

CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

Chapter -5

Handling of grievances:

Every employer hopes that their employees are always happy and satisfied with their work and working conditions. But in spite of your best intentions and preparation, employees may have an occasional concern or complaint that they would like to share with you and the company. As a business owner and manager, it is your job to make sure that everyone can communicate their concerns in a productive manner.

Definition:

It may seem like an easy question to answer, but there is no single cut-and-dried definition. A complaint or grievance can be a real or imagined feeling of dissatisfaction that an employee experiences in the course of their job. These complaints or grievances must then be communicated to management or the organization at large.

The best ways to address employee complaints and manage their outcomes are as follows:

1. Setting Up a System

The first thing to do is to create a system for employees to lodge complaints or grievances so they can be addressed. Here are some of the key things you should do when setting up this process:

- **Include your policy in your company's Employee Handbook.** Once your policy is established, it should become part of the handbook so employees can easily reference it. If your company makes employees sign an acknowledgement form, this is also a great way to make sure they read it.
- **Assign one person or department to handle the receipt of complaints.** Often, this is the Human Resources department or someone within it. Discretion is key, as employees will want to be assured (and should legitimately expect) that they are submitting their grievances in confidence.
- **Provide a central location to place complaints.** If your method for receiving complaints is a box or other receptacle, make sure it is in a central location that is easily accessible to all employees.
- **Devise a confidential way for employees to submit complaints.** Employees may hesitate to truly speak their minds if they fear retaliation for their concerns. Thus, encouraging employees to email their complaints is problematic, as it is not confidential. In some cases, devising a simple online form or survey that doesn't collect identifying information might be the best way to gather employee complaints. Or, as

antiquated as it may seem, having a hand-written system that uses complaint forms might be your best option to ensure confidentiality.

- **Establish a schedule to address concerns and complaints.** One of the most important aspects of dealing with employee complaints is addressing them efficiently and reliably. Make sure you have a timeframe in place for when and how you will address complaints, and stick to it. Employees will expect a certain level of responsiveness from you and the organization.

2. Categorizing Complaints

Once you've established the best system to receive complaints and have determined how often you will address them, you'll need to set about categorizing them and determining which issues should be prioritized. There are three key categories you should be able to place each complaint into:

- **Working Conditions and Safety.** These include any complaint or grievance that directly addresses the employees' work environment. These can include everything from unsafe conditions to indifferent managers.
- **Unreasonable Management Policies.** If employees feel that a certain policy is unfair or unreasonable, they will want their concerns addressed. Such policies can include those relating to overtime regulation compliance or a gap in production standards.
- **Violations of Rules and Policies.** These can relate to any organizational rules that employees feel are being violated by other workers and/or middle or senior management.

3. Addressing Complaints

Once you've categorized your complaints, you'll want to order them based on significance. Any unsafe working conditions or other safety concerns should be addressed immediately, as should violations of rules and policies. When preparing to address a complaint, follow these simple steps:

- **Acknowledge:** Make it known that the complaint has been received and that it will be addressed by the organization. You do not need to immediately provide a solution, but you want employees to know they are being heard.
- **Investigate:** Gather information regarding the grievance. If the employee listed specific incidences or situations, inquire about those and gather any relevant data.
- **Decide:** Once you've gathered all the information and fully examined the situation, formulate and decide on a solution. You may want to get your idea with other senior members of your organization or even with your employees.
- **Act:** After a decision has been made, act swiftly. Old employee complaints that linger unresolved can negatively impact morale and

production. The sooner you can resolve issues, the better off your company will be.

4. Reviewing Outcomes

After you've acted and implemented a solution, it's a good idea to review the situation that initially generated the complaint after some time has passed. That way, you can take an objective perspective and make sure your solution solved what it was supposed to solve. If the initial complaint wasn't confidential, it might be a good idea to check in with the employee who lodged the complaint to see if he or she is satisfied with the outcome. And most importantly, don't be afraid to make adjustments if necessary.

A legitimate complaint can signal not only discontent in the workplace, but it can also help to shine the light on serious infractions or even criminal conduct at your office. Psychologically, listening to your employees and addressing their concerns can be great for your company culture. It also shows them respect and fosters a sense of pride and accountability in their work. These benefits easily justify the implementation of a useful and effective system for addressing employee complaints.

Labour welfare

Labour welfare means the voluntary efforts made by the employer to provide better conditions of employment in their own industries. Its main object is to secure an improved standard of living for the workers, which effects on the worker's psychology and results in an increase in their productive efficiencies.

Labour welfare improves physical, mental and moral conditions of worker. Labour welfare includes housing, medical, educational, rest rooms, recreation, canteen, games and sports club facilities, adequate wages, reasonable working hours, insurance etc.

According to **Industrial Labour Organisation (ILO)**, "Labour welfare may be understood and including such services facilities and amenities which may be established in vicinity of undertaking to perform their work in healthy and congenial environment and to avail of facilities which improve their health and bring high morale."

Importance of Labour Welfare:

1. It improves the moral and mental conditions of the workers by providing facilities like games, cultural activities and recreation etc.
2. By providing facilities workers have more confidence in their employer, which leads to improve industrial peace.
3. When workers are promoted in a systematic way and they are heard properly then they feel and realize their duties towards enterprise.
4. By providing all these facilities, workers feel happy and become enthusiastic. Thus worker starts taking much interest in his work, which leads to greater efficiency.

5. Noise and vibrations caused by the machines, fumes and dust, hotness, too much wetness and lack of air ventilation are the main factors which affect the health of the worker seriously. Therefore periodical check-up and medical-facility help to maintain the health of the workers and save the worker from harmful effects. Thus when worker remains healthy, he will naturally work hard.

The scope and listed the following facilities covered in the scope are:

Scope # 1. Working Environment:

Conducive working environment helps to improve efficiency of workers and includes proper lighting, temperature, ventilation, safety, sanitation, transportation, cleanliness, seating arrangement and canteen facilities. Workplace sanitation and cleanliness is very important for making workplace helpful for workers to work.

Following activities are important to make it conducive for working:

- a) Proper ventilation using cross windows and doors, adequate lighting, controlled temperature, regular cleanliness, seating/standing arrangements for working, etc.
- b) Proper safety measures for lift, elevators, ropes, cranes, electric and dangerous operating.
- c) Sufficient urinals separate for gents and ladies, lavatories and bathing facilities with regular proper cleaning.
- d) Proper gardening with watering facilities and cleanliness of surrounding regularly.
- e) Pure drinking water facilities with purification and cooling facilities.
- f) Well maintained canteen services with good quality of food at nominal rates.

Scope # 2. Health Facilities:

Health is wealth. To maintain good health of the workers, the required health facilities should be maintained up to required standard.

It includes the following facilities:

- a. Health centre for regular check-up for workers and their families should be provided within factory or nearest place.

- b. Availability of ambulance service at telephone call itself should be provided in case of emergency.
- c. Free and regular medical check-up of workers and counselling regarding health and diet to workers.
- d. Availability medical staff and of doctors inside the factory for emergency.
- e. Welfare facilities for women and children such as – crèches, checking for pregnancy, etc.
- f. Suitable sports and recreation facilities in the premises.
- g. Schooling, vocational training facilities and library services

Scope # 3. General Welfare Facilities:

- a. Housing facilities for workers near to the work facilities.
- b. Cleaning and sanitation facilities in housing facilities.
- c. To and fro transportation facilities for workers and their children going for schools
- d. Sports facilities of indoor and outdoor in the residential location.
- e. Family planning and family care counselling.
- f. Entertainment facilities in the campus for workers and their families.
- g. Transport facilities for tours, picnics and festival celebration.

Scope # 4. Economic Welfare Facilities:

- a. Subsidized consumer goods including grains, vegetables, milk, oil and other daily requirements through cooperative stores.
- b. Banking, postal, services and credit facilities through credit society.
- c. Health insurance schemes by employers free of costs.
- d. Regular basis bonus and profit-sharing schemes.

6.0 Construction Labour and Labour Management

Essential steps for optimum labour output

There are different way to improve the labour productivity.

1.Examine the Operations

Observing is the first step to improve productivity in the workplace. After observing and noting the hang-ups leading to inefficiencies, you implement actions that can lead to a higher labour productivity.

A visual account of the labour force is a good starting point to examine body language and to locate obvious slowdowns in the labour process. Note everything for later when you design and implement new processes.

2.Gather Employee Feedback

Next, send out a survey to the employees. Gathering feedback from the ground is critical and the labour force is intimate with their daily job functions. Ask for feedback specific to the job roles and areas where they see recurring productivity issues. A simple communication gap between two departments can hang-up productions and solving that will ultimately stand to increase your efficiency and bottom line.

3.Examine Available Data

Lastly, examine any available data to build a baseline metric for production. In the manufacturing industry for example, you can attribute an average number of units produced daily, weekly or monthly. This makes it possible to implement changes while gauging their actual impact on production.

4.Build Better Processes

After determining the primary problems with labour and production, it's time to improve existing processes or design new operational policies. This can mean something simple like investing in new equipment or something more complex like a restructuring of the entire process from an operational standpoint.

In many established business models, updating technology and re-configuring the business model is sometimes needed to survive and compete. For example, automation is changing the business landscape and is actually replacing labour in some job roles specific to manufacturing and processes.

When a business loses ground on production because the competitors are using automation, changing the business structure is often the only option to remain relevant and profitable.

5. Employee Training Programs

Changing the processes is only effective when the actual labour force is trained to work with the new systems. Thorough and clear training is an absolute necessity for improving labour and productivity.

As you build processes, define them on paper and create a training manual to reflect the changing labour roles. Use mentors, text documents and video as a reference point for each role. Working through specific training days while encouraging questions will help employees become productive in their roles.

If your existing processes are adequate but the labour force is failing on productivity, this also calls for thorough training or re-training to ensure workers are performing their job functions to the best of their abilities.

6. Motivate the Labour Force

Productivity is not always hindered by processes. A simple lack of motivation will slow labour and productivity suffers as a result. Motivating employees however is not always a simple task. Providing performance incentives is a major motivator. Job security and benefits will also gain employee loyalty and help drive production.

The work environment itself also plays a role in motivation. Adding music a lively break-room and a comfortable work-space creates a fun and welcoming environment. Employee health programs are also effective because a healthy workforce is simply more productive and naturally motivated. They use fewer sick days and maintain the ability to perform labour tasks across the year with fewer injuries or issues.

Labour characteristics

Some of the most important characteristics of labour are as follows:

1. Labour means Human Exertion:

Labour means only human exertion and not the exertion of the cattle or machine. Labour always involves the mental or physical pain and sacrifice. For example, when a man works and is busy for a few hours, he becomes tired and so he needs rest.

2. A Man's Labour is part of himself:

This means the labour cannot be separated from the labourer. When the labourer sells his labour he has to deliver it in person and he cannot sell his labour like land and capital.

3. Labour Power and Labour Co-exist:

The labour power exists as long as the labourer exists. It becomes invalid or disappears when the labourer retires or expires.

4. Labour is Perishable:

The labour power withheld once is lost forever and cannot be stored. It cannot be regained. A day without work is gone irrevocably. As there is no stock, the labourer has to sell his labour immediately irrespective of the price. Labour is a flow of service of labourer.

5. Labour has low Bargaining Power:

Usually labourers have no reserve and are compelled to accept low wages. But the development of the trade unions has considerably improved the bargaining power of the labour in recent times.

6. Labour has Intelligence and Judgment:

Labour is something more than mere toil and exertion, for labourers being human beings, have intelligence and judgement and further the toil and exertion can be more easily undertaken by machines rather than by men. Thus the distinguishing mark of labour as factor of production is the exercise of intelligence and judgment.

7. Labour restricted by Social Factors:

The labour as human beings have much attachment to the language, custom, religion, place, culture etc., and consequently they do not move out so easily.

8. Both a Means and an End:

A labourer is both a means of production and an end of it.

9. Efficiency of the Labour can be Increased:

The efficiency of labour can be raised through training, education and experiences.

10. Labour have Decision Power:

A labour can make rational decisions regarding his job. Capital and land do not possess greater decision making capacity.

Labour incentives

Definition:

1. According to Milton L. Rock, incentives are defined as ‘variable rewards granted according to variations in the achievement of specific results’.

2. According to K. N. Subramaniam, ‘incentive is system of payment emphasizing the point of motivation, that is, the imparting of incentives to workers for higher production and productivity’.

3. The National Commission of Labour defines incentive as follows: ‘wage incentives are extra financial motivation. They are designed to stimulate human

effort by rewarding the person, over and above the time rated remuneration, for improvements in the present and targeted results’.

Types of incentives:

Incentives can be classified into three categories:

1. Financial incentives:

Some extra cash is offered for extra efficiency. For example, profit sharing plan and group incentive plans.

2. Non-financial incentives:

When rewards or prizes are provided by the organization to motivate the employees it is known as non-financial incentives.

3. Monetary and non-monetary incentives:

Many times, employees are rewarded with monetary and non-monetary incentives that include promotion, seniority, recognition for merits, or even designation as permanent employee.

Advantages of incentive Plan:

- a. Incentive plans motivate workers for higher efficiency and productivity.
- b. It can improve the work-flow and work methods.
- c. Incentive plans make employees hardworking and innovative.
- d. When employees are dedicated, supervision costs can be reduced.
- e. The National Commission on Labour says that under our conditions, wage incentives are the cheapest, quickest, and sure means of increasing productivity.
- f. Incentive plans help establish positive response in an organization.
- g. It helps workers improve their standard of living.
- h. The other benefits offered by incentive plans are reduced turnover, reduced absenteeism, and reduced lost time.

Disadvantages of Incentive Plan:

- a. Incentive plans can lead to disputes among workers, since some earn more than others.
- b. Hunger for money among the workers forces them to overwork, which may affect their health.
- c. Some workers may involve in malpractices in order to earn more money.
- d. For enhanced incentives, they may sacrifice quality.
- e. It also leads to corruption by falsifying the production records.
- f. Incentive plans can create tensions among different personnel.

Case studies related to labour disputes

Disputes in domestic and multinational companies in India are on a rise since 2008. It is not sure whether the labour unrest is here to stay or it is just a side

effect of the toppled economy. Citing a plethora of faults with employers, the labour community, represented by various organisations ranging from local trade unions to officers' associations continuously engaged themselves in strikes and protests. Indian economy which is about to lean heavily on service sector would get affected if the problem is not solved soon. While Jet Airways' pilots went on a strike for 5 days, there were millions of passengers who landed up in trouble. The results? Bad reputation for both – the company and the employees plus great monetary loss. While India's age old labour laws stand safeguarding the interests of the supposedly less powerful 'employee' community with a few amendments over the years, ironically, the labour unrest is growing in the country. Is it time to modify India's labour laws? Who is on the wrong side, employees or employers? The case study deals with the labour laws in India and its effect and influence in the modern day trade unions and businesses. Explaining the case of Jet Airways labour dispute in 2009, the case brings in the issues of increasing labour discontent and makes a case for why a major reform in labour legislations is required.

Pedagogical Objectives:

- To understand the need and importance of Indian labour laws and have an overview of all the laws related to Indian workers
- To discuss the causes of increase in labour disputes in India in general and that of Jet Airways in particular
- To discuss and debate on all the possible ways of and means to resolve the impasse between Jet Airways retrenched pilots and Jet Airways management and to address the standoff amicably

7. EQUIPMENT MANAGEMENT

Identification of different alternative equipment:

Planning in the construction industry, as is well known plays an important part in the successful outcome of a project. How a task is to be dealt with and with which tools, be they technical or management oriented, is part of the engineer's work load and it is his responsibility to assure that this planned work is carried out on time and within its constraints. Construction equipment is among these tools that have to be carefully chosen.

The traditional way to choose equipment was by its performance, in terms of maximum productivity at the lowest cost. Present pressures from governments and other institutional agencies as well as general conscience are forcing the construction industry to further adopt safety and environmental aspects in their normal way of functioning, and so every activity or process that a company carries out has to be rethought in order to achieve this integration of other parameters.

Methodology

Starting from the notion that construction equipment should be selected by its performance on site, the first stage in this research project was to choose the right method for measuring this performance. For each of the different types of equipment a specific method had to be selected. The construction equipment was divided in 6 groups:

- Earth movement equipment
- Material handling equipment
- Elevation and rising equipment
- Concrete equipment
- Auxiliary equipment
- Portable machines

And for each type the methodology used to analyze the different criteria was based in:

- Measuring the performance
- Measuring the minimal risk
- Measuring the minimal impact or environmental aspect.
- Calculating by the multi-criteria analysis method which of the options is the most suitable

Optimum performance

By Measuring the productivity

For each of the different types of equipment the productivity was measured by several ways, for example, in earth moving equipment, established methods were used, as the Caterpillar method for their equipment, and for other types of equipment productivity was measured on site under normal conditions of use.

By calculating Hourly costs

The hourly cost for each of the equipments, as in the productivity was obtained either by established methods or by doing a market research on the price for renting that equipment for a established period of time and dividing it by the actual time of usage.

Factor the influence the performance of construction equipment

There are several factors that can affect or influence the performance of construction equipment and that can be gathered in the following groups:

1. Routine delays: All those factors that are derived from the inevitable equipment use, no machine can function at maximum power continuously. Maintenance falls into these kind of delays.
2. Restrictions to optimal mechanic operation: These originate a reduction effect on production, due exclusively to limitations to its optimal operation. Slopes, angles, heights, cutting depths, etc, are all restrictions of this kind.
3. Site conditions: Once on site different kinds of factors can affect the performance of given equipment, some are:
 - a. Physical conditions: topography and geology of the site, geotechnical characteristics of the ground or rocks, etc.

- b. Climate: temperature, rain, snow, etc.
 - c. Localization of the site: how near is the site from urban centers or industrial sites for provisioning.
 - d. Adaptation conditions: degree of adaptation of the work team can sometimes hinder the performance of the equipment.
4. Direction and Supervision: Organization of the workflow, planning and other management decisions can pose obstacles for maximum performance. All of these factors were quantified in order to obtain a real production of the equipment.

8.0 QUALITY CONTROL

Quality Standards- during construction

Quality control (QC) is the part of quality management that ensures products and service comply with requirements. It is a work method that facilitates the of the quality characteristics of a unit, compares them with the established standards, and analyses the differences between the results obtained and the desired results in order to make decisions which will correct any differences.

Quality control and safety represent increasingly important concerns for project managers. Defects or failures in constructed facilities can result in very large costs. Even with minor defects, re-construction may be required and facility operations impaired. Increased costs and delays are the result. In the worst case, failures may cause personal injuries or fatalities. Accidents during the construction process can similarly result in personal injuries and large costs. Indirect costs of insurance, inspection and regulation are increasing rapidly due to these increased direct costs. Good project managers try to ensure that the job is done right the first time and that no major accidents occur on the project.

As with cost control, the most important decisions regarding the quality of a completed facility are made during the design and planning stages rather than during construction. It is during these preliminary stages that component configurations, material specifications and functional performance are decided. Quality control during construction consists largely of insuring *conformance* to this original design and planning decisions.

The following quality standards measures are taken during construction:

1. Project personnel

Every project should have a designated quality manager – the one person in charge of the project quality. Your client needs to know who this person is and what his or her quality responsibilities are. Therefore, include this information

in your quality plan along with the person's qualifications for holding this position.

While the quality manager has overall responsibility for the quality of your project, your project superintendents are primarily responsible for the day-to-day field operations. Your project quality control plan should indicate what responsibilities your project superintendent(s) has and what his or her responsibilities are.

2. Quality Communications

A quality plan should include a quality communications plan that defines the touch points that you expect to have with your client.

3. Quality assurance surveillance

A big concern of many clients is what management will be doing to monitor overall project quality and how they will make sure that the project quality controls are running the way that they should.

With this in mind, your client will expect some form of quality assurance surveillance. Will you be monitoring project quality on a weekly or monthly basis? What will you be reviewing? Lay it all out in your project quality plan so that your client has a good picture of how you will make sure that the project stays on track.

4. Subcontractors and suppliers.

Outside organizations play a huge role in supplying materials and carrying out work on construction projects. Tell your client what key suppliers and subcontractors you'll be using on their project.

5. Project quality specifications

It goes without saying that you will comply with your customer's specifications. However, in many cases, the customer specifications do not tell you which building codes or industry standards apply to your scope of work. List them so there's no confusion as to which versions of what standards apply to your project.

6. Inspections and tests.

A normal part of any construction process is to inspect phases of work (like steel erection) and to perform tests that verify material quality (like concrete strength) or a system function (determined by plumbing pressure test).

7. Control of non-conformances

Everyone understands that from time to time things go wrong in construction. Your quality plan should discuss how you will handle these situations. Make it clear how you will control non-conformances so that you protect the overall quality of the project.

Be sure you define controlling non-conformances in such a way that it does not include routine corrections and punch items, or you may end up creating a lot of extra paperwork for yourself.

Typical non-conformance procedures include:

- Preventing cover-ups
- Corrective actions
- Records you will keep of the incident

8. Project completion inspections.

All of the things that we have discussed so far have had to do with individual tasks and phases of work. You'll also want to discuss how you will conduct inspections and punch out near the end of the project to assure that all of the contracted work is completed to specifications.