

## How To Handle An Uprising of Office Politics

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Some people steer clear of office politics, but playing the game can be vital to career success because it provides a way to learn how to handle power and influence in your business. Office politics are a fact of life in any organization. Practicing "healthy" politics helps you to pursue reasonably and adequately the goals of your team and yourself. And, being alert to the "evil" politics around you helps to avoid unnecessary suffering while helping others.

To some extent, all workplaces are political simply because people are taking their personal emotions, desires, goals, and insecurities into their professional lives. We all want success, but we do not always agree with each other on what that means or how we should achieve it. Office politics arise when those personality and opinion differences become difficult to manage. And we often care deeply about the choices we make or others make about us, and we try to influence the choices that people make.

Remember also that some people will always have more power than others, either through hierarchy or some other source. It is natural to want to use our power, or increase it, but we could do so in a way that takes power away from others. Finally, there are limited resources on the organizations. This can lead teams to compete to meet their own needs and goals, even if that can go against the "greater good." There is no need to fear the politics of workplaces. Top performers are those who master the art of winning in the politics of offices.

To accept it as a reality is the foundation for making politics work for you in a positive way. It may change over time as people in your organization come and go but, odds are, it will never completely disappear. Then, techniques need to be built to identify and understand political activity and build a strong, supportive network. There are quite a number of ways to survive office politics and steps can be taken to ensure that one wins in office politics.

Analyze the politics of the Organizational Chart Office often bypass the formal organizational structure. So sit back and observe for a while, then chart the organization's political power and influence, rather than the rank or job title of the men. Understand the Informal Network It's time to look at the connections and relationships between people to understand the informal or social networks until you know where the power and influence lie. Watch closely (but discreetly and respectfully) to find out who's getting along with who, and who finds interacting with others more difficult. Look for cliques, in-groups or out-groups. Notice if the connections are based on friendship, respect, romance, or otherwise. Eventually, try to decipher how forces move between the parties and whether interpersonal problems occur.

Create connections You can start building your own social network now that you know how current relationships work. Look outside the immediate squad, and in all ways cross the hierarchical hierarchy—peers, supervisors, and executives. Do not be afraid of people with political power. Instead,

get to know them and build connections of high quality that avoid empty flattery. Be nice to everyone but avoid getting too closely aligned with one party or another. And, if you're considering a personal relationship at work, be sure to base it on consent, avoid any suggestion of unlawful or inappropriate influence, and never break privacy.

Build your "people skills" As we have seen, politics is all about people, so when it comes to building and sustaining your network, solid interpersonal skills will place you in good stead. Reflect on your feelings, what motivates them and how you treat them. If you can learn to self-regulate, you can think about it before you act. This kind of emotional intelligence also lets you perceive the feelings of other people, and consider what kind of approach they like or hate. Learn carefully to listen, too. When you invest time in listening, you are going to slow down, concentrate and understand. People like people who listen to them!

One should be aware that they have a choice. The most common reactions to workplace politics are either fight or flight. For survival in the wild, back in prehistoric days when we were still hunter-gatherers, it is a normal human reaction. Of course, the office is a modern jungle but winning in office politics takes more than just instinctive reactions.

Instinctive reactions to fight will only create more opposition to anything you try to achieve; while instinctive reactions to flight only mark you as a pushover that people can easily take for granted. Neither of these options appeals for healthy career growth. To win requires that you choose your reactions to the situation consciously. Recognize that no matter how bad the conditions, deciding how you feel and how you respond is an option.

One should know what they are trying to achieve. It is very tempting to pull into tunnel vision when disputes arise and focus on immediate gaps. That is a strategy that is self-defeating. Chances are, only by focussing on differences in people's positions or beliefs can you encourage more opposition. The way to mitigate this without necessarily failing to emerge as a winner in this dispute is to concentrate on the business goals. Discussing the pros and cons of each choice in light of what is best for the business.

Everybody eventually wants the business to succeed; if the business doesn't prosper then no one in the organization succeeds. When they realize that the chosen approach is best for the business, it is much easier for one to eat the humble pie and back off. You will learn to disengage from small differences by learning to steer the discussion in this direction and position yourself as someone who is interested in doing things. Your boss will also come to appreciate you as someone who is mature, strategic and has greater responsibilities to entrust.

## References

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