



Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation

Workplace Dynamics (Forces at Work) Kameli Batiweti

FIA's Technical Workshop | 19th of March 2021

What Is Workplace Dynamics?

- We spend a significant part of our day, week, month, year, and life, working for a salary to get by in life.
- This means that Workplace Dynamics or Forces at Work is:
 - how Workers work together as Colleagues,
 - how work responsibilities are delegated, and
 - how engaged workers are to the company's mission & vision, can have significant impacts on people's physical and mental well-being.
- Each person's interpretation of an ideal work environment may be different from what others see it as.



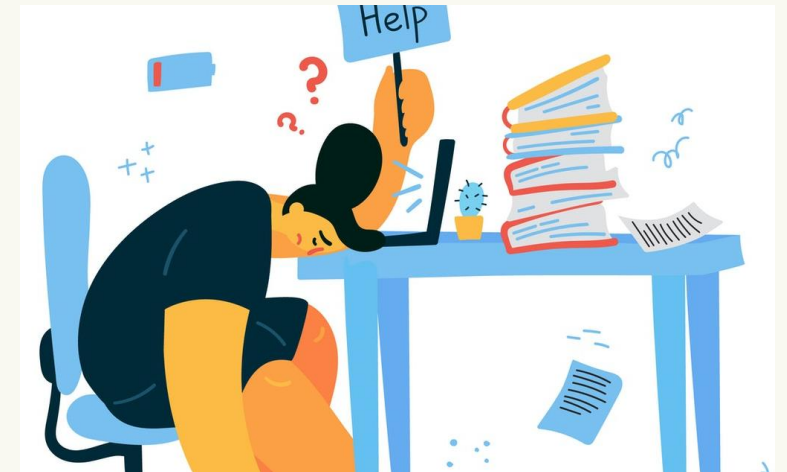
What Is Workplace Dynamics? (continued)

- Generally, a healthy workplace is one in which Employees are respectful of each other's:
 - personalities,
 - diverse ideas, and
 - working styles;
- Work is supposed to be allocated fairly; and trust exists between Employees, particularly between Management and junior level Employees.



What Is Workplace Dynamics? (continued)

- It is not always possible for someone to secure work in a field that is:
 - meaningful to them,
 - employees who feel that they are doing work that is interesting, challenging, and rewarding are more likely to experience healthy workplace dynamics.
- If, on the other hand, poor workplace dynamics are not addressed, it can trigger:
 - burnout or
 - widespread employee dissatisfaction (engagement).



What Is Workplace Dynamics? (continued)

- It may also lead to high turnover, which often creates challenges both for employees who leave, for those who are left behind and for the Employer.
- Thus, working toward strong workplace dynamics is in the best interest of workers, their families, and the company's bottom line.
- If not addressed or called out, the workplace dynamics may result in a Toxic Workplace.



What Are the Signs of a Toxic Workplace?

- The term “**toxic workplace**” can be used to describe any workplace in which **negative dynamics** harm an employee’s:
 - well-being,
 - foster conflict between co-workers, or
 - there is slow productivity.



What Are the Signs of a Toxic Workplace? (continued)

- Possible signs of a toxic workplace include:
 - Verbal abuse, especially by Managers,
 - Insulting language is frequently used,
 - employees are belittled or threatened by superiors,
 - disagreement is not tolerated (my way or the highway), or
 - malicious rumours are spread,
 - Poor communication,
 - Priorities are disputed,
 - instructions are vague, or
 - employees do not feel comfortable communicating bad news to superiors for fear of reprisals.



What Are the Signs of a Toxic Workplace? (continued)

- Imbalanced workloads.
- Some employees have little to do, while others must work extra hours on their time off to keep up with their workload.
- This can breed resentment among co-workers and may lead to overburdened employees leaving a company.
- Overall, poor mood. It's unrealistic to expect everyone to be happy or motivated all the time.



What Are the Signs of a Toxic Workplace? (continued)

- But, if most employees are in negative moods, more often than not,
 - talking or laughing is rare, or
 - there is no supervision of employees,
 - it will likely have a long-term effect on **morale** and **well-being**.
- While the signs vary, some are:
 - anyone who feels drained at the end of the day,
 - people who dread going to work in the morning,
 - or who struggle to keep up with unrealistic expectations may be in a toxic workplace.

When our job has negatively affected our mental health, we will dread going to work.

How Do You Handle a Toxic Work Environment?

- Spending 40 hours a week (or more) in a **toxic workplace** can be
 - damaging to one's mental health,
 - Trigger anxiety in an individual or a group of individuals,
 - depression, or
 - Lead to someone being indifferent or deliberately challenging Management's decisions.
- If someone has determined that their workplace is toxic, they may decide that leaving the job is the best choice for their well-being.
 - Employees, most often change jobs because of their boss.



How Do You Handle a Toxic Work Environment?

(continued)

- However, for those who are unable to find another job (or unable to do so immediately), there are steps that can make a toxic workplace more bearable or more toxic.
- Employees should, first and foremost, prioritize their own well-being.
- This means getting enough sleep,
 - engaging in self-care behaviours, and/or
 - seeing a Counsellor to discuss feelings of anxiety or sadness.

Prioritizing your health today is an investment in your future.

SELF

How Do You Handle a Toxic Work Environment?

(continued)

- Next, it's best to communicate concerns about a toxic workplace to a supervisor or a trusted co-worker;
 - Together, it may be possible to take steps to reduce toxicity.
 - Reporting verbal abuse or outright harassment to HR will ideally allow for bad Employees to be held accountable.
 - The Crimes Bill of Fiji does not allow for bullying and harassment, classifying it as a crime.
 - When all else fails, deciding to embark on a journey of Work life Balance might help.
 - Individual Families will experience the wrath of a Mother, Father or a sibling who is in a toxic work environment



How to Correct the Toxic Environment?

- Ensure that there are Policies in place that directs Employees from NOT engaging in behaviors that are contrary to the Values of the Organisation.
- The Policy must state very clearly what the expected and accepted behaviors are, and what the UNACCEPTABLE behaviors are.
- The Policy must include the sanction(s) for non-compliance or non-adherence.
- The Policy must be rolled out to all Employees and the Employees are required to sign an Acknowledgement Form at the end of the Training.
- Since most often, this toxic environment is initiated or allowed to exacerbate by a Manager, the Organisation may include Staff Engagement as a Measure to determine payment of Incentives at the end of the Financial year.

Q&A



Vinaka Vakalevu