Street, West 7th Avenue, or West Pender Street locations. It took approximately three weeks to conduct all fifteen interviews.

The majority of interviews were conducted either early in the morning or later in the afternoon. At the beginning of the interviews, candidates were shown a copy of the participant consent form, and the researcher explained the process and purpose of the project to them. They were then asked to sign the consent form and were given a copy to retain for their records.

As time was of the essence, the interview was constructed to take less than one hour. However, an hour was given to each participant to allow for the chance to elaborate on any recommendations that or to ask questions.

3.4.1 Data Analysis Methods

Once concluded, the interviews were first reviewed and transcribed. Extra care was taken to ensure that they were transcribed to the best of the researcher's ability, and that no information was left out. The researcher also consulted her interview notes to ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions. Members checking, or asking interviewees to validate their responses, did not take place primarily because the transcriptions were not being quoted or attributed (Flick, Metzler, & Scott, 2014).

Second, the transcriptions were read and reread in order to identify codes that had significance for the project at hand. Codes were selected based on the following criteria; keywords or phrases, attitudes towards conflict, word repetition, feelings and behaviours, strengths and weaknesses, and experiences. The following are just some of the codes identified during the interviews:

- company culture,
- conflicts that arose,
- training received,
- interpretations of situations,
- behaviour of managers and employees,
- steps taken to resolve conflicts,
- strategies and practices,
- relationships between peers and direct reports,

- interactions between departments,
- results of steps taken,
- reflection on previous conflicts,
- recommendations

Third, all the interviews were coded, and the researcher began the process of finding patterns among the codes. Many of the initial codes were dismissed as having little relevance to the final material or the purpose of the project. These codes came from managers explaining conflicts that they either resolved or had been a part of. However, since these codes neither explained the actions they took nor the outcomes of conflicts, they were discarded. The remaining codes that were relevant to the purpose of the project were quantified alone or grouped together with other more explanative codes in a process called hierarchical coding.

Hierarchical coding was also done, as many of the codes were in fact examples of, settings for, or causes of another code. For instance, under the code “right tools” are seven sub-codes ranging from “active listening” to “face-to-face meetings.” These sub-codes define what the term “right tools” stands for. In some cases sub-codes represent further steps an employee took to address an issues, for instance being “objective” and “avoiding emotions.” Where a code was adequately explanatory on its own, no sub-code was created. For instance, the four codes relate to “causes of conflict” were important enough, and provided sufficient explanation of what the interview material covered, that no sub-codes were needed.

The data was then measured by recording the number of times interviewees repeated each code. Each code and sub-code was entered into an excel spreadsheet, and the total number of times it was used is listed in column E. Column F of the spreadsheet provides a percentage calculated by dividing the number of times a code appeared by the total number of interviews and converted into a number out of 100. This step was taken to show the frequency with which each code appeared throughout the interviews. Refer to Appendix H for the complete list of themes, categories, codes, and sub-codes along with the calculations.

Finally, the codes were brought together under the categories and themes that the researcher believes best represent the purpose of the project.

3.5 Position of the Researcher in the Company

At the time at the interviews were conducted, the researcher was human resources administrator at STEMCELL. She was in charge of ensuring that all administrative duties of the department were taken care of. She was also assistant to the director of corporate affairs. As such, she took care of any internal corporate events and communications.

Neither of these roles, however, placed the researcher in a power-over relationship with any of the interviewees. The researcher did not have any direct reports, nor did she manage any teams. She was not in any position, therefore, to have any influence over the participant’s careers, and she did not communicate with her direct managers regarding this project.

3.6 Confidentiality

Participants were assured that their answers would remain strictly confidential. Answers were not shared with either the client or the project supervisor at the University of Victoria. In the final report, participants cannot be identified whether they are a manager or an executive. All raw data has been locked in a drawer in the researcher's office, and will be confidentially disposed of when the project is complete.

To protect confidentiality, no manager or executive will be mentioned or quoted when the results of the data analysis are presented. Rather, responses to question have been grouped together according to assigned codes. For instance, if five managers find the current CRM training unsuitable for dealing with conflict, this data are mentioned as a percentage of the total number of employees interviewed.

While the researcher attempted to capture the perspectives of different age and gender groups, doing so did not compromise confidentiality. When disseminating the information, the researcher ensured that responses were grouped together according to age or gender within a given question.

3.7 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Method

The limitations of this project are both methodological and implemental, and the following subsections discuss the details of every limitation. This project was undertaken in the hope that should the research reveal any issues with the current CRM, the client will have the ability to continuing to research and to initiate any suitable changes to the CRM. On the other hand, should the research reveal no issues with the current CRM then this project contributes to academic knowledge on successful CRMs.

3.7.1 Implementation Limitations

The first implemental limitation is the company's budget, and whether implementing a new CRM can be justified at the current time. While this research was completed at no cost to the company, any change in the CRM will require an investment of money to arrange additional training for managers and HR team leads.

A second limitation is time and the resources available to make the recommendations made later in this project. Developing and implementing a revised CRM takes time, commitment, and other resources, often through a stepped process that allows for continuous learning and adjustment. This project starts this process by identifying through literature and empirical research some conceptual problems and associated initial concrete ideas for improvement. While time and the scope of this project limited the number of interviews and amount of research that could be done, the findings nevertheless begin the process of addressing whether the current CRM is sufficient for the company's needs. The next step that remains is whether STEMCELL is able to find the resources needed to make the changes.

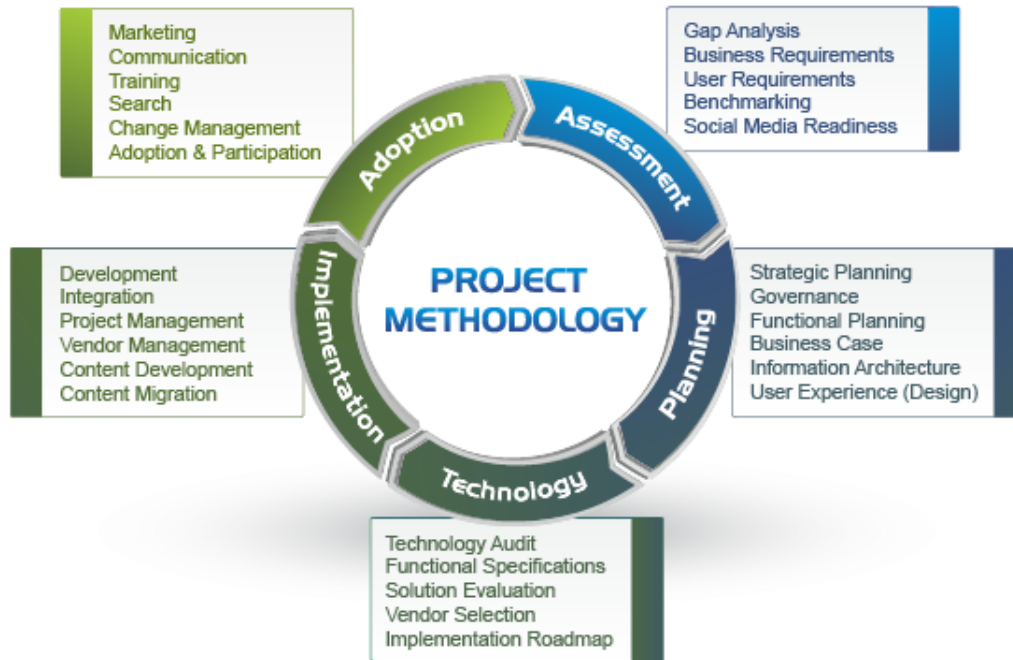


Figure 3: Cycle of Implementation

Figure 3 shows the cycle of assessment, planning and implementation that the client will have to go through with any of the recommendations made by this project. As with any policy change this cycle requires money, time and commitment on behalf of the client.

The final implemental limitation extends from the fact that this is a single case analysis and, therefore, no generalizations can be drawn from this project. As a privately held manufacturing company in the field of biotech, STEMCELL is a unique company with a unique structure. There are a limited number of similar companies in the international community, and even fewer located in British Columbia. Furthermore, while the literature review is very general and focused on a variety of issues regarding the definition of conflict, organizational conflict, and conflict resolution models, the empirical research methods that have been utilized in this project are unique to the needs of STEMCELL. They were designed to answer the particular set of three research questions related to whether the current CRM is adequate to this company's needs.

3.7.2 Methodological Limitations

There are many methodological strengths and weakness to the current research. The first is the narrow scope of a project meant to provide a quick analysis of what the client feels is an important issue for the future of STEMCELL. The project interviewed a variety of people at different levels within the company only to understand whether there is an issue with the current CRM. It is important to note that while this project does not focus exclusively on employee experience, further study in this area is important. The importance of having a working CRM is paramount, and should the company decide in the future to further investigate this matter, it would be well worth the effort.

A second limitation is the brevity of the interviews and questions that are not as in-depth as they need to be to understand the full impact of the CRM. As this is not a high priority project, the interview questions are short and precise, and so do not delve too deeply into opinions and recommendations.

The final methodological limitation comes in emergent codes that were all subjectively chosen by the researcher. Because the researcher did not set any codes prior to beginning the data analysis, the codes that emerged were all selected. Another researcher may well have identified different codes. In fact, the findings of two different researchers may show little or no overlap. Therefore, the results of the research would differ should another person review the same data.

On the other hand, one of the strengths of the chosen research method is that it gives the researcher the flexibility to find the right approach to suit the purposes of the project. Once the interviews were complete and transcribed, the researcher was then able to read through the raw material and decide that emergent coding was the right research method for this project. Not having pre-set or a priori codes allowed the researcher the freedom to extract all the material that was important and relevant from the transcribed interviews. Going through the raw data, the researcher was able to pick up on unexpected phrases, words, and behaviours that were important to how the material was interpreted. This flexibility, in turn, allowed the researcher to use the codes to test frequencies and rank the importance of each one.

4.0 Literature Review

The literature review for this project involves a variety of articles on conflict resolution models from Canada and the United States. The following sections outline why CRMs are important and the qualities that make an adequate CRM. First of all, defining conflict, and in particular organizational conflict, helps to establish why an adequate and suitable CRM is necessary for STEMCELL. Disputes will not be discussed in this section as they are not detrimental a company's well-being like conflicts are. Second, it is important to explore why companies are putting more effort into creating and implementing suitable CRMs. Third, the literature outlines how CRMs contribute to improved performance, leadership, and managerial growth for employees. Fourth, the literature review provides an overview of non-North American CRMs that provide alternative models for how STEMCELL can address deficiencies in its own CRM. It offers a different CRM that STEMCELL can implement in its international offices, should the company ever need/want to take that route.

4.1 Defining Organizational Conflict/Conflict

For the purposes of this project the following definition of both conflict and organizational conflict is used. While conflict is generally understood as people fighting with each other, a more suitable definition describes a condition in which people experience a clash of opposing wishes, wants, or even needs (Prause and Mujtaba 2015). Organizational conflict, on the other hand, occurs specifically in companies with many different departments, teams, and groups. It refers to the discord that can arise when the goals, interests, or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible, and those individuals or groups block or thwart one another's attempts to achieve their objectives (Ibid).

Both of these definitions apply to STEMCELL, a company comprised of ten different departments and over 700 employees. Employees have their own goals, needs, and values in addition to the goals, needs, and values of the particular department they work in and STEMCELL as a whole. Many occasions arise for these values and needs to clash and lead to conflict. A CRM allows each manager and department head to understand the reasons behind employee actions, and to utilize these differences to create lasting solutions.

4.2 The Importance of Conflict

While conflict is generally understood to be disruptive to the productivity of an organization, a moderate amount of conflict is necessary to attain optimal organizational effectiveness (Kwahk and Kim 1998). In any organization, too much conflict can be detrimental to the overall health of the company and too little conflict will result in no change. However, the right amount of conflict, if managed properly, can drive new developments in an organization (Flink 2015). Conflict forces organizations to open dialogue between different departments and employees in order to address a variety of issues.

The main players in organizational change and conflict are managers. They deal with disputes and conflicts continuously. Good managers aim to recognize and understand conflict, and then use that information to develop the organization. They can turn conflict into an advantage, something that allows disagreements to be aired and fixed before they become bigger problems (Flink 2015). As Claude-Hélène Mayer and Lynette Louw (2012) argue, managing conflict in the workplace involves the diagnosis and analysis of organizational conflict, and the development of effective intervention techniques and methods to resolve it. In many cases, these analyses provide feedback on what processes are working and whether or not change is needed. Therefore, without a degree of conflict organizations may never change their processes and thus how their companies are administered.

It is important to note that despite the benefits that conflict may have for an organization, most conflict management recommendations still focus on reduction, resolution, or minimization, because of the negative impact conflict can have on organizations or individuals (Mayer and Louw 2012). Depending on the size of the organization, continuous or large-scale conflict can occupy valuable resources such as time and expertise. In a large organization such as STEMCELL, this expense may be less of an issue, because there are a sufficient number of employees who can devote their time to resolving conflicts (Flink 2015). Continuous conflict nevertheless lowers employee morale and decreases productivity.

There are a variety of ways in which an organization can address conflict and organizational conflicts. Strategies range from manager training to developing new processes and bringing in external help in the form of a mediator or facilitator. Conflict resolution models that some organizations like STEMCELL have implemented are growing in popularity. Conflict and organizational conflict can be detrimental to the health of an organization. While change can mean that an organization is getting better, it might also mean that new types of conflict arise among different groups (Bendersky 2013). However, change is less detrimental if there are processes in place to deal with conflicts that arise as a result of change.

4.3 Adequate and Suitable CRMs

This section discusses that having a suitable and adequate CRM is paramount because it provides managers with the tools to deal with conflict effectively and efficiently without damaging working relationships. CRMs help managers to recognize and manage conflicts, and provide feedback to their superiors about needed changes. Using the established hierarchy, managers can bring important issues to the executive team by providing feedback through the chain of command.

The literature on dispute resolution reinforces the necessity for companies to have adequate and suitable conflict resolution models. An adequate CRM addresses a dispute before it becomes a conflict, and resolves it while ensuring that workplace relationships are not damaged beyond repair. Prior to the introduction to this alternative form of dispute resolution, employees had unions to protect and fight for their rights. However, with the decline of unions, employees who wish to address a conflict must file grievances or speak to their Human Resources department to

file a complaint. In many cases, these complaints are not viewed or addressed, and if they are addressed, the chances of resolving the conflict peacefully are not always high or even a possibility. A good CRM can ensure that conflicts are addressed with speed, flexibility, and understanding, as opposed to traditional forms of dispute resolution such as conciliation, adjudication, and arbitration (Roche and Teague 2012).

Research shows that both employees and employers prefer to use Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) led conflict management systems, because they associate these systems with higher productivity, lower conflict-related costs, more adaptive organizations, and higher organizational morale and commitment (Ibid). More importantly, CRMs have the capacity to resolve potentially destructive conflicts – a great asset especially in larger firms. Companies have been quick to adopt ADR processes such as open door policies, Ombudspersons, peer review, employment arbitration, negotiation, and mediation (McKenzie 2015). As David Brubaker et al. (2014) argue, many large organizations, particularly corporations, governments, and universities, have incorporated organizational ombudspersons to assist members in choosing and pursuing one or more of the conflict management options available. In fact, the more such organizations adapt CRMs, the more schools and universities begin to offer programs to train students in conflict management.

4.4 Characteristics of a CRM

There is much discussion of what makes a CRM suitable for an organization, and what characteristics a CRM must possess. To begin, CRMs must reflect the goals that an organization has for dealing with disputes and conflicts. Some organizations prefer to train their managers and allow them to deal with any issues. Others prefer to bring in a third party to deal with disputes and conflicts.

Corrine Bendersky (2013) argues that organizations typically use three methods to deal with conflict. First, they rely on a third party to determine the outcome of a dispute based on laws, contracts, or standards of behaviour. This process may include arbitration, peer review, or formal investigations. The second method involves a third party neutral mediator or facilitator who assists with resolutions. Third, the individual disputant may resolve the conflict without seeking external aid. While each one of these methods may successfully resolve a conflict, no one method is superior to another. Choosing the right method depends on the type of conflict, the resources available, and the culture of the company. For instance, a company may be able to resolve a dispute without third party aid. On the other hand, a deeply rooted conflict that involves several employees or even multiple departments may require a mediator or facilitator to assist with resolution.

The first two options are available to the organization in case it is unable to resolve the conflict internally. This research project concentrates on how organizations can use the third method to deal with disputes and conflicts. CRMs are designed to give managers the ability to identify conflict and use their leadership skills to facilitate a conversation internally between the parties, and to resolve the issue by identifying common interests. While resolving a conflict is important,

it is perhaps more important to first define that conflict. Levi and Benjamin (1977) argue that doing so allows the participants to focus on the main issue rather than the surrounding arguments. This step is especially important in interest-based negotiations and solutions, because it allows managers to understand what kind of conflict they are dealing with before proceeding to possible solutions.

Perhaps the most important aspect of a CRM is its training program, which teaches managers to do more than just resolve disputes and conflicts. Through conflict resolution training, managers develop three valuable skills. First, they learn to work towards win-win solutions by adopting the viewpoint that cooperation is the most effective means of handling conflict, because it leads to better quality outcomes for all concerned (Feeney and Davidson 1996). Two, they learn to actively listen to the participants in a conflict in order to gain greater cooperation from them. Three, they learn to use the interests they discover in their conversations with the participants to brainstorm creative solutions. Once training is complete, managers will tackle problems using the integrative problem-solving process outlined in the CRM, thus, resulting in more win-win solutions (Ibid).

4.5 CRM and Employee Performance

Perhaps the most beneficial aspect of a CRM is the opportunity to train managers in understanding workplace differences. One challenge that managers must deal with is the rise of generational differences that can lead to disputes and conflicts. Hillman (2014) argues that different generational preferences in the workplace lead to conflict, and therefore conflict management should treat each generation differently (Hillman 2014). According to Hillman, the current workplace includes four generational cohorts: Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y, each with its own values and assumptions about the other. These attitudes shape how the generations interact, and in turn deal with conflict. Hillman (2014) suggests that in order to have a successful CRM, managers need to,

examine why and how differences between the generations affect competencies, behaviours, attitudes, and other attributes to ensure their recruitment, management strategies and practices appropriately address the differences and do not lead to unintended consequences, such as exacerbating conflict in the workplace.

Historically, managers were older than the people they led, and became managers by virtue of seniority and tenure with an organization (Standifer et al. 2013). In contemporary companies such as STEMCELL, employees often work alongside co-workers who may or may not be of similar age or culture (Ibid). In fact, in some cases there is minimal or no age difference between managers and employees. When managers understand generational difference (whether there is one or not), they can implement generationally sensitive policies that can increase employee productivity.

Perhaps the most important reason for a sustainable and adequate CRM is its ability to motivate people to continue performing at high levels, especially in companies that rely on revenue from

sales. At STEMCELL, while scientists create new and improved materials from research, it is the Sales team that has to generate high revenues from the sale of products worldwide. Research shows that a salesperson's ability to manage their emotions in high stress situations is an important element of successful performance (Mulki et al. 2014). Thus, organizational success depends on a healthy and constructive work environment (Ibid). An adequate and suitable CRM designed to deal with conflicts is essential for creating such an environment. Below a thorough analysis assesses how STEMCELL's CRM affects the Sales department, but for now it is clear that reducing levels of work-related stress is very beneficial.

4.6 CRM in different countries

While the United States is considered the birthplace of ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution), and subsequently CRMs, other countries have been quick to adopt ADR practices (Roche and Teague 2012). However, each country has its own interpretation of how to implement ADR and what constitutes a CRM. In the case of Australia, the push for ADR and CRMs has not been the same as in the US or UK. Australian companies use public agencies that were established under statute to assist them with resolving workplace disputes. The Australian government provides considerable autonomy to employers and trade unions to shape their own relations, but at the same time has public dispute resolution agencies to help the parties (Roche and Teague 2012). While these public agencies differ from US-style ADR, they do in fact practice many similar ADR techniques such as conciliation, mediation, conferencing, assisted resolution, and arbitration (Forsyth 2012).

Meanwhile, New Zealand regards ADR as highly interventionist, and requires a neutral third party to work actively to reach a settlement. In fact, New Zealand has managed to combine arbitration and mediation into one process, despite the fact that they are incompatible (Roche and Teague 2012). This practice is rare, however, and does not apply to other countries. While every country is different in how it adopts and implements ADR, CRMs are becoming more and more commonplace because they help to resolve disputes in a constructive manner.

One of the goals of this literature review is to allow the client to decide whether they wish to develop one culturally-sensitive CRM for the entire the company (at all locations), or tailor the current CRM to the specific needs of each of its eleven locations. The executive and managerial groups are culturally diverse and therefore include people with varying views on how to manage conflict. At STEMCELL all managers and executives are trained to use the CRM, however, this training does not mean that these individuals do not have a priori ways of managing/dealing with conflict. Understanding a manager's background is key to understanding how they might deal with conflict. Therefore, it is necessary to recognize the role background plays, and that it may affect answers provided in the interviews.

4.7 Culture in Conflict

One important factor that affects how individuals perceive and deal with conflict is culture. To understand why culture is so important we must first define it. While there is no agreed upon definition of culture, the following statement serves the purposes of this project. Culture can be

broadly defined as the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another. This definition can apply to an individual's gender, ethnicity, place of residence, and even educational background, with the result that one individual can have several cultures with which they identify. Moreover, it is important to note that culture is variable, actor specific, and shapes human behaviour and cognition. Altogether, culture plays an important role in influencing both individual and social behaviour (Bercovitch and Foulkes 2012). In short, culture is the lens through which we view the world, make decisions, and more specifically, understand disputes and conflicts and their resolution.

As Bercovitch and Foulkes (2012) argue, culture plays a large role in determining a party's behaviour in conflict and most other social situations. Therefore, it is important for anyone dealing with conflict to understand that all parties bring with them a set of beliefs and values that are determined by their culture. For instance, a manager attempting to settle a dispute between two employees will find that the cultural background of each person involved will dictate how they approach the conflict. Additionally the culture of the organization and that of the manager also plays a role in how the conflict is viewed and resolved. Suddenly, solving the dispute becomes very difficult. The inability of the manager to understand cultural differences can seriously jeopardize resolution efforts (Tinsley 1998). Therefore, any attempt to understand, create, and implement a CRM must first consider the role that culture plays in disputes and conflicts.

While culture is prominent in conflict and its resolution, existing literature gives little thought to cross-cultural management. Many of the articles surveyed in this literature review were published quite recently, which leads the researcher to assume that culture has only recently been recognized as an important topic in conflict resolution (Sanchez-Runde, Nardon, and Steers, 2013). Indeed, as the number of multinational organizations grows, and people interact more and more across boundaries and cultures, understanding the role of culture becomes increasingly important in conflict resolution literature.

4.8 What an Organization Can Do

Thus, when an organization decides to implement a new or revised CRM, it must consider culture as an important factor. Doing so involves the following steps: (1) ensure the CRM takes into consideration the various people who will use it; (2) managers must be aware that they will come across cultures that may be quite different from their own.

Different CRMs focus on different goals. In the case of STEMCELL, the current CRM is based on a leadership program that teaches managers and executives to practice active listening, team building, and interest-based negotiation, among other techniques. As an organization that employs individuals from a variety of backgrounds and cultures, however, STEMCELL may find that not everyone is comfortable with using a single CRM. Catherine Tinsley (1998), in a paper on different CRMs used in Japan, Germany, and the United States, found that Japanese managers prefer a status power model, German managers prefer a regulations model, and American managers an interest-based model. As a Vancouver-based organization, STEMCELL may be more inclined to rely on interest-based negotiations, however, doing so might be difficult to implement given the cultural diversity within the organization. Therefore, the company has to

ensure that managers trained in the current CRM not only understand and are comfortable with cultural diversity in the workplace but also understand the organizational culture of STEMCELL.

4.9 What Managers Can Do

Managers play an important role in how any CRM is implemented and used within an organization. However, they also need proper training to understand the effect of culture on how disputes and conflicts unfold. Research suggests that managers should consider subjective factors such as the perceptions, expectations, values, and aspirations of those involved (Bercovitch and Foulkes 2012). For instance, behaviour considered acceptable by one party may be interpreted by another party as incompatible with their interests, thus resulting in conflict (2012). Managers need to be aware that when they deploy the company's CRM, they deal with their own values and beliefs as well as those of the parties in conflict, who may also misinterpret each other in the resolution process. To combat misunderstanding, managers need to try to understand the disputants' backgrounds and how they interpret conflict. With this information, they can educate each party about the other in an attempt to promote cultural awareness. This is a necessary step for managers regardless of whether they are resolving a dispute or a conflict, because in some cases long standing disputes become conflicts if not properly dealt with. Managers can stop disputes from festering by educating their team on cultural awareness, which in turn will help employees to work better together.

5.0 Data Results

As outlined in the methodology, emergent coding was used to analyze the data generated for this project. These codes were then used to identify categories and themes. This section discusses the general themes that emerged and explains the categories and codes. The intention is to provide a broad view of the findings before narrowing them down to the codes in order to make final recommendations for the company and the client.

5.1 Emergent Themes

Twelve categories were identified under four themes: Company Culture, Approaches to Conflict Resolution, Support, and Opportunities for Change. These themes are listed here in an order that sees all four work together to ensure that STEMCELL's current conflict resolution model constantly evolves to adapt to the growing needs of the company. The excel spreadsheet in Appendix H outlines how the twelve categories fit within these themes.

Company Culture

The first theme encompasses two categories: STEMCELL culture, and specialized conflict resolution (CR) training. STEMCELL's company culture is a major theme in this project because it dictates policy for conflict resolution training. Like all companies, STEMCELL has a culture that it cultivates, preserves, and teaches. Those who have been with the company long enough know the culture and carry on traditions established when the company was founded. They teach this culture to new employees and provide any necessary support. The manner in which STEMCELL chooses to teach its supervisors, managers, and executives to deal with conflict sets a precedent for all future employees and defines how the external world sees the company.

Approaches to Conflict Resolution

The next theme includes all of the categories that define how a manager or an executive prepares for, approaches, and deals with, conflict. While the previous theme set the tone for conflict resolution training, this theme reflects how that policy is applied.

As we will see below in the two sections that discuss the codes and categories, managers and executives are essentially the drivers and users of the CRM. They are trained in the culture of the company and expected to push that concept out to all employees with whom they have direct relationships. They carry out this mandate through face-to-face conversations with their direct reports, and by consulting with their peers and the HR department on correct strategies to resolve conflicts. Finally, they are expected to attend training sessions and to utilize the new skills they learn in their day-to-day activities. Executives and managers also provide feedback on whether the company needs to make any changes to its CRM. Therefore, the Approaches to Conflict

Resolution theme reveals managers and executives as the main drivers and users of the CRM and their importance in the change and implementation of new policies is paramount.

Support

The third theme, Support (discussed extensively throughout this project report), includes the categories of “coaching,” “support,” and “training materials.” While support may mean material assistance, for the purposes of this project its definition also includes the assistance that managers need to deal with conflict. This support may come in the form of materials, training, and/or third party assistance.

In many ways, support refers to what managers and executives need to fully utilize their conflict resolution skills. At any stage in conflict resolution, managers may require support. They will require support to understand their role and how to deal with their direct reports. At some point in the process, they may find that they need the support of a third party neutral person. On the other hand, they may find they only need a few additional materials in order to perform at an optimal level.

This theme is closely related to the previous themes, Approaches to Conflict and Company Culture, both of which dictate whether or not, and what kind of, support is necessary. The company’s culture dictates its approach to conflict, and together these themes will determine whether managers and executives have the necessary tools to deal with conflict.

Opportunity for Change

The final theme this project identifies is Opportunities for Change. This theme is perhaps the most important because it can force company culture to change. The categories that fall within this theme are “issues,” “advantages of conflict,” “causes of conflict,” and “recommendations for change.”

All four of these categories highlight how every roadblock and issue that arises offers an opportunity to change conflict resolution methods and the training program. Preliminary research using the gathered data showed an emphasis on how conflict is not detrimental but beneficial to the well-being of companies. For example, in the case of STEMCELL, conflicts and disputes created the opportunity for this project to take shape and to recommend improvements and make changes to the current CRM.

The interviews revealed many opportunities to make changes to the current CRM program. Managers’ willingness to explore underlying issues and to understand the root causes of conflicts signify they are well aware of the importance of the current CRM and the training program. Their opinions are so important to the future of the CRM and training.

5.2 Categories

In order to organize the vast amount of data collected, the codes and sub-codes identified group into twelve categories: coaching, conflict resolution (CR) techniques, issues, management styles, advantages of conflict, preparedness, causes of conflict, recommendations, specialized conflict resolution training, STEMCELL culture, support, and training materials. The categories are listed in the cycle that is illustrated in the sub-conceptual framework in Appendix F.

The purpose of creating these categories is twofold. First, the categories group the codes together and assist in the analysis of the data. The title of each category roughly explains the codes that it encompasses and attempts to reflect the importance of those codes. For instance, the category “coaching” includes the following codes and sub-codes:

Themes / Concepts	Categories	Emergent Codes	Sub-codes	Number of times used	Total number of participants
Support	Coaching	Guidance for Managers		1	6.67%
			Leadership/Teamwork	2	13.33%
		Peer Level Training		4	26.67%
		Training other Managers		5	33.33%
			Note Swapping	3	20.00%
			Constructive Feedback	7	46.67%
		Collaborating		2	13.33%

Second, their purpose is to help answer the research questions by showing how the coded concepts work together to define and create the conflict resolution model used at STEMCELL. A complete chart that shows the links is provided in Appendix H, the explanation of which is provided in the paragraphs below.

5.2.1 The Categories Explained

To make explaining the categories easier they will be discussed according to the order that they appear in the sub-conceptual framework.

The first category in the cycle is Company Culture, because this category defines and dictates the company’s approach to conflict resolution. The training that employees receive during their time at the company is an extension of the company culture and how senior management wishes to deal with conflict. While employees may have their own approaches to conflict resolution, they

are expected to follow the company's policy and use their training to address any issues that they may face. STEMCELL ensures that this culture is preserved by having all managers attend company training.

Preparedness, coaching, and management styles are placed in the same area together because they shape how a manager approaches conflict. "Preparedness" refers to the training a manager has had in conflict resolution, and how prepared they believe they are to deal with the conflicts they may face in their daily activities. One of the important questions that this project aims to answer is whether managers are satisfied with their training. As the next section will show, 100 per cent of participant stated they were satisfied with their initial training, and so there is little cause for concern in this section.

"Coaching" refers to the assistance managers receive from their managerial peers and superiors. Many participants outlined the importance of providing assistance to each other and their direct reports. They described assistance in the form of receiving constructive feedback and swapping notes to assist each other with improving their conflict resolution skills.

Finally, "management style" encompasses how a manager's personality and style of work dictates the approach they take to conflict. Many managers prefer to have individual and confidential face-to-face conversations with the parties involved. Others prefer to bring the parties together and facilitate a conversation that they hope will clear up any misunderstandings. While a manager's training provides the tools for conflict resolution, it is ultimately personal management style that sets the tone for conflict resolution and the specific methods used.

The categories "conflict resolution techniques" and "support" follow the previous group of categories. They include the training tools that STEMCELL provides to its managers. Under "conflict resolution techniques" are the tools managers have to address the issues they face. They can ask questions and communicate honestly in face-to-face meetings with their direct reports. These techniques are taught in all training programs STEMCELL provides.

On the other hand, "support" outlines the assistance that managers have at their disposal when they believe they are not dealing with a conflict effectively. 33 per cent of the managers interviewed stated that they would like there to be an experience-sharing mechanism to support managers. Meanwhile, many managers would prefer support from either the HR department or an external third party experienced in dealing with conflicts. This latter preference partly comes from the fact that some conflicts involve confidential information that cannot be disseminated to managers within the company.

Inevitably, even managers who use the training and the resources available to them to deal with conflict will face difficult issues. Therefore, the "issues" category refers to those things that contribute to conflicts, as well as current conflict resolution training and the resources available

to managers. Managers face issues both in their use of the CRM and their training on a daily basis, such as trouble ensuring confidentiality and a lack of trust, which are not only detrimental to the well-being of the company but also hinder a manager's ability to deal with conflict. These issues are reflected in the interviewee's recommendations for the conflict resolution program discussed below.

The next category in the cycle outlines some of the causes of conflict at STEMCELL. While short, the list nevertheless highlights two key issues: (1) managers at STEMCELL do not deal with large-scale conflicts that require extensive changes to the current training program; (2) the training that managers receive is currently sufficient to assist them with the issues they face.

The next category encompasses recommendations and training materials. While there is some overlap between the two, there are two separate category divisions for several reasons. First, under "recommendations," interviewees were quick to state that they wanted changes made to the conflict resolution training. For instance, they stated that they want more frequent training sessions, because managers have to wait months for the next cohort. They also want revision courses to be offered so they can update their knowledge.

The category of "training materials" covers the materials that managers would like to have at their disposal when they deal with conflict. For example, managers would like to have books, a cheat sheet, and case studies that outline the steps to conflict resolution. They would also like short videos and demos for managers to consult in their spare time. Such training materials would give managers the ability to update their knowledge on the CRM on their own time, and also access to tools when they face a potential conflict situation.

The penultimate category in this cycle is "specialized training in conflict resolution." While this category could also be classified under "recommendations," it is important enough to warrant its own category. Interviewees showed high support for the current training to be made more specialized. The interviewees stated that the current training is too generic and lacks specificity. In fact, many managers would like to have both department-specific and cross-functional training in conflict resolution. In addition, 66 per cent of interviewees want to have conflict resolution taught as a single, stand alone topic, as they feel that two hours is not a sufficient amount of time to learn all that they need to know. More importantly, with no follow-up revisions, the interviewees argue that they have difficulty remembering their training despite having attended the sessions.

The final category, "advantages of conflict," falls in the center of this cycle because it affects changes within the CRM and the training program. While conflict can be disruptive and counterproductive, it is also one of the major drivers of change in companies. Often conflicts reveal underlying issues that need to be addressed through changes to company policy,

processes, and even training. “Advantages of conflict” appears in the middle of this chart because it affects all other steps of the cycle.

The cycle of revision is completed with changes made to STEMCELL’s corporate culture. This cycle can be repeated a number of times to ensure constant revision of conflict resolution training. In other words, using these categories the company can constantly adapt the program to meet its changing needs.

5.3 Codes and Sub-codes

As section 5.1 outlined, an emergent coding system was utilized for this project. The excel spreadsheet provided in Appendix H outlines all thirty-eight codes and thirty sub-codes that were found and categorized. Column E shows how many times interviewees used a code or sub-code. Column F provides the same number as a percentage of the total number of interviews (15).

It is important to note here that the researcher was concerned with whether interviewees used a certain code rather than the number of times the code was repeated in their transcript. The purpose of the project was to understand how many of the interviewees used a certain code to gauge its importance rather than evaluate the importance based on one person’s responses.

To make discussion of the codes and sub-codes easier, they are listed according to the categories above.

Company Culture

Several managers indicated that STEMCELL’s culture and company policy were important factors in conflict resolution. 26.6 per cent of interviewees agree on the need for a common basis upon which all managers can perform their responsibilities. In fact, a company-wide conflict resolution training program provides that common ground for everyone in the company. Furthermore, 13.3 per cent of the interviewees believe that the training reinforces STEMCELL’s culture both for newly promoted and newly hired managers.

Ultimately, the sub-code ‘company policy’ was created because STEMCELL culture also dictates the company’s policy towards conflict resolution. Any change to the CRM will first require the company to make a change in its policy.

Preparedness

Under this category, the most interesting result was that 100 per cent of those interviewed expressed satisfaction with their initial training in conflict resolution. All interviewees were satisfied that the training was clear and easy to understand and the instructor was informative and knowledgeable on the subject.

Meanwhile, only 20 per cent of the interviewees had prior training in conflict resolution, which indicates that the training these employees received at STEMCELL was their first exposure to CRMs.

Furthermore, it is important to note that only 13.3 per cent of those interviewed felt their prior training in conflict resolution helped them prepare for conflicts. Therefore, the researcher can assume that STEMCELL's conflict resolution training program is doing a better job at preparing interviewees for disputes than training received elsewhere.

Management Style

In 46 per cent of the interviews the phrase "different management styles" was mentioned as a deciding factor in how a manager reacted to and dealt with conflicts. While training can only provide a basic knowledge to managers on what to do in conflict situations, a manager's own style often dictates how they approach a situation and what method they use to resolve it.

While only 6.6 per cent of interviewees stated that they changed their management style due to the coaching and support they receive, the researcher believes this to be an important piece of information to include. As the sample population was very small in comparison to the number of employees, the researcher believes that other managers and executives may be using similar styles but they were simply not interviewed for this project.

On the other hand, 86 per cent of the interviewees stated that they had very large groups to supervise. While these interviewees will most likely be in the senior management and executive groups, the larger the group they supervise the more complex the issues they may face. Therefore, they require more CR training and support.

Finally, the sub-code "manager-to-manager interactions" showed 6.6 per cent of interviewees stated they had to deal with this relationship in their role. Since 86 per cent of those interviewed stated that they manage large groups of people, the assumption is that more managers do deal with manager-to-manager interactions but they did not explicitly state this in their interview. This discrepancy could have been a result of the researcher not asking clear questions in the interviews with regards to peer level interactions. Or the interviewees could assume that manager to manager interactions are inherent in their role and therefore they did not mention it.

Coaching

The idea that managers and executives require some sort of assistance from other managers within the company was well expressed during the interviews. Coaching codes are separate from the support category because they represent the assistance that managers require from their peers and superiors within the company. For instance, 26 per cent of the interviewees wanted to be trained with their peers (rather than their superiors), and a further 33 per cent wanted to be trained with managers from within their own department.

The code "guidance for managers" includes the sub-code "leadership/teamwork," as interviewees reported leadership as a type of guidance that managers wanted to have from other managers or their superiors. Only 6.6 per cent of interviewees express an interest in having a guidance system for managers, and 13 per cent of the interviewees specifically want some sort of leadership or teamwork in the workplace. Both of these codes are included here because as the next paragraph will outline that managers require some assistance with regards to conflict resolution just not in the form of leadership/teamwork.

“Training other managers” was further divided into sub-codes for a number of reasons. First, 20 per cent of the interviewees want to be able to swap notes with other managers to see whether they had handled a situation properly or had used the correct techniques to approach a situation. In fact, 46 per cent of the interviewees want their peers to offer them constructive feedback, meaning that managers trust their coworkers enough to ask for their assistance and guidance when they require it.

Finally, the code “collaborating” was included despite just a 13 per cent usage, because collaboration is one part of conflict resolution. Managers and executives are required to collaborate with one another and with their direct reports if they wish to maintain a fully functioning workplace. The low percentage for this code indicates either that the interviewees are not collaborating or that they failed to mention their collaborations in their interviews.

Conflict Resolution Techniques

This category encompasses important steps that managers need to take when they have to deal with conflict. While 20 per cent of the participants stated that they needed the right tools to deal with conflict, others were quick to state the exact tools they require.

The following sub-codes under “right tools” represent those tools that managers and executives use to deal with conflicts. 40 per cent of the participants said they use “active listening” and “face-to-face meetings” to deal with conflict, while 33 per cent of participants stated that they try to remain “focused on the issue” to avoid allowing conflicts to escalate. One of the most encouraging results revealed 66 per cent of participants use “communication” as a tool to deal with conflict. This shows that not only do managers utilize the techniques they are taught but they also see value in using these skills in their day-to-day activities.

The code “objectivity in conflict resolution” was created to reflect remaining neutral in a conflict, which is one of the key techniques that managers should exhibit. Even so, this code only applied to 6 per cent of the interviewees, meaning that 94 per cent did not refer to objectivity in their conflict resolution. A possible explanation for this could be that the majority of interviewees deem objectivity an unspoken rule. Another possible explanation is that the interview questions did not cover objectivity in conflicts, thus the interviewees failed to mention it. Either way, it is difficult to draw a conclusion from this result without further research.

Finally, 33 per cent of interviewees believe that “avoiding emotion” is important during conflict resolution. This result shows that some managers understand the importance of focusing on the issue rather than allowing emotions to make the situation worse and damage relationships.

Support

The codes grouped under this category represent both the assistance that managers have available to them and the external support they would like to have for more complicated conflicts.

First, 33 per cent of the interviewees indicated that they use “sharing experiences” as a method of getting help when they face a difficult situation. It should be specified that for reasons of

confidentiality these managers could only consult other managers within their own departments. In fact, for more sensitive issues they are only able to consult with their direct supervisors as they cannot divulge any information to another person in the company.

For this reason, 46 per cent of the interviewees said that they would prefer to use “HR support” when dealing with a confidential issue, and 46 per cent stated that they would prefer to use an “external third-party resource.” All together, then, 92 per cent of those interviewed were prevented by confidentiality from approaching their peers for help. This result shows that managers and executives would appreciate having the option of consulting someone who would understand the issue of confidentiality. Furthermore, these codes assisted in shaping the recommendations that these interviewees had for the conflict resolution program outlined below.

The final code and sub-code in this section are “external training” and “more assistance/training.” While interviewees supported having refresher courses in conflict resolution, they were less inclined to have more training in the same material. Many felt that studying the same techniques that they learned in the internal training would be time consuming and redundant. These codes, however, had to be included since 26 per cent of the interviewees felt that the option of external training should be available to them.

Issues

The interviews revealed that managers and executives understand that there are many issues that both create and inhibit their ability to deal with conflicts. For instance, 33 per cent of those interviewed would look at “exploring underlying issues” to understand the root of a conflict. This result is encouraging because it indicates that participants are using their initial training to understand the best approaches to conflict resolution. It is important to note that 13 per cent of the interviewees blamed business decisions for conflicts, showing that they understand that some decisions are out of a manager’s control. Therefore, the solution to a business decision conflict is neither easy nor within the manager’s ability to enforce.

The researcher decided to include the sub-code “who gets training?” as a valid question raised in interviews. At the current time, managers, supervisors, and executives get different levels of training in conflict resolution. However, 6 per cent of the interviewees suggested that perhaps the training program should be extended to all employees at STEMCELL so they too have an idea of the conflict resolution processes currently in place. The decision to change this policy is in the hands of the executive and the president.

Managers related a number of issues with the conflict resolution training itself. One major issue was confidentiality. 26 per cent of the interviewees stated that they felt uncomfortable sharing conflicts that they had been a part of because of confidentiality. In fact, confidentiality is the main reason that 46 per cent requested an external third party with whom they could consult on conflict resolution.

The remaining codes in this category arose from interviewees' complaints regarding the training program in general. 13 per cent of the interviewees argued that the training does not cover "managing difficult issues," and another 6 per cent stated that the "class was too large." Meanwhile, one of the bigger issues they identified was forgetting the training due to "lack of use." Some of the recommendations below aim to address this issue by suggesting the company provide managers with the option of updating their knowledge.

"Trust" is also included as a code despite only 6% of interviewees referring to it as an issue, because it is a fundamental requirement of conflict resolution. Again, the low percentage might be the result of a lack of inquiry by the interviewer or the fact that trust is an unspoken rule that all managers and executives follow. Nevertheless, it is difficult to draw a conclusion from this code and further inquiry is needed.

Causes of Conflict

This category includes four codes repeated enough times throughout the interviews to stand on their own without any sub-codes.

The first code is "misunderstandings." 20 per cent of interviewees cited misunderstandings as a cause of conflicts. As STEMCELL includes many different nationalities, cultures, and religions, misunderstandings are bound to arise among coworkers. Many of the conflicts that managers and executives deal with on a regular basis result from misunderstandings that arise between their direct reports.

Second, 33 per cent of managers stated that they deal with conflicts related to "performance issues," which means that managers have to cooperate with their direct reports to ensure they are working to the best of their ability. At STEMCELL, performance reviews are done bi-annually, and the HR department is always available to assist managers and executives who need to address employee performance.

Interdepartmental issues are a third cause of conflict reported by 20 per cent of the interviewees. These issues are especially troublesome for senior managers and executives as they deal with more cross-departmental concerns than do lower-level managers. Therefore, further specialized training may be needed for these higher level managers in order for them to deal with cross-departmental conflicts. The recommendations below discuss this option, providing a sense of the support that specialized training has among the interviewees.

Fourth, 40 per cent of the interviewees stated that "inexperienced employees" were a cause of conflict. This result is understandable as twice a year STEMCELL employs a large number of co-op students, and also hires a large number of new university graduates who have little or no work experience. While the company makes an effort to train these young employees, many of

them experience some degree of conflict while adjusting to working life. More importantly, many students lack experienced in working with colleagues, which inevitability means that they experience some level of conflict in the first few months of employment.

It should also be noted that the lack of serious conflicts at STEMCELL indicates that none of these causes are beyond the abilities of managers and executives to deal with. This is a positive sign.

Recommendations

Some of the most important codes and sub-codes found in the interview materials fall into the recommendations category. The recommendations discussed here are for the conflict resolution training program. Training materials recommendations are discussed below.

“Frequent training,” “hotline for employees,” and “freedom to attend classes” each appear in 6 per cent of the interviews. The researcher decided to include them in the final results because, despite their low support, they are viable recommendations that can be implemented at various times according to the resources the company can allocate to the conflict resolution program.

The only recommendation that received a higher percentage of support was “Lunchtime Classes” at 13 per cent. One executive recommended such classes because they have little time to attend classes during other times of the day. The researcher believes despite low interest in these types of classes, they would be beneficial to the company.

Only 13 per cent of the interviewees were in favour of changing the format of the training. As previously mentioned, 100 per cent of interviewees are satisfied with their initial conflict resolution training and see no need to change it.

While the interviewees were divided on their recommendations for the training program, 80 per cent agreed that they would like to re-attend the conflict resolution portion. Despite the fact that some of the interviewees had only recently gone through this training, there was still a high consensus that retraining was not only necessary but should be mandatory. Because many managers do not use their conflict resolution training on a daily basis they forget the techniques and the material. Therefore, they would like to have the opportunity to review some of the basics.

The only training issue on which there was no consensus pertained to format. Interviewees could not agree on whether they wished to have lunchtime classes or more “frequent training” sessions they could audit when they have the time. With resource restrictions it might only be possible to offer one of these options. As the company grows, however, both options can be implemented to allow managers the ability to choose how they want to be trained.

Training Materials

This category encompasses all of the tools and materials that the interviewees would like to have when they face a conflict situation. The codes and sub-codes express the specific tools interviewees would like to have for their use, with the exception of the first code and sub-code, which refer to the items that the interviewees would like the training materials to cover.

The code “steps to CR” captures the 20 per cent of interviewees who stated that a step-by-step approach to conflict resolution is important. An additional 33 per cent of the interviewees argued that they make an effort to understand different points-of-view in order to address conflict constructively.

The sub-codes “case studies” and “cheat sheet” form the main focus here, and will also be discussed in the recommendations section of the project below. Both of these sub-codes appeared in the interviews at a higher percentage compared to other codes and sub-codes. While 73 per cent of interviewees want to review more specific case studies during conflict resolution training, one complaint was that instructors focus too much on case studies that students bring to class. Although this strategy allows participants to bring forward any issues they are dealing with, attendees felt restricted due to confidentiality. Meanwhile, 46 per cent of the interviewees want to have some sort of cheat sheet that they can refer to prior to dealing with conflict situations. The recommendations section below discusses the costs and benefits of providing such a cheat sheet to employees.

The final sub-code the researcher includes in this section is “books on CR,” despite its low support at just 13 per cent. Currently, STEMCELL has a small library that houses a number of books on management, leadership, and business, but only one book on conflict resolution, *Getting to Yes* by Roger Fisher and William Ury. Despite the low demand for books, the researcher believes that more employees would read about conflict resolution if more materials were available to them. Books would give employees the option to study the subject on their own time instead of using valuable work time to understand conflict resolution. Especially since books are a cheap alternative to more training!

Advantages of Conflict

Perhaps one of the most important categories is how advantageous conflict is to a company. Conflict is generally viewed as disruptive to day-to-day activities, yet it also provides an opportunity to change policies that are no longer beneficial or efficient.

33 per cent of interviewees state that conflict is an “opportunity for growth.” This code was created because several managers stated that although frequent and long-term conflict is counterproductive, some conflict provides an opportunity to address changes that needed to be

made. However, they were quick to admit that the opportunity for growth could come in the form of more proactive and interactive training. Both of the sub-codes, proactive approach to CR and interactive training had 20 per cent support from the interviewees.

Both of these sub-codes come from interviewees requesting sufficient training to approach conflicts more proactively. More importantly, they want to have training sessions that are more interactive and less instructive. They want to be able to practice the techniques they learn and receive feedback from the instructor. Each sub-code appears in 20 per cent of the interviews, indicating that interviewees had some knowledge of what those changes entail.

Specialized CR Training

Finally, this category encompasses the codes and sub-codes that emerge from interviewees' suggestions for changes they would like to see to the conflict resolution training program. While this section is very similar to the recommendations category, it specifically pertains to training in conflict resolution rather than changes to the training program. However, the interviewees could not agree on what a specialized training program should look like. The following is a breakdown of the different suggestions and their levels of support.

20 per cent of interviewees agreed that they would like to have department-specific conflict resolution training, because not all the material they are taught is applicable to their position. On the other hand, 40 per cent of interviewees felt they had not received adequate training for their position, and therefore wanted the conflict resolution training revised to be more cross-functional. While these requests may oppose one another, together they mean that managers and executives would like a more tailored conflict resolution training program.

53 per cent of the interviewees agree that more situational training is needed in the company, meaning that the material taught should be tailored to a manager's specific level and possibly to their department. At the current time, training is very general. Every class includes managers and executives from a wide range of departments. However, not all managers deal with every department, and therefore not all managers should be required to take sessions that do not concern them.

On the other hand, 40 per cent of the interviewees believe a cross-functional approach is better. Because many managers deal with cross-department issues, they require a little extra help to understand the functional relationships in the company. This training is especially important for those managers who are new to STEMCELL and unaware of the company's interaction patterns.

Perhaps the most interesting finding is that 66 per cent of the interviewees agree that conflict resolution needs to be taught as a topic separate from other training programs. Although STEMCELL is a biotech company and therefore in the business of scientists helping scientists,

managers and executives are nevertheless interested in taking a specific conflict resolution course because they believed it is essential to their management skills.

Additionally, just 13 per cent of interviewees want selective attendance, and a further 13 per cent want special training only for the executive team.

In conclusion, it is evident from these codes and sub-codes that the interviewees are indeed interested in changing the current training program to better emphasize conflict resolution.

6.0 Recommendations

The following recommendations draw on both the results of the data analysis and the time and cost involved in implementing changes. During the interviews, participants were eager to stress that while their training was informative, it was not sufficient and repetitive enough to ensure the material became habitual. Therefore, the following recommendations are designed to ensure that managers are exposed to conflict resolution methods on a regular basis and in ways that will help them to retain the information better. The recommendations are divided into two sections, short-term and long-term changes, and the cost associated with changes. While both short- and long-term changes require the company to invest a certain amount of time and money, the cost of not making any changes at all will be much higher over the long-term.

6.1 Re-attending Conflict Resolution Training

The first recommendation is that the company allow managers who both have and have not attended either the supervisory training or the manager of managers training programs to review the training material. Those who have attended the program within the last three years can be removed from the list of managers who need training in conflict resolution, while those who had training prior to 2013 can be asked to re-attend the training. The latter can join newly promoted managers and audit the conflict resolution training again.

The purpose of this step is twofold. First, the research shows that managers who went through their training more than three years ago no longer remember what was taught. Furthermore these managers have been with STEMCELL for more than three years and have only gone through one class on conflict resolution. Few were able to recall any details from their training other than that they received it from an external instructor and there was discussion about conflict. They could not remember what was taught in detail, even the conflict resolution techniques that the interview questions covered. Therefore, a refresher course may help them to remember the material whenever they need to use it.

The second purpose of asking managers to attend the training again is that the material has changed. Over time, the program has evolved to cover more information both on conflict resolution and management skills to assist managers with their day-to-day needs. If STEMCELL continues to grow at its current rate, more and more managers will need to deal with their direct reports on a growing number of topics, issues, and business decisions. Therefore, refreshing their conflict resolution skills will ensure that they are able to effectively manage their teams.

6.2 Reference or CRM Cheat Sheet

The interviews show that managers who face conflict on a less frequent basis often forget their training, compared to managers who have to deal with conflicts more regularly. Therefore, the second recommendation is for a reference or “cheat” sheet for managers.

The purpose of this sheet is simple as it gives managers easy access to materials that they may need at any time. As the data show, disputes tend to arise on a daily basis and many times managers are faced with situations that they are unprepared for. While the HR department is always available to assist with any difficult conversation and provide support to both the employee and the manager, a cheat sheet would provide assistance if/when managers face small issues that do not require additional assistance. This sheet will review some of the basic steps that managers can follow in their meetings to ensure -that their employees feel heard and fairly dealt with.

The sheet will cover several issues such as options on what an employee can do when faced with a conflict, questions that a manager can ask in one-on-one meetings to assess the situation, who should be involved in the meetings, whether an HR presence is necessary, and how to address the concerns of the parties involved in a calm and proactive way. The sheet should be placed in an accessible location, most likely on Stemweb (the company’s intranet), and should be part of managers’ forms so that all managers have access to it.

6.3 Conflict Resolution Course

At the current time, conflict resolution is part of the larger training program that educates managers on how to perform their new responsibilities. However, the interviews reveal that there are several issues with the current structure, ranging from a lack of sufficient case studies and not enough department-specific topics, to not enough emphasis on conflict resolution training within the larger program. Therefore, this section suggests that conflict resolution be offered as a course separate from other training programs.

The interviewees suggest they would like to have a whole course dedicated entirely to conflict resolution. A re-designed management training program would remove conflict resolution from the larger course and make it independent. Managers will attend this training program early in their new roles, along with any other training programs that are available to them. The course could still be taught by an external person, possibly from the same institution that does the current training program, Kwela.

The second issue ties into the first in that the current course is not in-depth enough and does not provide enough case studies. Having attended the managers of managers training program on conflict resolution, the researcher has witnessed that the course is not long enough to address

some of the more serious questions that attendees have. The current course gives a very brief overview of some of the techniques that managers can use to address conflicts, and gives them a brief opportunity to practice what they have learned with their peers. In an independent course, managers would get a much more comprehensive look at how to address disputes before they become conflicts, how to use active listening correctly, and when interest-based negotiation is best used. More importantly, participants would have the chance to examine real case studies and practice scenarios with their classmates.

The third issue that an independent training course would address is managers and executives receiving training at the same time. As the data analysis shows, managers and executives deal with different issues in their respective roles, and would prefer to receive training separately. In many cases where executives and their direct reports (who are managers) attend the same courses, both groups find speaking about the issues they face uncomfortable. In short, attending and participating in the training program becomes a test of their ability to deal with conflict rather than a learning experience.

Finally, the current training program brings together employees from different departments, which causes an issue when managers wish to discuss department-specific issues. As explained in the methodology, STEMCELL has many different departments that work together to ensure that work is completed and customers' needs are met. Therefore, different departments deal with different issues that lead to conflict. For instance, Manufacturing is a team-orientated department in which all employees are divided into groups to carry out tasks. Employees need to be in constant communication and work together while dealing with a heavy work volume. Therefore, managers in Manufacturing will need a different kind of assistance than managers in IT and Sales would need. With specific conflict resolution courses managers from similar or the same departments can attend classes together rather than have to be grouped into one large class.

6.4 Cost and Benefits of a New Course

As the previous paragraphs show, the benefits of an independent, stand-alone course on conflict resolution are numerous. First, managers have the opportunity to engage with their instructor for a longer period of time to cover issues that concern them. Second, managers can study more cases covering a wider range of issues, rather than focus on just the high level material that is currently covered. Third, employees can be grouped together to ensure that the material covered is tailored to their specific needs. Senior managers can meet at one time and executives at another to ensure each group covers the issues important to it. Fourth, an independent conflict resolution course will ensure that managers and executives are fully trained whenever they face any kind of dispute or conflict.

On the other hand, there are several disadvantages to an independent conflict resolution program. One is cost. Creating such a course would require either an external organization (i.e. Kwela) or an internal employee to create, instruct, and administer it. Thus, an independent course would require extra monetary resources. Second, an extra course demands that managers be away from their duties and responsibilities. Currently, newly hired/promoted managers are expected to assume their new duties within a few days and need to be ready to begin their new positions right away. Thus, they will need to balance their new duties with any training they have to attend over several months. However, as conflict resolution is not a top priority for new managers, adding a new course to the current program may not be beneficial.

6.5 External Consultant for Conflict Resolution

Over the course of the interviews, several of the senior managers and executives suggested they would like a neutral third party whom they could approach when they face a conflict. Therefore, the fourth and final recommendation of the current research is that STEMCELL contract an external person, either a consultant or an employee, to administer the conflict resolution training program. This person would be an expert in dealing with conflict in the workplace. He/she would develop the training program and keep track of managers' attendance, and would assist in answering questions from managers and executives, sit in on negotiations between employees, and advise and coach employees in order to help deal with any disputes and conflicts that may arise. He/she would be seen as neutral and therefore able to step into any conflict at any time to provide assistance. This individual would need to be very experienced in such a role so as to be able to provide executives and managers with the knowledge and expertise they require in a conflict situation.

While such an individual would be ideal for any company, the option is also the most expensive of all the recommendations here. STEMCELL would either have to hire an individual on a full-time basis to work in the company, or contract with a consultant from an external organization that offers these services. Both of these options would involve large sums of money spent on recruitment and interviewing potential candidates. Therefore, this is not an option that the researcher feels would benefit the company or its current needs.

6.6 Researcher's Recommendations

Rather, in this final section, the researcher recommends two courses of action that would most benefit the company. First, implementing a cheat sheet to assist managers and executives would perhaps be the fastest and most cost effective way STEMCELL could change its conflict resolution training program for the better. It would offer employees unrestricted access to help any time they need it. It would also ensure that managers are better prepared to deal with conflict, and no longer need to consult their training binder to access information.

A cheat sheet would be easy to create and include information on how managers should approach conversations, how they should manage emotions in a conflict, and what resources are available to them. More importantly, the company would not need to contract with an external organization to create this cheat sheet as the information that would be included is already in the training binders given to employees.

Second, the researcher recommends that those managers who attended conflict resolution training prior to 2013 refresh their training by auditing the current conflict resolution material. As section 10.1 shows, many managers would benefit from the chance to do so. Some managers and executives do not recall what they learned the material, so this revision will be most beneficial to them. Furthermore, having managers re-attend conflict resolution training would be virtually cost of free, as they would be auditing a course that is already offered to new managers.

Further analysis of alternative conflict resolution training methods options should be considered by the client in the context of deeper company needs.

7.0 Conclusion

In July 2015 the researcher began this project as a way of understanding how disputes and conflicts are dealt with at STEMCELL Technologies Inc. STEMCELL Technologies is a multinational company with an aim to help further the researcher on stemcells for cancer research. The company employs over 750 employees across eleven countries. The company researches, manufactures and sells its products around the world. Each department is dedicated to ensuring STEMCELL's products are utilized in every research lab around the world. Amongst other goals, the company also values continually educating its managers to better carry out their duties and responsibilities. Hence the training and development department works hard to ensure that managers are adequately trained for all issues they face including disputes and conflicts.

The researcher was the Human Resources Administrator and as a result of her interactions with other members of the HR department she began looking into whether managers and executives felt that they were adequately trained to face and deal with conflict. Despite the researcher's interest in how conflicts are dealt with and the reference to conflict resolution methods, this project mainly focuses on disputes as the company does not have any active conflicts.

In order to answer the research question this project has provided the client with an outline of the current conflict resolution methods and the training program, completed an extensive literature review, and interviewed twelve managers and three executives to make some recommendations for the improvement of the current program.

The researcher began with the current conflict resolution methods. While each group has a different level of training according to their specific responsibilities, the current CRM is a combination of techniques that are taught to all supervisors, managers and executives. At the current time once an employee is promoted to a managerial position they must attend several hours of training in order to take on their new responsibilities. As this research shows, the current conflict resolution program is taught within another, larger program designed to train managers to take on their new roles and responsibilities. Managers are taught a variety of techniques to listen, understand and create suitable resolutions to disputes and conflicts. They are also taught how to use interest based negotiations and the Thomas-Killman model of conflict resolution. These two techniques along with leadership skills form the core of the CRM.

The interview questions were then designed to understand whether interviewees understood the material, found the classes helpful, whether they utilized the tools they were taught and finally any recommendations that they had for the future of the program. Managers and executives were chosen for interviews as they are the main users of the CRM. During their time at STEMCELL they are expected to know and use the methods taught during their initial training. Thus they were the best candidates for this project.

The method that was utilized to analyze the interviews was emergent coding. Codes that were significant to the purpose of the project were found and categorized under headings that best described their purpose. These categories were later combined under four themes, Company Culture, Approaches to Conflict Resolution, Support, and finally Opportunities for Change. The categories were also used to create a sub-conceptual framework that explained how the CRM was created, used, and changed to reflect the values of STEMCELL.

Another important function of the interviews was to gather information on the kinds of recommendations that managers and executives had for the CRM and its training program. They were given the opportunity to express their concerns and how they believed STEMCELL could change to accommodate them. Their suggestions and comments were also taken into account when the researcher provided the client with the final list of recommendations.

In addition to researching the CRM and conducting interviews the researcher also conducted an extensive literature review to illustrate the importance of conflict resolution methods and models in the work place. The researcher used the University of Victoria's library online data base to find academic articles that focused on different conflicts, cultural fluency in conflict resolution and how different countries deal with conflict in the workplace. The purpose of the literature review was to show the client the importance of having and maintaining its CRM and training program.

Finally the project ends with recommendations that are categorized according to the resources that their implementation would require. The researcher combined the suggestions of the interviewees along with her own suggestions for the program to create four recommendations. The client can choose to create a cheat sheet for employees to use, to provide more frequent training so that new managers can attend classes right away and more experienced managers can revise their knowledge on the CRM. Perhaps the most substantial recommendation is the creation of a position of in house conflict resolution specialist. The details are outlined and the researcher provides the strengths and limitations of each recommendation. Using this information the client can make the right decision for STEMCELL's future.

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