Dilbert Versus Godzilla

How to prepare yourself to deal with monsters in the workplace...
Warning Signs

- Threatening posture (in-your-face)
- Red face
- Lowered voice
- Talking through clenched teeth
- Condescending tone
- Balled fists
- Slamming doors or drawers
Underlying Causes of Conflict

- Hurt
- Shame
- Frustration
- Embarrassment
- Fear
10 Conflict Fears

People avoid conflict because they fear....

1. Harm
2. Rejection
3. Loss of relationship
4. Anger
5. Failing
6. Being seen as selfish
7. Saying the wrong thing
8. Hurting someone else
9. Getting what you want: success
10. Intimacy
7 Conflict Choices

1. Avoidance
2. Giving in
3. Bully
4. Compromise
5. Honor
6. Passive-aggressive
7. Problem solve together
Breakout

- Organize into small groups of 4-5. Take about 3 minutes each to highlight your most horrific work-related conflict and how you reacted.
- Decide among yourselves whose story is the most awesome and be ready to share with the room.
Horror Stories Revisited

- Let’s hear from each table.
- Which is the most awesome story?
- How could the situation have been resolved differently?
Recognizing Godzilla

- What happened or was the catalyst?
- What were you saying to yourself that upset you?
- How did you feel about the event?
- What did you do in response to the event?
- Is your mental response to the event helping or hurting?
Techniques for Coping

- Face the conflict
- Other’s perceptions are more important than our reality
- Think your way through doing and not doing something
- Circumnavigate facing the conflict directly
- Build on small successes
- Be courageous and tenacious
5 P’s of Group Escalation

1. Prevent further escalation by listening first
2. Provide an organized and timed forum for discussion
3. Present possible options for resolution
4. Project confidence in the group’s ability to reach a resolution
5. Produce by promising and delivering
“Vent If You’re Bent...”

According to Michael Staver, practice the following technique to defuse anger...

1. Offer to listen to a 2-minute rant.
2. If needed, offer another minute.
3. Don’t interrupt the person.
4. Don’t tell them to calm down.
5. Be empathetic...”You might be right.”
6. Paraphrase what they’re saying.
7. Don’t take responsibility for something that isn’t yours.
Playing Referee

- Ask permission before getting involved or you may become the focus of the anger
- Stay detached and remain neutral
- Focus on issues, not just the signs
- Don’t assume you know the answer
- Formulate an action plan
Conflict Management

If you’re Godzilla:

- Acknowledge responsibility
- Seek help and change your behavior
- Avoid excuse making
- Forgive yourself for being human
Conflict Management

If they’re Godzilla:
- Report all threats
- Continue normal work patterns
- Allow discussion

- Look and listen for escalations
- Maintain confidence and assertiveness
Conclusion

Responding to conflict effectively can bring peace and promote better relationships.
References

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- Lifescripts: What to Say to Get What You Want in Life's Toughest Situations by Stephen M. Pollan and Mark Levine
- 21 Ways to Defuse Anger and Calm People Down by Michael Staver
- A Coward’s Guide to Conflict by Tim Ursiny, Ph.D.
- Problem Solving and Decision Making – Handling Conflict and Dealing with Change by Thomas J. Winninger, CPAE
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