

## How to Deal With Workplace Political Issues

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Workplace politics is the processes and behaviours in human interactions involving power and authority. It is also a tool to assess the operational capacity and to balance diverse views of interested parties. Influence by individuals may serve personal interests without regard to their effect on the organization itself. Some of the personal advantages may include access to tangible assets or intangible benefits such as status or pseudo-authority that influences the behaviour of others. Positive politics are behaviours that are designed to influence others with the goal of helping both the organization and the person playing the politics.

There are some general guidelines on how to become a winner in workplace politics as follows:

### **Know what you are trying to Achieve**

When conflicts happen and focus on people's differences, you will invite more resistance by focusing on differences in people's positions or opinion. Do not fight just to emerge as a winner in this conflict but to focus on the business objectives. In the light of what is best for the business, discuss the pros and cons of each option. Eventually, everyone wants the business to be successful, if the business does not win, then nobody in the organization wins.

By learning to steer the discussion in this direction, you will learn to disengage from petty differences and position yourself as someone who is interested in getting things done. Your boss will also come to appreciate you as someone who is mature, strategic and he may feel free to entrust you with bigger responsibilities.

### **Focus on Your Circle of Influence**

At work, there are often issues that we have very little control over. It is common to find corporate policies, client demands or boss mandates that affects your personal interests. Think about it, other than that short-term emotional outlet.

Instead of feeling victimized and angry about the situation, focus on the things that you can do to influence the situation, that is your circle of influence. It removes the victimized feeling and allows others to see you as someone who knows how to operate within given constraints. You may not be able to change or decide on the eventual outcome but, you can walk away knowing that you have done the best within the given circumstances.

### **Prevent yourself from becoming a target**

Follow the rules in your workplace. There are several reasons why you might not want to follow the rules. They might seem unnecessary or it is possible that others are already breaking them. However, going against the rules in your workplace opens you up to criticism. Make sure you read and understand the policies in your workplace and follow them at all times. If you do something wrong, fess up to your supervisor and correct the error immediately. This will show that you are an open, honest person who wants to do the right thing. In addition, it will eliminate the risk that your coworkers can use your actions against you.

Act like a professional at all times so you are not an easy target. While it is okay to have fun at work events, make sure you do not cross the line into unprofessional behavior even on casual days. Imagine that your boss is watching at all times, and avoid doing anything you would not want to discuss in a review of your job performance

Avoid complaining about work because it hurts your reputation. Keep your complaints about your workplace, your boss, and your coworkers to yourself. Try to focus on the positive aspects of your workplace. If you really hate your job, start looking for a new job. In the meantime, put your best foot forward at your current job so that you get a good recommendation from them.

Make yourself useful to your coworkers. If your coworkers need your help, they will be unlikely to undermine you at work. Freely share your knowledge and skills with anyone who needs it. You want your coworkers to feel like you are helping them reach their goals, which will make them feel like you need them. This also helps you be an asset to your organization, so it will help your career, as well.

Talk up everyone's accomplishments so you will not seem like a brag. Getting your accomplishments recognized can help you get ahead, but bragging about yourself can make you a target of office politics. Instead, celebrate everyone's accomplishments to show that you are a team player. This will make your coworkers respect you more and will show your employer that you care more about your company's successes than your own

Be reliable when you agree to do something. If you let your coworkers down, you are likely going to become a target for office politics. This makes your coworkers frustrated with you and can leave them in a bad position. Always meet your deadlines. If you are going to be late for any reason, notify your coworkers as soon as possible and tell your supervisor so you are in control of the situation.

## **Develop your people skills**

Seek to understand, before being understood. Calm down before you respond to something upsetting. It is possible that your coworker does not realize that their behaviour is problematic. In fact, they might think you are the one who is being political. Try examining the issues you are having with them from their perspective to see if they might have a reason for acting as they do. Then, look for changes you can make to improve the situation

Reflect on your emotions, what prompts them, and how you handle them. If you can learn to self-regulate, you will be able to think before you act. This kind of emotional intelligence helps you to notice

other people's emotions, too and to understand what kind of approach they like or dislike. When you invest time in listening, you will slow down, focus, and learn. In addition, people like people who listen to them.

## **Don't Take Sides**

In office politics, it is possible to find yourself stuck in between two power figures who locked horns with each other. You find yourself being thrown around while they try to outwit each other and defend their own position. In cases like this, focus on the business objectives and don not take side with either of them even if you like one better than the other. Place them on a common communication platform and ensure open communications among all parties and it will help to direct conflict resolution in an objective manner. You will also build trust with both parties.

## **Don't Get Personal**

In office politics, you will get angry with people. It happens. There will be times when you feel the urge to give that person a piece of your mind and teach him a lesson. Do not. People tend to remember moments when they were humiliated or insulted. Even if you win this argument and get to feel good about it for now, you will pay the price later when you need help from this person. What goes around comes around, especially at the workplace.

Another reason to hold back your temper is your career advancement. Increasingly, organizations are using 360-degree reviews to promote someone. Even if you are a star performer, your boss will have to fight a political uphill battle if other managers or peers see you as someone who is difficult to work with.

## **Think Win-Win**

Fight fair. If conflicts do occur, focus on the issue, not the person. Address behaviors, never the individual. Handle confrontations privately, fairly and without judgment.

Get close to the people who play dirty so you know what they are doing. While you might be tempted to distance yourself from the key political players, it is best to get close to them instead. This will help you understand what they do and what their current goal is. Do your best to stay on their good side. Additionally, use your inside knowledge to avoid work drama

Connect with people who have influence in your office. BRIEF

According to [HRDive](#), 53% of workers think playing workplace politics could get them promoted. It is important to know the informal hierarchy at your job. For instance, your boss's secretary may have a low job title but probably has a lot of influence over your workplace. Pay attention to who seems to have authority in your office. Then, build a relationship with those who have influence.

Keep records of your work progress and communications. If you do find yourself a target of office politics, having good documentation can help you protect yourself. Save your email-communications,

document meeting minutes, and keep records of the work you contribute to group projects. Organize your documentation so that it is easy to access.

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