



Workplace mediation communication dispute case study

Workplace mediation between Sonia and Giles, who were part of the sales team at Hunters Ltd. They had worked alongside each other for around three years, although not the best of friends they got on most of the time. Each of their roles depending upon the others input, Giles always found that he was forever correcting Sonia's work, he had raised this with her before, which she did not take very seriously, he had also mentioned it to their manager who never really raised the issue with Sonia.

Due to the economic climate the sales figures were down considerably, both Sonia and Giles were alerted to this fact and were held accountable. Giles claimed he was swamped as he was having to do his own work as well as correcting Sonia's work, which took too much time which was leading to him getting behind with his own work.

Sonia took great offence to this and felt she was doing the best she could, after this meeting with their manager words took place between Sonia and Giles, the exchange of words was unpleasant, resulting in Giles calling Sonia incompetent and her telling him to get a life.

Communication between the two soon broke down, whereby they only spoke to one another if necessary, leading to the sales figures to decline even more. Their manager suggested mediation which was arranged within a week, as this dispute had been going on for 10 months and thus a quick resolution was required.

In private session Sonia told the mediator that she felt that Giles thought he was better than her, a perfectionist, he had more experience on certain issues and therefore he would have to correct her work with regards to certain aspects because she had no knowledge or training in those areas.

Giles felt that if Sonia paid more attention and worked harder she could grasp the knowledge she required, he had never been trained he learnt everything as he went along, and if he did, so could she, in fact he did not think he was better than her at all.

The mediator highlighted to both of them one another's issues and that we all work in different ways and have different levels of training needs. Sonia suggested that if Giles actually trained her up on various issues that could possibly prevent him from having to correct aspects of her work, Giles felt it was not his job to do this and he had too much on, however if their manager approved it, then he would. Both agreed that they needed to work alongside each other and be respectful to one another, and any future issues needed to be communicated to one another in an orderly manner. At first they

both had a few teething problems, however their manager reported 3 months after the mediation, they were working with each other rather than against and both of their figures had now improved.

Facts & figures

- **The mediation took 1 day compared to the 10 months this workplace dispute had already gone on.**
- **The mediation cost the employer £750.00 compared to the thousands they would have had to spend had they continued with an Employment Tribunal or Court action.**