

Conflict Management Scenario

Majd, Director Corporate Services, is responsible for providing support and secretariat functions to the various operational areas within the business line. Due to the corporate nature of the work, Majd often relies on the collaboration and cooperation of colleagues make projects happen. Majd does not have functional or line authority over colleagues which makes it challenging to get the information needed for the projects.

Majd has a good working relationship with all of the executive colleagues in the team, except for one, Alexis. Majd is frustrated with Alexis' lack of collaboration. It is always a major headache for Majd to try to get information from Alexis which in turn results in missed deadlines for Majd. Majd's requests to Alexis for a representative to be on a working group, or for data from budget documents usually goes unanswered. Majd sends Alexis reminder and calls but nothing seems to work. Majd often thought that the reason Alexis did not respond was because the requests were not clear enough. Majd rewrote them and resent them in hopes that a response would come. No change.

Majd even tried embarrassing Alexis into cooperating by raising the issue at a management meeting in front of all of the colleagues and the Director General. The Director General reminded Alexis of the important role Majd plays and that all Directors have an obligation to cooperate with Majd and provide the requested information, in a timely manner.

Majd raised the ongoing problem with the Director General at a bilateral meeting to which the Director General committed to have a meeting with Alexis and Majd. The Director General addressed the issue and emphasized that the work Majd does reflects on the whole organization and its reputation in the department. Alexis was in full agreement with what was said and committed to cooperating with Majd.

A month after the meeting with the Director General, Majd had reached a boiling point when a project that should have taken six months was well into one year mostly because of Alexis' lack of collaboration. Majd was convinced that Alexis did not want to take direction from a colleague and really did not understand nor respect the role of Director, Corporate Services.

One day, Majd contacted Alexis because the deadline for a corporate project was reaching a critical point and Alexis still had not provided the necessary information. Alexis started to say, "Yeah, I know you asked for that information, but you know, this project you are working on is not going to help my shop and I have a lot of more important work to get done. Besides, you and your managers are not really cooperating with mine." At this point, Majd lost all patience and in a raised tone said, "No, we are not getting anywhere because you are not cooperating. You are the problem. Period." Majd hung up abruptly on Alexis.

What caused the conflict?

What do you think should happen next?