

## **Applying Nudge Thinking to Mediation Series**

### **Part 3: Changing conflict-negative culture**

by John Crawley

To finish my series on applying 'nudge' thinking to mediation and effective dispute resolution at work I want to focus on creating a more productive conflict culture in your workplaces. Create a measure to calculate the cost of conflict and ROI of mediation

In 'Nudge' Thaler and Sunstein mention how a 'reference point' can help people improve the way they make difficult decisions, and reduce the impact of 'social contagion' in which people just follow the popular choice, without really applying a critical eye to the situation. CMP Resolutions have devised a simple tool to measure the cost and scale of unresolved workplace conflict<sup>1</sup> which will give you a very powerful reference point to remove any complacency around your difficult conflict management decisions. It clearly shows the lost productivity caused by workplace conflict in your workplace, and can calculate the cost benefit of mediation and effective dispute resolution. This will generate tangible and local evidence to change resolutions decisions and culture.

Once you have the direction of travel towards effective dispute resolution why not set your people and your organisation targets. This would incentivise organizations and key stakeholders like HR, the Unions and managers to see, for example, mediation as 'proper work' properly rewarded. Measures of organisational health could include use of levels of complaints and use of mediation as an indicator.

#### **Positioning mediation awareness and knowledge in managerial competencies**

This is a nudge which has already been used successfully in some sectors when dispute resolution and conflict management skills and competencies are introduced to core competencies. As a minimum all managers need to know enough about mediation to talk any prospective party through the process and talk about its benefits. Ideally CMP also

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the Conflict Profile tool contact

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recommends mediation skills as essential for team leaders. At the top end, mediation skills are proving to be a huge asset to senior managers in changing times.

### **Identify a key resistant group and deliver a tough targeted message from careful chosen influencers.**

This involves mobilising people who may appeal to a particularly resistant group. The example in 'Nudge' is the 'Don't Mess with Texas' campaign which aimed to reduce littering and was targeted at young men and delivered by the popular Dallas Cowboys. Who delivers the message and how is critical.

### **Model mediation values and behaviours at senior level**

Reports on managing bullying at work have commented on the influence which behaviours from senior level staff have on what is perceived as acceptable – where the 'zero' in zero tolerance is set. A consistent message coming from the highest levels advocating mediation would have a powerful impact.

### **Reward excellence**

CMP Resolutions is looking to jointly sponsor awards for excellence in workplace dispute resolution. It maybe that excellence in nudging could be one category.

The White Paper – Nudging Mediation: Applying 'Nudge' thinking to increase the use of mediation and cut the cost of conflict in the workplace – is published at:

[http://cmpresolutions.co.uk/pdfs/CMP\\_Resolutions\\_Nudging\\_Mediation.pdf](http://cmpresolutions.co.uk/pdfs/CMP_Resolutions_Nudging_Mediation.pdf)



This article is Part 3 of 3 in this series

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CMP Resolutions work to Close, Manage and Prevent disputes at work through skills development, mediation and investigation services.

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