



Mediation Case Study

Environmental Programmes Consultancy – ‘John’ and ‘Pete’

John* was a manager in a sustainability based organisation, Environmental Programmes Consultancy (EPC)*. EPC works with a wide range of public sector and business clients on improving environmental sustainability.

In the one year that he had worked for EP, John had found the relationship with Pete*, one of the key members of his team, particularly challenging. Pete regularly undermined him in team meetings and was generally uncommunicative and withheld information. John had tried various approaches to draw Pete out, but none had been very successful. While he found the relationship difficult, he also thought that Pete was excellent at his job and was concerned about losing him.

John heard about mediation through a personal friend and thought it would be worth a try, although he didn't hold out a lot of hope. However, he took the plunge and asked Pete whether he would consider it, explaining that it was independent from management and a voluntary process. Pete was unsure at first but agreed that his phone number could be passed onto the mediator for a conversation.

John called me at *Peacebuilders* and gave the background to the situation. I spoke on the telephone with Pete and it emerged that Pete felt railroaded into a project by John and described some of John's behaviour as bullying, citing one specific incident. He also mentioned that he was looking for other jobs.

At the individual meeting with John and Pete, each of them agreed to a joint meeting. Pete spoke of his suspicion of the process but agreed to give it a go.

At the mediation meeting, I set the stage and carefully guided Pete and John through a structured exploration of the issues. Pete brought up two key incidents in team meetings that he felt aggrieved by and John listened. John, in turn, then explained some of the decisions that had been made and where they were coming from. John also expressed his appreciation for Pete's contribution to the team. The key incidents were explored in some depth and both John and Pete expressed regret for what had happened and made apologies to one another. They were each able to understand better where the other person was coming from and agreed to deal with problems sooner next time.

John and Pete went away from the mediation session with a clear written agreement about how they would work together in the future and how they would communicate if any issues arose. Things improved from this point onwards. Because the mediation session had 'cleared the air', the agreement stuck and Pete and John were still working together well a year later.

E-mail received from 'Pete'

"I've wanted to let you know how things are going between myself and John following our mediation session. We're definitely working better together and things are different. I now know more about where he is coming from and I'm aware of this when we're in meetings together and it has led to a more positive way of communicating. Also, that I'm being given more respect and space to talk. He is responding to me differently too.*

Thanks for everything you did helping us prepare for the session. I was hesitant to do mediation as I really don't like confrontation and although it wasn't easy, I'm really pleased I did it as it has made things so much better. I would also recommend it to others as well as I think a lot of people would benefit from mediation to promote better working relationships with others. Many Thanks."

**Not their real names. Names and some other details have been changed to protect confidentiality.*

Are you wondering about mediation but not sure if it's suitable?

Drop me an e-mail or phone call for a free consultation:

Laura Gilchrist

laura@peacebuilders.co.uk

0785 556 7563