Solutions to the problems of the work climate that are specific to the culture of the military organization

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Abstract
This study aims at itemizing the modalities of managing the organizational conflicts that appear because of pseudo-camaraderie at work. Colleagues are not a quick solution meant to solving such issues as those related to loneliness or career, or to love disappointments, illness or failure. The role of positive comrades is to enrich our lives, making us happier.

Keywords: camaraderie, management, culture, techniques of mediation of the disputes among colleagues, work climate

Rezumat
Lucrarea își propune trecerea în revistă a modalităților de gestionare a conflictelor organizaționale apărute datorită pseudocamaraderiei la locul de muncă. Colegii nu sunt o soluție rapidă pentru rezolvarea problemelor legate de singurătate sau carieră ori pentru dezamăgiri în dragoste, boli sau eşecuri. Camarazii pozitivi au rolul de a ne îmbogăți viața, făcându-ne mai fericiti.

Cuvinte cheie: camaraderie, management, cultură, tehnici de mediare a disputelor între colegi, climat de muncă.

JEL Classification: M54, M59

Introduction
False camaraderie has a destructive potential that lies in the harm of the seven essential aspects: trust, empathy, honesty, confidentiality, acceptance and the respect of the individual’s legitimate borders (consisting of his/her free will).

The managers of the military organization have the competence/responsibility to recognise/annihilate the potentially destructive factors of the work climate when practising friendly leadership. The reason why it is so important for the leaders to have empathetic skills is that they have the responsibility to prevent the downgrading of the organisational climate by removing the traumatising surprises felt by the subordinate employees when betrayed in their pseudo-camaraderie relations.

The stages of the reaction to unexpected betrayal very much resemble the stages of the pain one feels when one learns he/she has a terminal disease:

- Stage 1: the person feels a shock/denies the facts/loses confidence in others and in him/herself;
- Stage 2: the person has the feeling of fear of failure, which is manifested through logorrhoea on the topic of that respective event and the attempt to cling to a possible last hope;
- Stage 3: apathy alternates with anger;
- Stage 4: decision-making.

When the person who feels betrayed and decides to save/to cure the pseudo-camaraderie relation, the steps he/she has to take are the following:

Step 1: to admit the fact that the camaraderie relation needs attention from his/her part: he/she has probably not dedicated enough time/energy to seeing his/her colleagues, there may have been communication gaps, or, maybe, he/she has communicated inefficiently;

Step 2: to clarify details by trying to understand what he/she has done since the beginning, and what the person considered
his/her comrade has done to contribute to the occurrence of such break-up;
Step 3: to decide whether he/she will confront the colleague with the situation or will postpone such confrontation by allowing things to just go on for a while;
Step 4: to understand whether he/she (and the colleague as well) still believes that the camaraderie relation can improve.

The premises for the relation to become healthier start from the correct diagnosis and common struggle against the following specific characteristics of pseudo-camaraderie:
- the uncontrollable jealousy between those who are involved in the pseudo-camaraderie relation;
- excessive competitiveness between the so-called comrades;
- disclosing the other’s secrets outside the so-called camaraderie relation without his/her permission;
- things or money borrowed by one of the parties that are/is not given back;
- broken promises;
- individuals who make excuses to one another when failing to show up for a meeting or when being late;
- either one or the other of the so-called comrades boast about this relation to other people for opportunistic reasons;
- the relation between the phony comrades is inflexible, with attempts to maintain status, despite the normal and predictable changes that impose a series of new requests on the other one;
- the false camaraderie relation has decreased priority for at least a part of the protagonists;
- communication within a pseudo-camaraderie relation is tense and unpleasant;
- this type of relation is based rather on duty than on pleasure;
- sharing the same activities, emotional support and confidentiality is unilateral;
- this relationship is not based on equality and mutual respect.

The causes of betrayal
People betray when they avenge themselves, and the will to avenge relies in an individual’s capacity to forgive something or someone who has harmed his/her dignity. Unfortunately, the inability to forgive condemns an individual to have a destructive emotion named anger. One’s reasons to be angry are wrongly managed negative emotions such as jealousy, envy, excessive competitiveness, unexpressed anger.

1. Envy, in its turn, might be caused by the wish to possess:
   - material palpable things (money, career success, marital status, possibility to travel etc.) which belong to the envied persons;
   - time that the envied person spends with his/her lover/spouse;
   - the beauty of the envied person;
   - the charisma of the envied person (the fact of being charming and the ability to easily relate with other people, talent, sociable and friendly personality, appeal).

2. Jealousy is the fear that the individual feels in his/her love affairs and in the relationship with his/her own children in connection with the fact that he/she considers his/her own person as worthless and easily replaceable.

3. Excessive competitiveness is caused by the angry individual’s relating to a reference group that he/she either belongs or aspires to belong to and things get out of control, and the individual attempts to sabotage the uninterrupted success of his/her colleagues, or even finds subtle ways of undermining his/her colleagues’ well-deserved accomplishments, such as:
   - The act of ignoring a success of the competing colleagues;
   - The act of disregarding demonstrated competitive skills, according to the fox’s principle in Aesop’s fable: “I’m sure the grapes are sour”.

4. The cause of unexpressed anger is:
   - Either a behaviour of self-defeat through the refusal to acknowledge the discomfort of one’s own needs and the consequences of practising this defence mechanism (the wish to revenge oneself)
   - Or the identification with the aggressor, which is yet another defence mechanism that consists of replicating the aggressive characteristics of the one who has harmed his/her dignity, i.e. the characteristics of the
selfish/egocentric person, owing to the fact that such behaviour is considered to be correct/desirable/normal/adoptable as a model in order to be successful in life.

Techniques of mediation of the disputes among colleagues
1. The IBN (Interest-Based Negotiation) Method: looking at the causes of the problems that have occurred among the colleagues and reformulating the situations by focusing upon the positions brought into discussion by either of the parties. The solution is to answer the question “Why?” or “Why not?” while focusing on the problems instead of the involved personalities.
2. To put yourself in the other person’s position in order to understand his/her reasons and to compare them with your own reasons. Next, the other person (your colleague or fellow) will be asked to do the same exercise, by putting him/herself in your place to be able to understand your reasons.
3. To listen to your colleague attentively when he/she talks to you, in order to correctly validate the opinions and the importance of your fellow’s person.
4. To detach yourself from the situation and to try to see the whole picture while imagining that you are looking at it from outside, similarly to watching a movie, and trying to be objective.
5. To agree with your colleague that you can sometimes disagree, thus trying to accept the existence of other opinions than your own about certain problems and to accept the differences of opinion.
6. To validate the camaraderie by telling the other person about the fact that you cherish your relationship with him/her.
7. To allow a breather, by deciding to withdraw from an upsetting situation, by postponing the debate of the problems, by waiting for anger to appease, and imposing yourself to take a period of rest so as to analyse the situation cold-bloodedly afterwards.
8. To demand some understanding from the part of your colleague by asking him/her to be lenient with you until the problem that you have caused is resolved, provided you have discovered that you are the one to be blamed for it. You should also inform your comrade that such causes are temporary.
9. To say “I’m sorry” if you are the person who caused the conflict, thus taking responsibility for the harm you have done to the other, expressing your remorse and promising it will not happen again.

Workplace camaraderie
Workplace camaraderie is desirable for the organisation’s management for three reasons:
- The fact that it makes the workday more pleasant;
- It helps improve the work climate;
- It contributes to the decrease of the number of migrating employees;
But there are also disadvantages related to the existence of friendly relations among the employees, such as:
- the problems that occur when one of the friends is promoted to a leading position;
- the issue of the betrayal that occurs due to the intimacy existing among friendly employees;
- the issue of the professional competition among befriending employees that can generate the lack of fair play.

Is or isn’t camaraderie at work often to be met in the organization of these days? A possible answer is given by the result of the survey conducted by Jan Yager on a lot of 180 men and women, out of which only 139 subjects accepted to answer the question about camaraderie at work. Thus, 24 out of 139 respondents stated that they had one ore more comrades at work, which gives an average lower than 1 per lot, i.e. 0.25. Moreover, 96 subjects of the 139 respondents claimed they had one or more close comrades or friends, a single one on average. All the 139 subjects also stated that, on average, they had 6 occasional friends at work.
Apparently, occasional friendships are the most desirable at work, whereas very close friends or comrades are the hardest to find, (Daniel Goleman, 2001). The existence of a small number of very close friends at work is
caused by the fact that the following ethical rules must be obeyed at work:
- **R1**: Avoid being a part of any friend gangs (circles of influence) at work. (The reason why it is correct / ethical for this rule to be obeyed is to reduce the existence of preferential treatment within the organization).
- **R2**: It is important to be cautious when making friends at work. (The reason why it is correct / ethical for this rule to be obeyed is to prevent the deterioration of the work climate because of possible jealousy/resentment).
- **R3**: It is preferable to be discreet about the secrets that are told to you by your work comrades or friends. (The reason why it is correct / ethical for this rule to be obeyed is to avoid any conflicts arising from treachery, regardless of whether it is caused by carelessness).
- **R4**: Do not gossip. (The reason why it is correct / ethical for this rule to be obeyed is to protect personal information/secrets that regard someone’s career plans, new product launching etc.).
- **R5**: Do not use camaraderie at the workplace for opportunistic purposes. (The reason why it is correct / ethical for this rule to be obeyed is to prevent the friendship from crumbling due to the creation of a toxic climate).
- **R6**: Do not boast or do not use your friends’ names at the workplace. (The reason why it is correct / ethical for this rule to be obeyed is for you not to be perceived as boastful or eager to gain personal advantage). This rule does not refer to the situations when you recommend a friend to take part in an activity (or even to lead it) that you yourself are organizing/supporting.
- **R7**: Avoid any situation that might involve you or your comrade in any conflicts of interest with the employing organization. (The reason why it is correct / ethical for this rule to be obeyed is for you not to be perceived as boastful or interested into gaining personal advantage).
- **R8**: Pay attention to non-verbal signals when you communicate at work. (The reason why it is correct / ethical for this rule to be obeyed is to avoid transmitting too familiar messages that might be interpreted as inadequate/awkward behaviour by the other employees).
- **R9**: Do not turn friendship at work into a love relation. (The reason why it is correct / ethical for this rule to be obeyed is to avoid jealousy/resentment/sexual harassment claims/promiscuous behaviour at work).
- **R10**: It is important to adopt a conduct that does not give rise to rumours in your friendship relations with persons of the other gender. (The reason why it is correct / ethical for this rule to be obeyed is to avoid giving the wrong impression that you might be lovers).

### The management of work conflicts

If the 10 ethical rules are not applied in the camaraderie relations at work, it is reasonable to expect the deterioration of the organizational climate, which will turn into a toxic, hard to bear one, (Danile Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, Annie McKee, 2005). In order to be able to get out of such impasse and to manage organizational stress, each employee must cope with the conflicts arising from negative friendship at work by using such methods as those indicated below:

- To change only yourself.
- To give only your comrade the opportunity to change.
- Both you and your friend must change.
- To detach yourself from the conflict, by observing it as an objective outsider.
- To resolve the conflict by talking to your comrade about the occurring misunderstanding.
- To allow a period of rest or a break in the relation with your comrade or friend.
- To ask for help from a third party (a professional mediator or a professional human resources manager).
- To decide to definitively cut off from your comrade, thus ending the friendship, and to get transferred to another department or even to leave the organization.
Conclusion: solving problems in the relations of camaraderie

Comrades are not a rapid and safe solution to career problems or to love disillusion, to mental diseases or to failures. Friends, and we are speaking of very close or very good friends, have a positive role in our lives because they enrich our very existence by making us happy. The friendlier we get to ourselves, the less probable for a comrade to betray us, or for us to further accept any toxic friendship. The better we feel in our own skin (estimate/love ourselves), the more we are pleased of everything that surrounds us, our fellows included. If we practise kindness towards ourselves, we are no longer rough to others.

Personal or professional rewards will justify the time, energy, search of the self or self-knowledge that we need to use in camaraderie relations. Despite the risks and traps that you might encounter in the event of a toxic friendship, the positive relation of authentic camaraderie has a great healing power both upon the person and upon the workplace climate. The research mentioned by Natasha Raymond and published in the Psychology Today Magazine has revealed, through its results, the fact that 72% of the women who had made friends with volunteers with which they had interacted along the years reported an amelioration of the depression they suffered from, as opposed to only 45% of the women representing the control group, who had not received such regular visits. According to this study, the effects of positive interhuman relations have a success rate that is comparable to that of antidepressive medicines or of cognitive therapy. Epidemiologist Dr. Lisa F. Berkman studied the manner in which human solidarity improves the rate of survival after a heart attack, using a group of 194 men and women aged over 65. More recent research have indicated that “when the women who had been diagnosed with averagely serious breast cancer had a large group of friends and relatives that offered their support, the risk of the disease relapsing and of them dying decreased by 60% in a 7-year interval”.

There are several ways of solving the problems related to the establishment and maintenance of human solidarity, whether it is personal solidarity or the solidarity within the organization, by cultivating authentically friendly positive inter-human relations, (Danah Zohar, 2011):

- Reading/ learning about the problems related to the creation/maintenance of authentic friendship relations among people;
- participating in seminars or courses for grown-ups;
- bibliotherapy (purchasing/reading books that help get rid of the toxicity of negative friendships);
- writing to feel relieved (writing whatever comes to your mind and then destroying the paper);
- keeping a diary in which you must write at least four pages every morning;
- finding a personal physical activity that will help you finalise your impulsion to fight or to run;
- watching inspirational films and, if you are able to cry while doing so, this might help you relax;
- Surrounding yourself with authentically positive friends, understanding what you admire in those people;
- Noting down thoughts about friends and friendship in a special diary (it is necessary to apply this method, all the more so as we are in the bad habit of throwing angry words at the people around us, which we later regret);
- Choosing to focus, for a few weeks, on a friendship-related issue that you want to solve (it might be about trust/empathy/the capacity to listen/giving more time to friendship relations etc.)
- Writing your friend a letter that you will keep for a while and then you will send if you are absolutely certain that you want to do this (the simple clear expression of your thoughts helps clarify and solve the problems that this camaraderie relation should surpass);
- Thinking of the worst fears that we have in the friendship relation, trying to imagine how we might survive them by facing them
- Listening to speeches about anger, intimacy, conflict management, communication abilities;
- Using the following 10 methods of finding/giving the time necessary to maintain relationships with your friends:
  1. Treating the meetings with your friends as a priority in your schedule.
  2. Organizing regular meetings with your friends (by going to the same club or doing the same things or activities such as the same sports, or by attending certain common interest courses).
  3. Getting involved into certain volunteering activities together with your friends.
  4. Going downtown with your friends in the evening.
  5. Celebrating birthdays or name days with your friends.
  6. Organizing your holidays in such a way as to spend them with your friends, if they live far away.
  7. Having lunch with your friends, if you live close to each other.
  8. Sending e-mails to your friends when you are too busy to meet or to call each other.
  9. Scheduling the next meeting with your friends when you meet them.
  10. Maintaining the friendship relation by trying to foresee and accept the changes that might occur in the relation with the other in terms of frequency of the meetings and of intimacy of the communications;

An occasional friendship may evolve into a close friendship when the following methods are used:

- Accent is laid on the common values/interest.
- The friends agree upon the frequency of the meetings and the intensity of the camaraderie relation.

- Discretion is manifested in relation to the friendship.
- The comrades or friends will not seek any favours that might turn the relation into an interested one that might be suspected of opportunism;
- Those involved in the relation communicate with regularity;
- They show real interest into the each other’s lives, without such interest becoming a form of controlling the other.
- Offering help when such help is requested, thus showing that we care about the other.
- Meetings in the most varied situations that go beyond the limits of the initial limited context.
- Not considering the relation as something implicit and avoiding unrealistic expectations.
- Putting emphasis on fun, because the joy of being together is essential.

References