

# Managing Complaints

How do you deal with team member complaints? Do you ignore them? Avoid them? Overreact to them? Or do you treat them as a way to solidify the team and improve team member self-esteem? Your own perception is not as important as the team member's view of the problem. What may seem trivial to you could be very serious to the team member. So, all complaints must be treated with fairness and dignity.



Some complaints may appear to be minor – just irritations that might go away with time – but they will probably build up into larger problems. A small sore can fester and become a major wound. Also, a complaint is often a sign of a team member who is unmotivated and, therefore, unproductive.

Other complaints are serious to begin with, threatening the work environment. These can go from being an open wound to a fatality in terms of productivity and teamwork. It's important to see complaints as chances to enhance your relationship with team members. The simple act of listening to and really hearing the complaint goes a long way toward making the team member feel important.

However, listening is not enough. In fact, if you listen and do nothing, the situation will get even worse. Instead, you need to deal with the issues and solve the problem, if possible.

## Program Description

As the leaders on the front line, managers and team leaders are often the first to hear team member complaints. And though sometimes they may seem unimportant, each complaint should be addressed and resolved. This module shows how to resolve simple complaints and identify the hidden agendas that so often underlie the chronic grievances.

**Managing Complaints** is an interactive, 4-hour group workshop designed for 6 to 18 participants.

## organizational impact:

**Managing Complaints** will enable managers and team leaders to:

- Understand why all team member complaints must be dealt with rather than ignored or dismissed.
- Be more sensitive to all the problems-minor or trivial, real or imagined-that can lie behind complaints.
- Understand techniques used to determine underlying problems, which are not always the same as those the team member thinks are responsible for his/her difficulties.
- Use various techniques to solve such problems while maintaining a positive relationship with the team member.