

INTEGRATED INSTITUTE OF PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT

Our Accreditations



Our Standards





Work Place Politics

Course Objectives

The political element at work

Definition of political behavior at work

Understanding politics in the work place

Politics of values and styles

The Political roles people play

Dealing with office politics

Power and politics

Objective criteria for assessing trust behavior

Responding to key political behavior

Contents

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Politics of values and styles

The Political roles people play

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Power and politics

Objective criteria for assessing trust behavior

Responding to key political behavior

Politics – A fact of organizational life

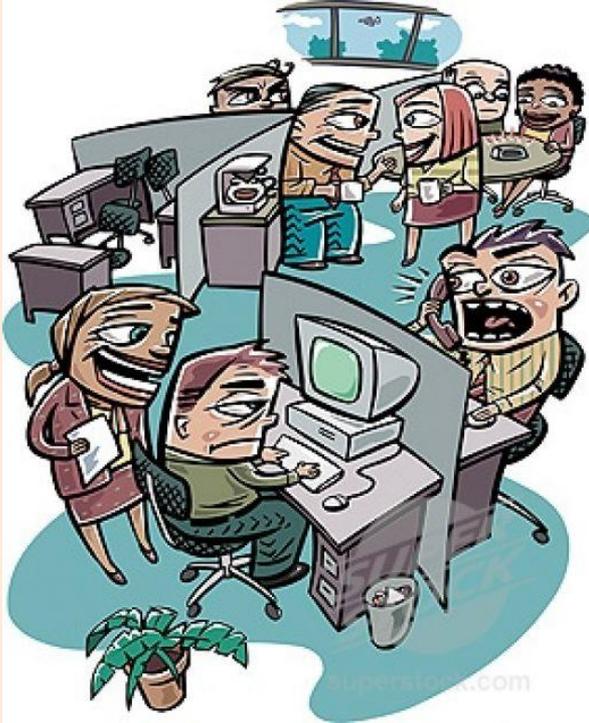


Political behavior at work is a fact of life. You will encounter it everywhere, in your team, your department or group, in your managers, your peers, in those who work for you and in yourself. Depending on how prevalent political conduct is in your workplace you may find that some, or maybe most, of the decisions made by your leaders and managers, and many of the decisions that you make yourself, are influenced by political considerations. Whatever your view of workplace political activity, it is something you need to get to grips with.



You may make observations about how prevalent politics is in your organization, and how it gets in the way of you and many of your colleagues doing your jobs properly. You may comment on how annoying and energy sapping it can be. You may see political activity as something that takes up precious time, but doesn't achieve anything beyond the self advancement of certain key players. Part of you wants to shout with frustration and tell them all to get on with their real jobs. So, just what is your attitude to workplace politics?

Not engaging with workplace politics



You might now like to compare your list with the points below which reflect some of the most common reasons why people prefer not to engage with workplace politics. It may be that you:

- Don't know how to have a positive impact.
- Feel powerless to do anything effective.
- Lack the seniority to feel safe enough to get involved.
- Are intimidated by your more robust and ambitious colleagues.
- Worry that, if you do get involved, you'll mess up and you'd have been better off not getting involved in the first place.

The consequences of politics at your workplace

You might now like to compare your list with the points below which outline some of the commonly cited consequences of workplace politics:

Ill-thought out decisions.

Decisions made on the basis of only one consideration, such as finance.

Petty competition between colleagues, teams or departments.

People feeling they have little or no control over decisions that affect them.

Missed opportunities to collaborate.

Escalated conflicts, unnecessary aggression and arguments.

Missed deadlines.

Wasted resources, errors and rework.

Dissatisfied customers, reduced profits.

Disheartened and, sometimes, demoralized employees.

The starting point for handling politics

Understanding the political agendas, motivations and behaviors of key players at work – and responding effectively to them – is the starting point if you want to have genuine influence in your workplace. You need to be able to read the political agendas that matter, understand the issues from the point of view of the key protagonists and be prepared to adopt effective, sensitive political approaches as and when you need them. You need to know how to identify, handle, respond to and, at times, initiate effective political strategies at work.

Contents

The political element at work

Definition of political behavior at work

Understanding politics in the work place

Politics of values and styles

The Political roles people play

Dealing with office politics

Power and politics

Objective criteria for assessing trust behavior

Responding to key political behavior

What is political behavior at work

1

Hidden agendas

3

Egos and ambitions

5

Power retained in
hands of few people

7

Managing other
people's perceptions

9

Basic discourtesy
and impoliteness

2

Power struggles

4

Personal animosities

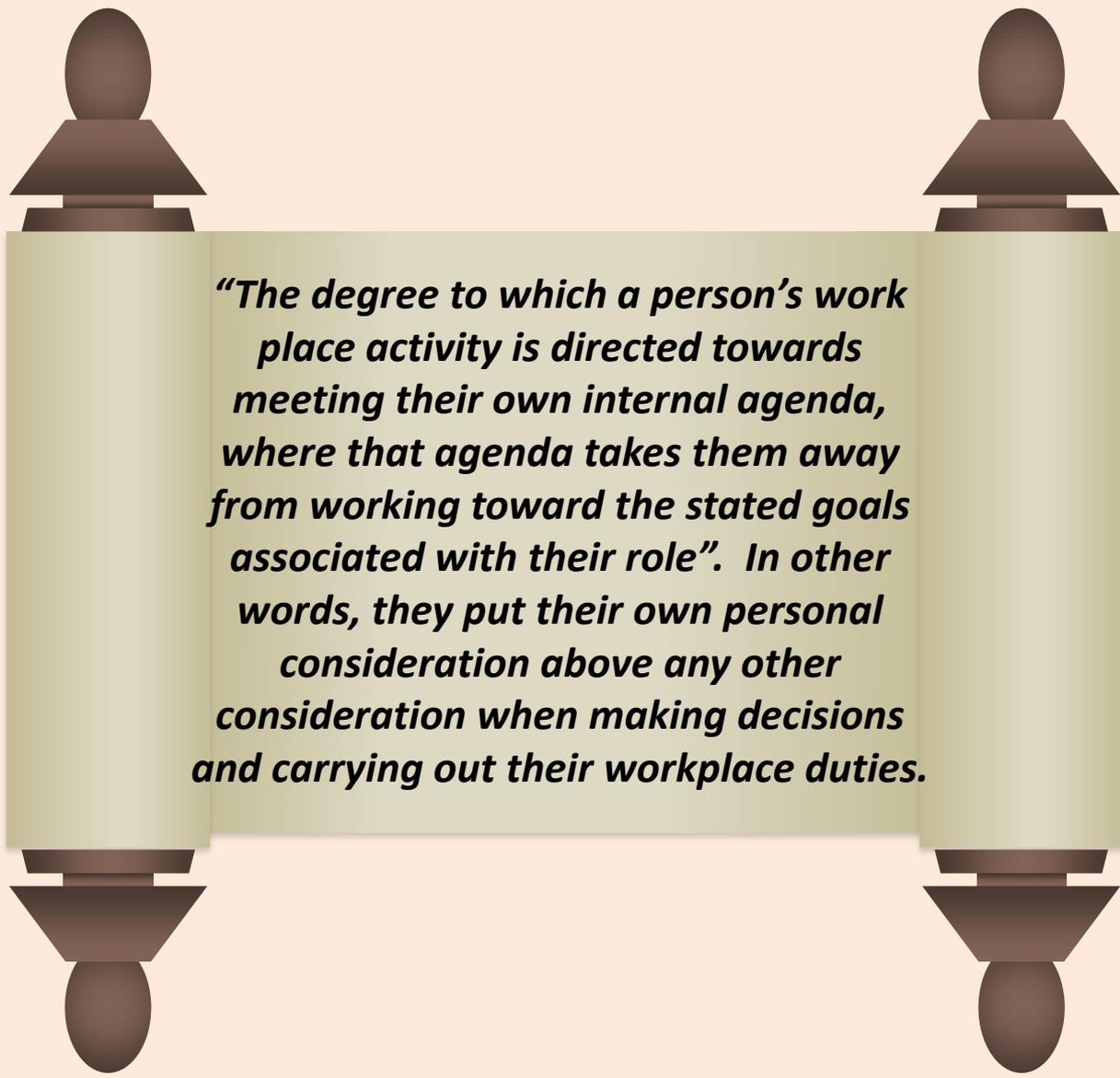
6

Personal agendas

8

Taking credit for someone
else's work

Political behavior at work – A definition



“The degree to which a person’s work place activity is directed towards meeting their own internal agenda, where that agenda takes them away from working toward the stated goals associated with their role”. In other words, they put their own personal consideration above any other consideration when making decisions and carrying out their workplace duties.

Political behavior – A high price to pay?

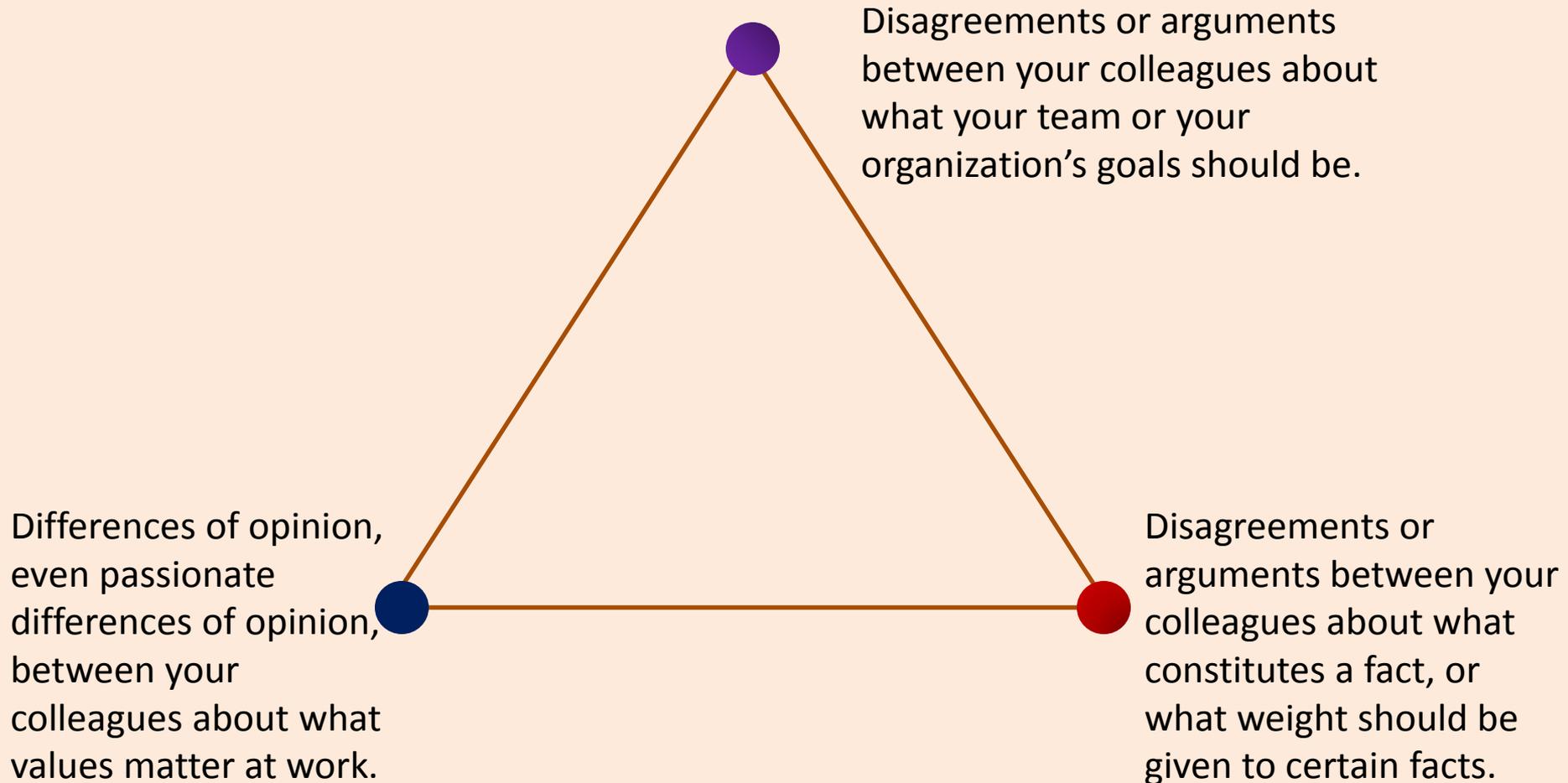
Every person is unique and has their own reasons for behaving at work as they do.

But, it is likely that people who use destructive political behavior continually, and seem blind to the consequences they create for themselves and others, probably don't readily make the connection between their behavior and not being well thought of.

They simply don't see it this way, preferring instead to see themselves as people using behavior which is justifiable, even necessary, given the environment in which they work.

What constitutes non political behavior?

We need to clarify which behaviors, even if they are demanding and tricky to deal with, annoying and vexing, are not, actually, politically motivated. These include:



Your political behavior

Consider the framework in the next slide. It identifies, at a high level, four stances that you could adopt to a particular workplace issue based on your:

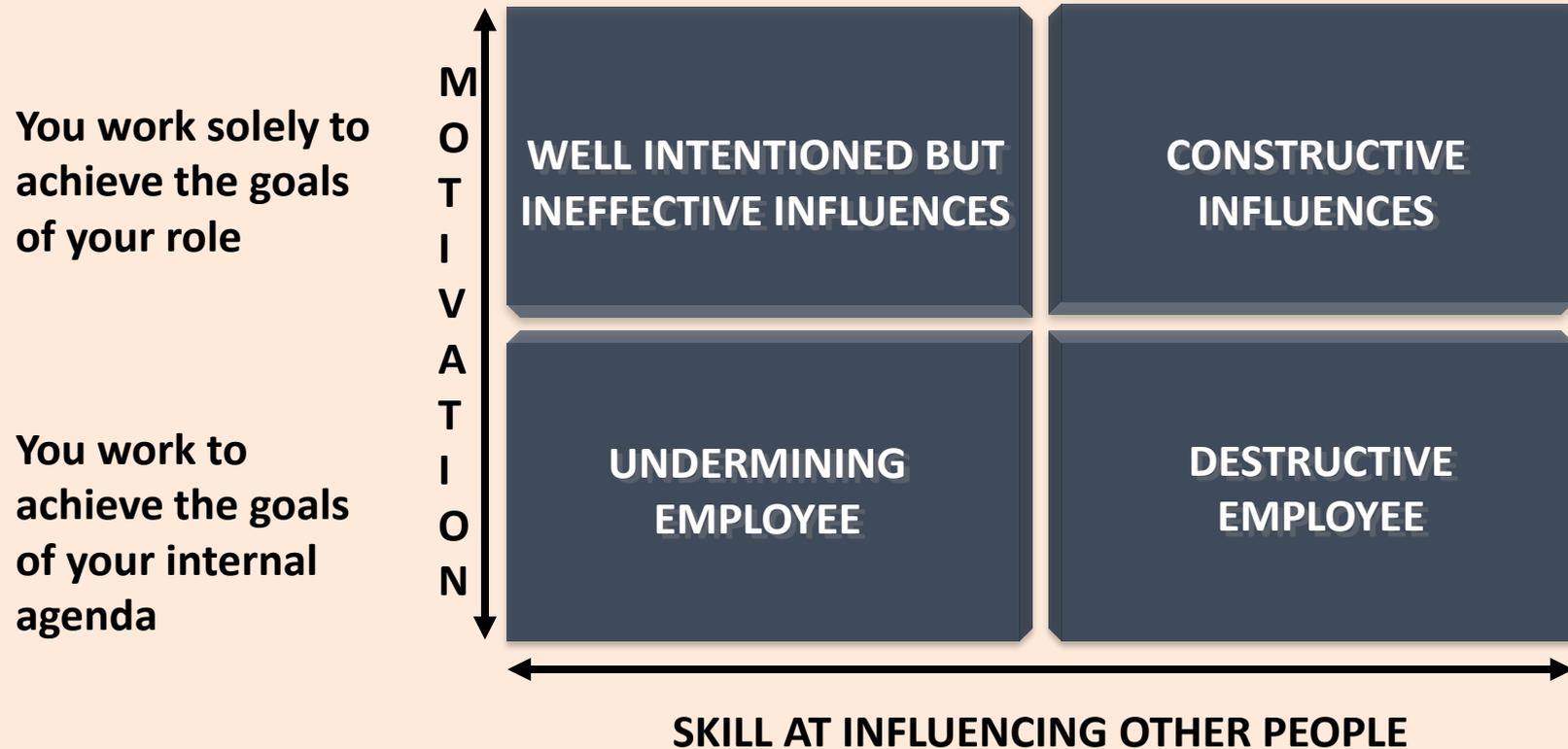
Motivation to achieve the goals associated with your role on that issue.

Skills at influencing other people on that issue.

The framework is issue driven, so it is quite possible for you to behave as a constructive influence on one issue, and as a destructive employee on another; or as a well-intentioned but inefficient influences on one issue and as an undermining employee on another.

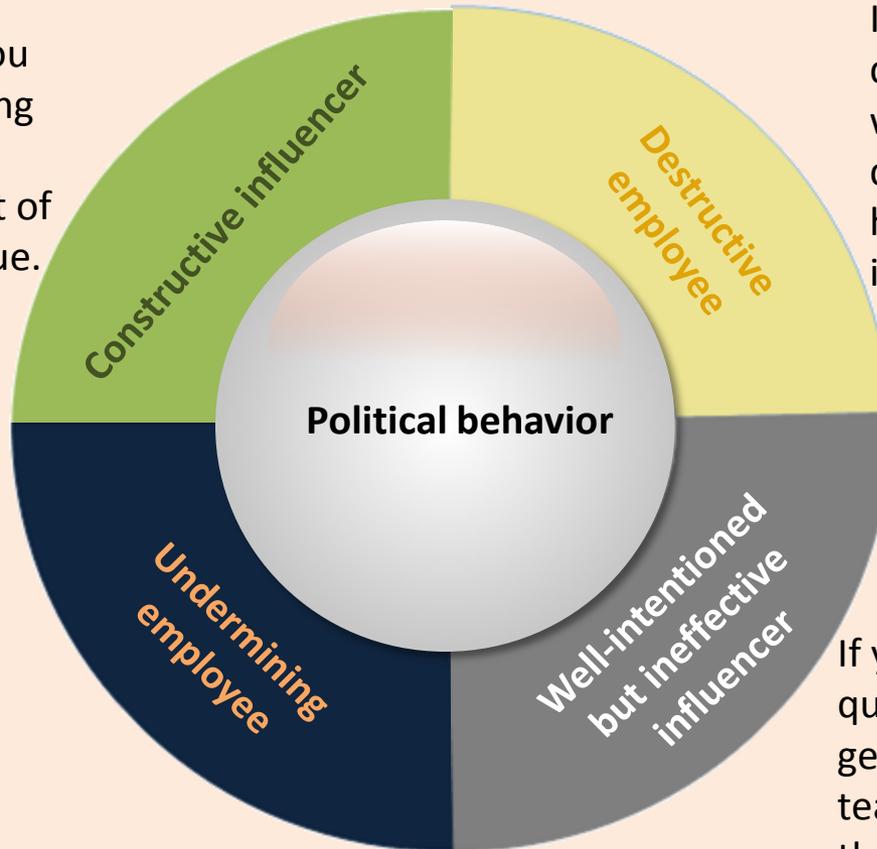
 Let us look at the framework in the next slide.

Your political behavior



Your political behavior

If you see yourself as a constructive influencer, you think you are adept at using your well-developed influencing skills in pursuit of your role goals on this issue.



If you see yourself as destructive employee then you want to use your well-developed influencing skills to help you achieve your own internal agenda on this issue.

If you see yourself in the bottom left quadrant that you'd like to pursue your hidden agenda on this issue but aren't skilled at achieving this aim.

If you see yourself in the top left quadrant, you want to make a genuine contribution to your team or organization by achieving the goals associated with your role on this issue, but you lack influencing skills to do so.

Contents

The political element at work

Definition of political behavior at work

Understanding politics in the work place

Politics of values and styles

The Political roles people play

Dealing with office politics

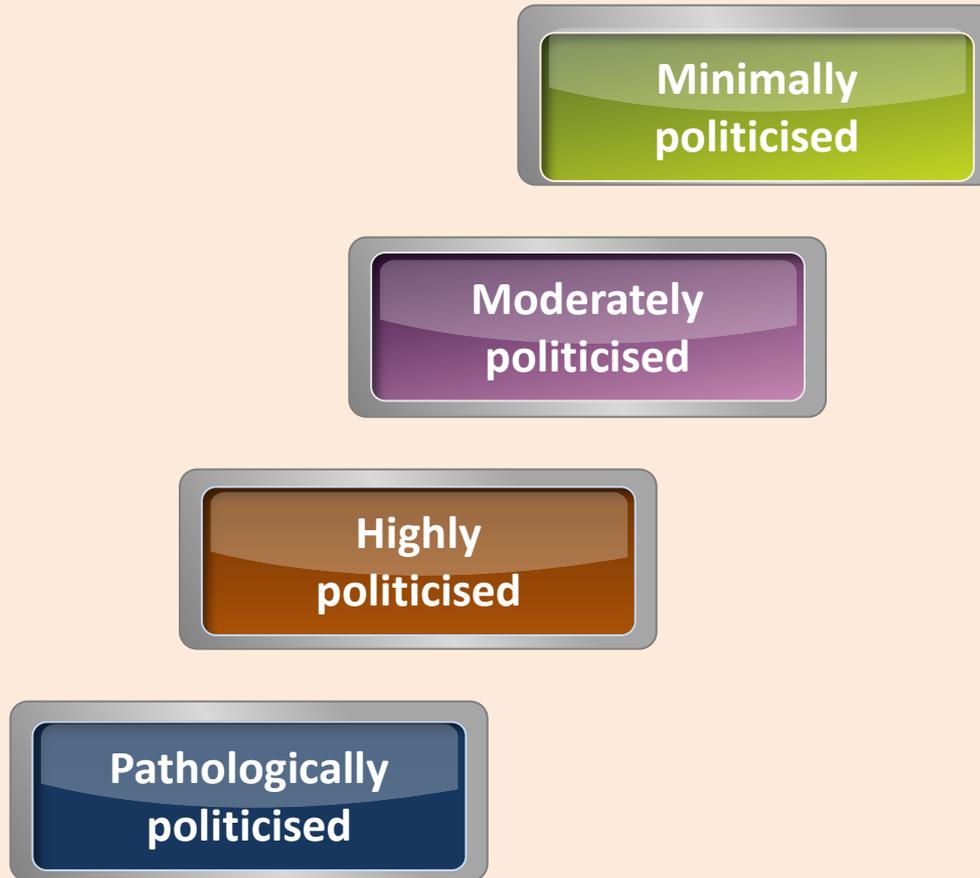
Power and politics

Objective criteria for assessing trust behavior

Responding to key political behavior

Levels of political arena

There are four main levels of political arena within the workplace ranging from minimal to pathologically critical levels.



Characteristics of each level

Minimally politicised

For those who are fortunate enough to work in an minimally politicised environment there is likely to be a pleasant and friendly atmosphere. There is unlikely to be cliques and in the rare cases where conflicts arise, it is not something that will last long or get blown out of all proportion.

Moderately politicised

Organizations which may be identified as being moderately politicised tend to have fairly formal rules which are sanctioned and widely understood. In such an environment, the level of office politics is unlikely to be a destructive influence and may in fact help in terms of working through issues.

Highly politicised

Most people will likely have experienced at some point what it is like to be employed by an organization where there is a high level of office politics and there are in and out cliques, making it hard to work as a team.

Pathologically politicised

For those unfortunate enough to be working in a pathologically politicised workplace, it may be an extremely stressful, destructive environment. A complete lack of trust is common as is an inability to work as a team.

Contents

The political element at work

Definition of political behavior at work

Understanding politics in the work place

Politics of values and styles

The Political roles people play

Dealing with office politics

Power and politics

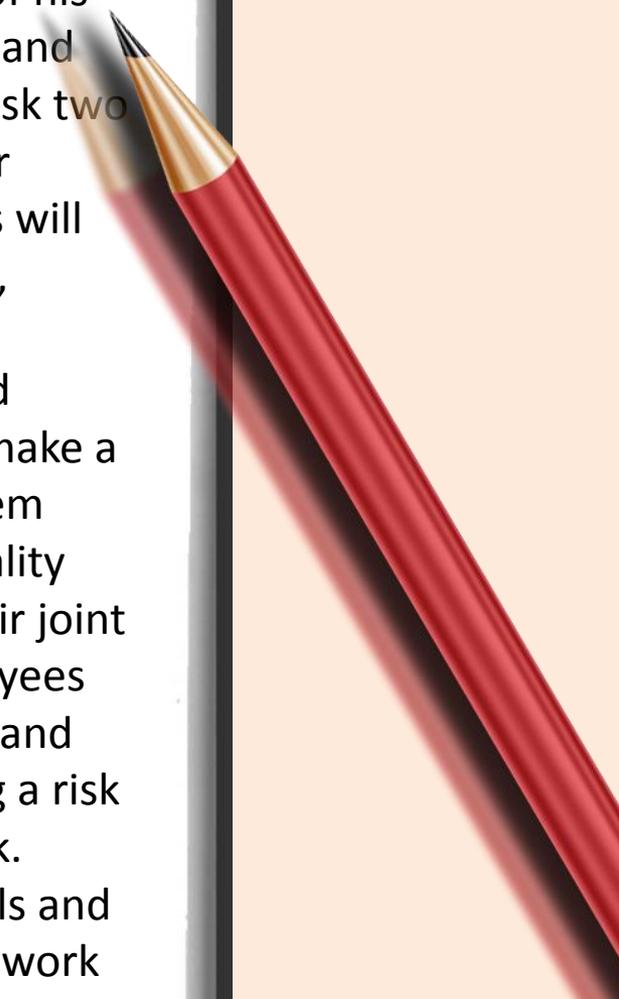
Objective criteria for assessing trust behavior

Responding to key political behavior

Different priorities, different perspectives

Accurately identifying which category a conflict or tension belongs to is important before we take actions. For example, where a colleague's behavior is not politically motivated, and the tensions between you are a result of a genuine values or styles clash, you will need to sit down and decide how to work effectively together. But, where your colleagues behavior is politically motivated, you will need to take a different tack in handling the issues their approach creates for you. It probably won't be possible for you to sit down and simply sort it out. The politically motivated person is, by their very nature, unwilling to use collaborative, open and transparent behavior.

Different styles, different agendas



The manager of a software development firm needs two of his employees to work together on a joint program for a new and potentially important customer. The manager decides to ask two employees who had quite differing styles to work together because he hopes that their different ways of doing things will prove useful for the project. He hopes that the big picture, action-oriented approach of one colleague will be well complimented by the detail orientated, more cautious and planned approach of the other, and that together they'll make a good team. He briefs them together, making it clear to them that the project must be in on time and to the highest quality standards. He anticipates that it will take ten weeks of their joint time to deliver. The manager knows that these two employees haven't worked together on a major piece of work before and are very different and in some sense he knows he is taking a risk putting them together on such an important piece of work. However, he has faith in their individual and collective skills and is sure that, given the importance of the project, they will work well together for the good of the firm.

▶ What happened after assigning the project to them See next slide

Different styles, different agendas

After five weeks the two colleagues are making heavy weather of working in tandem. Their relationship is marked by habitual niggling disagreement, interspersed with sporadic conflict. They have different ways of doing things, see most situations from divergent perspectives and value dissimilar things at work. They both claim to be working towards the same overall project objective, but whenever there is a decision to be made, or a discussion to be had, they present their widely differing views on how to proceed and then argue over the disparities between them. After five weeks of working together, they haven't found an effective way to merge their perspectives constructively and as a result progress is slow.

 Let us see how the manager reacts in the next slide

Different styles, different agendas

The manager tells the two employees to get in a room and sort out their differences. He tells them not to emerge until they have decided how they are going to work together. After two hours, he intervenes and speaks to each of them in turn in private, asking them what are the key issues, from their perspective, that make it so hard for them to work well together. The first colleague says her more methodical co-worker holds up progress, doesn't make things happen and is jeopardizing the project. When it is his turn to meet with his manager the second colleague says that he thinks his more vigorous colleague disregards practical considerations and risks, and doesn't plan enough. The manager reassigns the more cautious of his two colleagues to another project and replaces him on the high-profile project. The manager wants to get the project completed on time, he doesn't believe that the two original colleagues are going to resolve their differences and he doesn't want to waste any more time.

Analyzing political dynamics

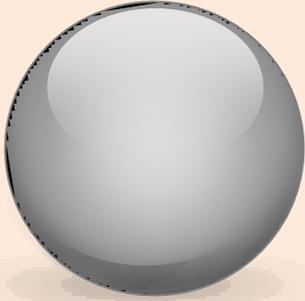
Let's examine what has happened here. The manager is not politically motivated in this instance. He wants to end the waste of time and resources that has resulted from the two colleagues not working effectively together. However, his solution carries a risk; the third colleague will have to get up to speed quickly and, in joining a project part-way through, will have a short space of time to understand what has already been accomplished, what is yet to be done and how to work productively with her new colleague, someone who is likely to see herself as the senior member of the partnership. If the third employee is able to handle these dynamics she could make a valuable contribution to the project, and it may yet come in time. However, given the agenda of the first colleague, the outcome for her new team member isn't clear at the outset.

Analyzing political dynamics

Let's now look at the first colleague in more detail, and especially at the issues in her character which her manager seems to have overlooked. She behaves politically throughout this scenario. She uses a style which focuses on the big picture and on generating momentum. But she forms an early judgment that her style is superior to her colleague's and she determines to give him a hard time. She does not take pleasure in working with her more thoughtful and careful – or as she sees it – pedantic colleague.

Let's now look at the second of the two colleagues, the one who uses a style characterized by a focus on the detail and thorough planning. This colleague is behaving nonpolitically throughout this scenario. But he is much more tenacious than his colleague realizes. While he could like to work with someone less stressful to deal with, he is also committed to his employer and is highly conscientious. So he gives as good as he gets, argues and counterargues, determined to balance out the maverick streak – as he sees it – in his colleague.

Analyzing political dynamics

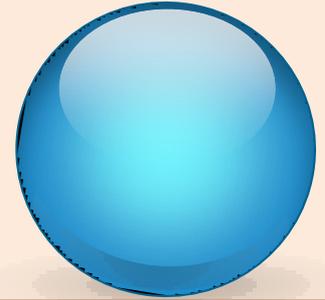


When the manager steps in he does so without paying sufficient attention to the intrapersonal dynamics within each person and focuses instead on the interpersonal issues within them.

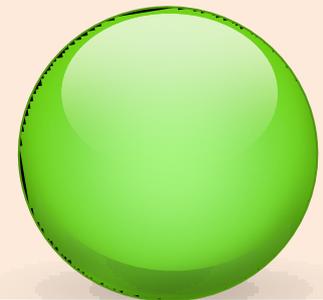
He chooses to take their unproductive working relationship at face value, and decides that they are two colleagues who are letting their style and value differences get in the way of them working together as a team.



He removes the colleague who – for all his methodical, slow style – had the best interests of the project at heart and leaves it in the hands of the colleague who refuses to see beyond her own style preferences.



He fails to understand their individual motivations and doesn't ask the right questions about the underlying causes of their fractious relationship.



Value and style differences – The key principle

- Political and nothing at all to do with style differences – even if it is presented as such. This is the approach of the first colleague
- Nonpolitical and about style differences that the parties haven't found a way to resolve or don't know to resolve. This is the approach of the second colleague.

In the given scenario, both colleagues agree on the overall project goal, so their conflicts are not caused by them working to disparate objectives. Nonetheless, their working relationship was unproductive for their employer. Their interpersonal tensions took up valuable time and energy which were needed by the project and which were being paid for by their employer. But they did so for different reasons.

The first colleague acted out of her hidden agenda to unsettle her colleague and eventually get him reassigned. The second colleague wanted to make sure the project was a success, and tried hard to get to grips with his working relationship with his more robust colleague. He was genuinely unable to find a way through their difficulties and challenges and, when given an opportunity to give his side of the story, told the truth as he saw it, that his colleague didn't attend sufficiently to detail.

Four different working styles

Only one of the styles all the time. In this case you have a clear preference for the values that underpin that style in comparison with any of the other sets of values.

A blend of two or three of the styles simultaneously. In this case you pay more attention to a specific blend of values in comparison with any other sets of concerns.

All four styles simultaneously. In this case you set yourself the challenge of finding ways of satisfying four potentially competing sets of concerns all the time.

Different styles with different groups of workplace contacts. In this case you might, for instance, use one combination of the styles with your boss, a different combination of styles with your customers, and a different combination of styles with your peer group or team members.

Key values of “*Style 1*”

- Seek out opportunities to direct proceedings and take charge of the work you are involved in.
- Have a penchant for generating momentum and demanding continued productivity, even in pressured situations.
- Naturally clarify direction for the work you are involved in
- Like to give and receive information in bullet points and headlines.
- Take a strategic view, and speak about outcomes and future-orientated plans.
- Get frustrated if progress is slow; or you perceive that the actions of other people are preventing you from making headway; or if you cannot directly influence factors key to the success of your work.
- Get concerned if you think you are missing an opportunity; or if you are unable to capitalize on the possibilities in a situation

Key values of “*Style 2*”

- Seek out opportunities to ensure quality and manage risk in the work you are involved in
- Have a penchant for planning, monitoring and evaluating progress
- Naturally clarify the fact of the matter, supplying data to support your case
- Like to speak about the background and rationale, providing detailed supporting data and facts
- Make a point of asking what can be learned from previous work that could prevent error going forward
- Get frustrated if you are expected to move ahead without having had time to consider the situation

Key values of “*Style 3*”

- Seek out opportunities to be a supportive mentor to the people who work with and for you
- Have a penchant for assessing the impact of decisions on other people and for maintaining harmony
- Naturally respond to other people, providing a sense of committed responsibility to the work your undertake
- Like to work in an environment where people learn from one another, develop new skills and resolve conflicts
- Are a reliable performer who contributes loyalty and understanding to the workplace
- Get frustrated if you are expected to work with people who take advantage of your willingness to help others

Key values of “*Style 4*”

- Seek out opportunities to facilitate and broker relationships at work in order to have influence and make things happen
- Have a penchant for remaining flexible, managing other people’s perceptions and marketing your achievements
- Naturally like to experiment, and enjoy using your resourcefulness to get round problems and obstacles
- Like to be in the spotlight, acquiring influential contacts at work
- Are sociable, get on well with many people and enjoy working as part of a team
- Get frustrated if you are expected to work in a highly structured environment with tight deadlines

Exploring your style

Which style, or which combination of styles, do you use when things are going well for you at work and you are at your best?

Which characteristics of this style or styles do you value, and in what way are they useful to you in your work?

Which characteristics of this style or styles do other people dislike or find challenging to deal with? What, if anything, can you do about this?

Exploring your style

Which style, or which combination of styles, do you use when things are not going well for you at work and you are under pressure?

Which characteristics of this style or styles do you value, and in what ways they are valuable to you when you are under pressure?

Which characteristics of this style or styles do other people experience as challenging?

Exploring your colleague's style

Identify a colleague with whom you have an effective working relationship. Which of the four styles, or which combination of the four styles, do you think your colleague uses when things are going well for them, and how does this shift when they are under pressure?

Which characteristics of his or her styles do you value, and why are these characteristics important to you in your work?

Which characteristics of his or her styles do you value, and why are these characteristics important to you in your work?

Exploring your colleague's style

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Which characteristics of his or her styles do you value, and why are these characteristics important to you in your work?

Identify a colleague with whom you have an ineffective working relationship. Which of the four styles, or which combination of the four styles, do you think your colleague uses when things are going well for them, and how does this shift when they are under pressure?

Exploring your colleague's style

Which characteristics of his or her style do you find challenging, and why are these characteristics problematic for you to deal with in your work?

What conclusions have you come to about how to better manage your relationship with this colleague going forward?

Contents

The political element at work

Definition of political behavior at work

Understanding politics in the work place

Politics of values and styles

The Political roles people play

Dealing with office politics

Power and politics

Objective criteria for assessing trust behavior

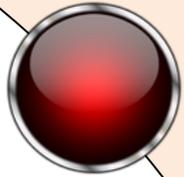
Responding to key political behavior

Garnering support, forming alliances

Assuming that your plans fall fairly and squarely within your role goals, how do you go about garnering support for your ideas and making them reality? How do you assess what tactics to use to gather support for your plans and handle potential opposition to them successfully? How do you form an effective strategy to help you navigate the political landscape and bring your plans to fruition? The following points will be help you to construct a workable plan.



Assess the political climate surrounding your proposals and decide whose support you might need.



Identify who might scupper your plans and how to handle those people should they try to do so.



Recognize who might be willing to form an alliance with you to help you progress your proposals, however fragile and transitory the partnership.



Determine what you need to do to make progress in turning your proposals into concrete action.

Determining the roles people play

You work in a role where your ability to get things done is intimately connected to your ability to form and maintain effective working relationships with other people: your colleagues and, in some cases, people from other organizations that you work with, such as your customers.

Your colleagues may work in the same department as you, or they may work in a different department to you.

They may be your peers or seniors, or they may be more junior to you.

Whichever way it works, you cannot get done the things you'd like to get done without the active commitment and support of people within these groups.

Making an accurate assessment about who is likely to support you on any given initiative, who is likely to oppose you and who is likely to be ambivalent toward your proposals is key to you making the right approach to the right person at the right time.

Contents

The political element at work

Definition of political behavior at work

Understanding politics in the work place

Politics of values and styles

The Political roles people play

Dealing with office politics

Power and politics

Objective criteria for assessing trust behavior

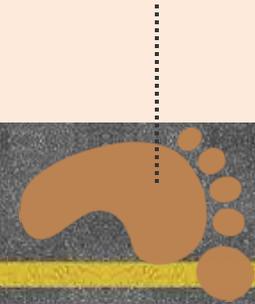
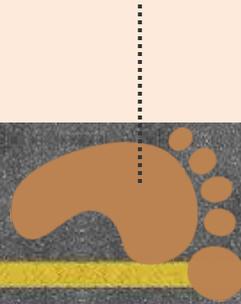
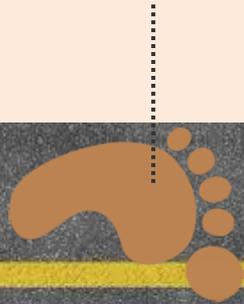
Responding to key political behavior

Work politics are inevitable

Some people are powerful than others – either because of hierarchy or on the basis of influence.

Most people care passionately about decisions at work and this encourages political behavior as they seek to get their way.

People and teams within organizations often have to compete for limited resources; this can lead to a kind of "tribal conflict" where teams compete to satisfy their needs and objectives, even when this is against the greater good.



For some people, getting promotion is important and this creates competition among individuals in an organization.

There is a goal conflict whenever a decision is taken in an organization because it affects both work-related goals and personal factors.

Making politics work FOR you

Here are some tips



Contents

The political element at work

Definition of political behavior at work

Understanding politics in the work place

Politics of values and styles

The Political roles people play

Dealing with office politics

Power and politics

Objective criteria for assessing trust behavior

Responding to key political behavior

What is Power?

“Power is the probability that one actor within the relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance”

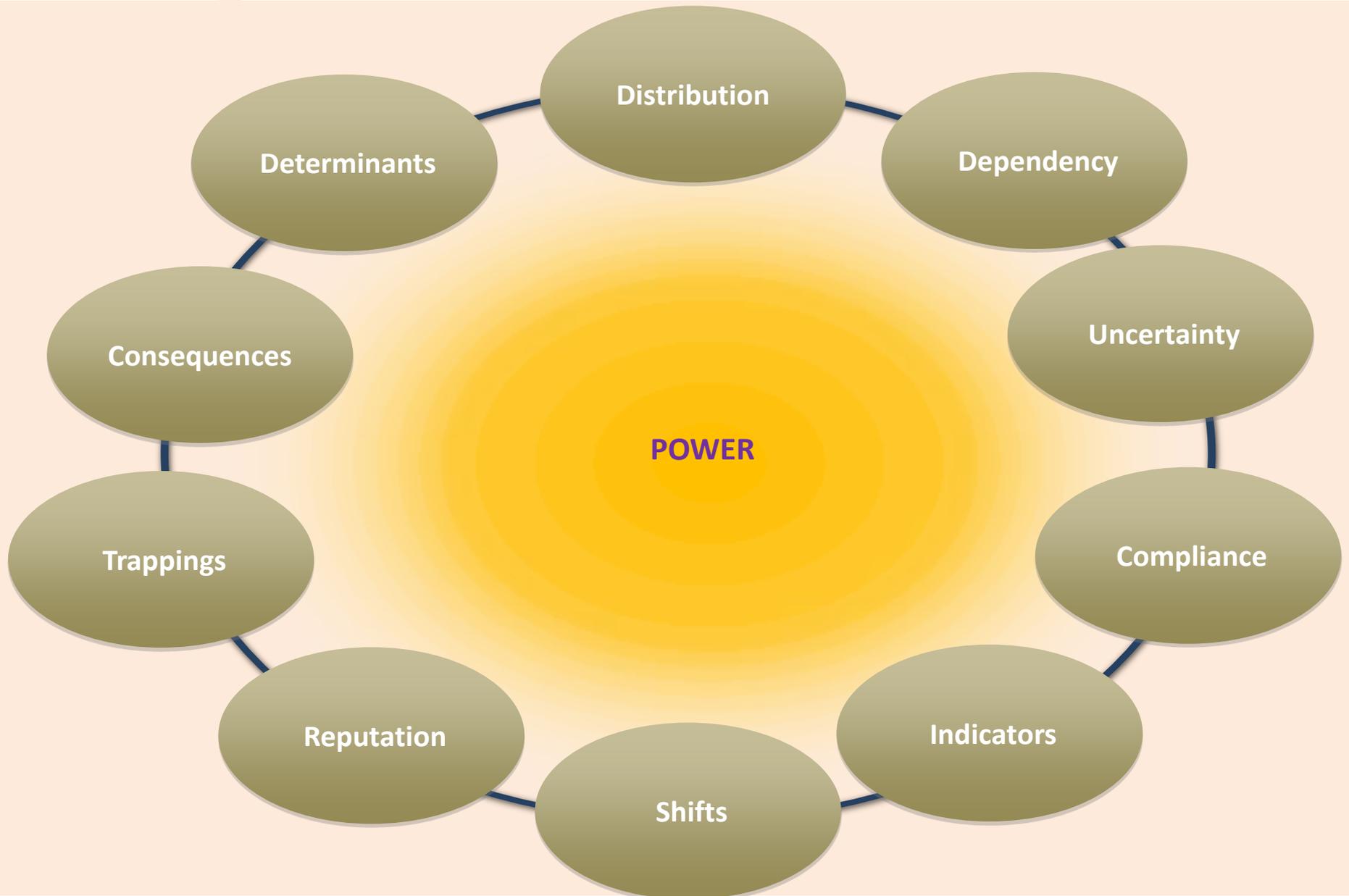
– Max Weber



Power refers to a capacity that A has to influence the behavior of B so that B does something he or she would not otherwise do



Power dynamics



Five sources of Power

Referent or Personal Power

The ability of leaders to develop followers from the strength of their own personalities

Expert Power

The ability to control another's behavior because of the possession knowledge, experience, or judgment that the other person does not have but needs

Legitimate or Position Power

Stems from an authority's legitimate right to require and demand compliance

Reward Power

The extent to which a manager can use extrinsic and intrinsic rewards to control other people

Coercive Power

The extent to which a manager can deny desired rewards or administer punishment to control other people

Power tactics

Assertiveness

Sanctions

Coalition

Integrative

**Friendliness or
ingratiation**

**Higher
authority**

**Uncertainty
absorption**

Importance

Rationality

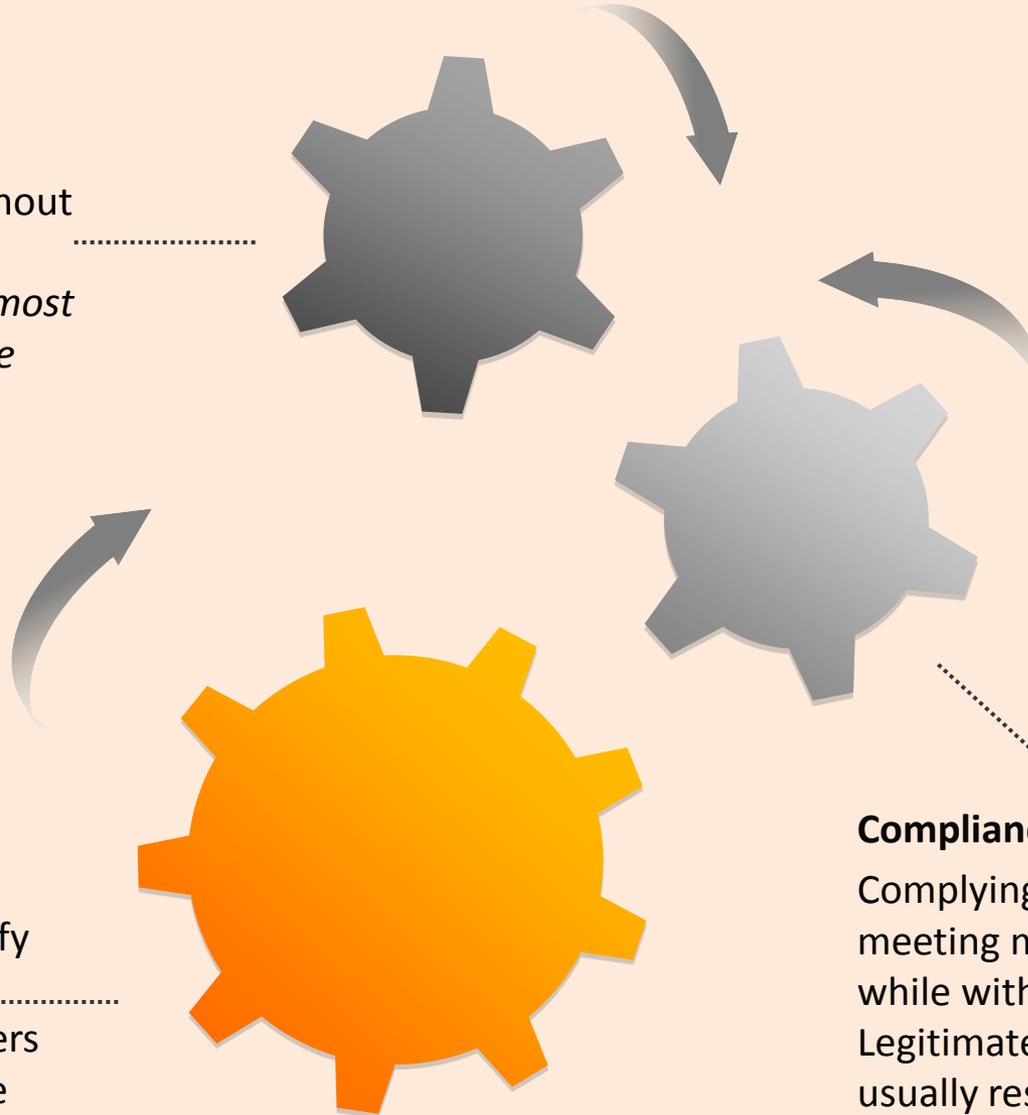
Bargaining

Substitutability

Possible responses to use of power

Resistance

Resisting the request without apparent cause or in an arrogant manner. *This is most likely response to Coercive Power*



Commitment

Enthusiastic release of energy and talent to satisfy the leader's request.
Referent and Expert Powers are most likely to produce commitment

Compliance

Complying with the request by meeting minimal expectations while withholding extra effort. Legitimate and Reward Powers usually results in Compliance

Common employee reactions to bases of Power



Resistance

Coercive



Compliance

Reward

Legitimate



Commitment

Referent

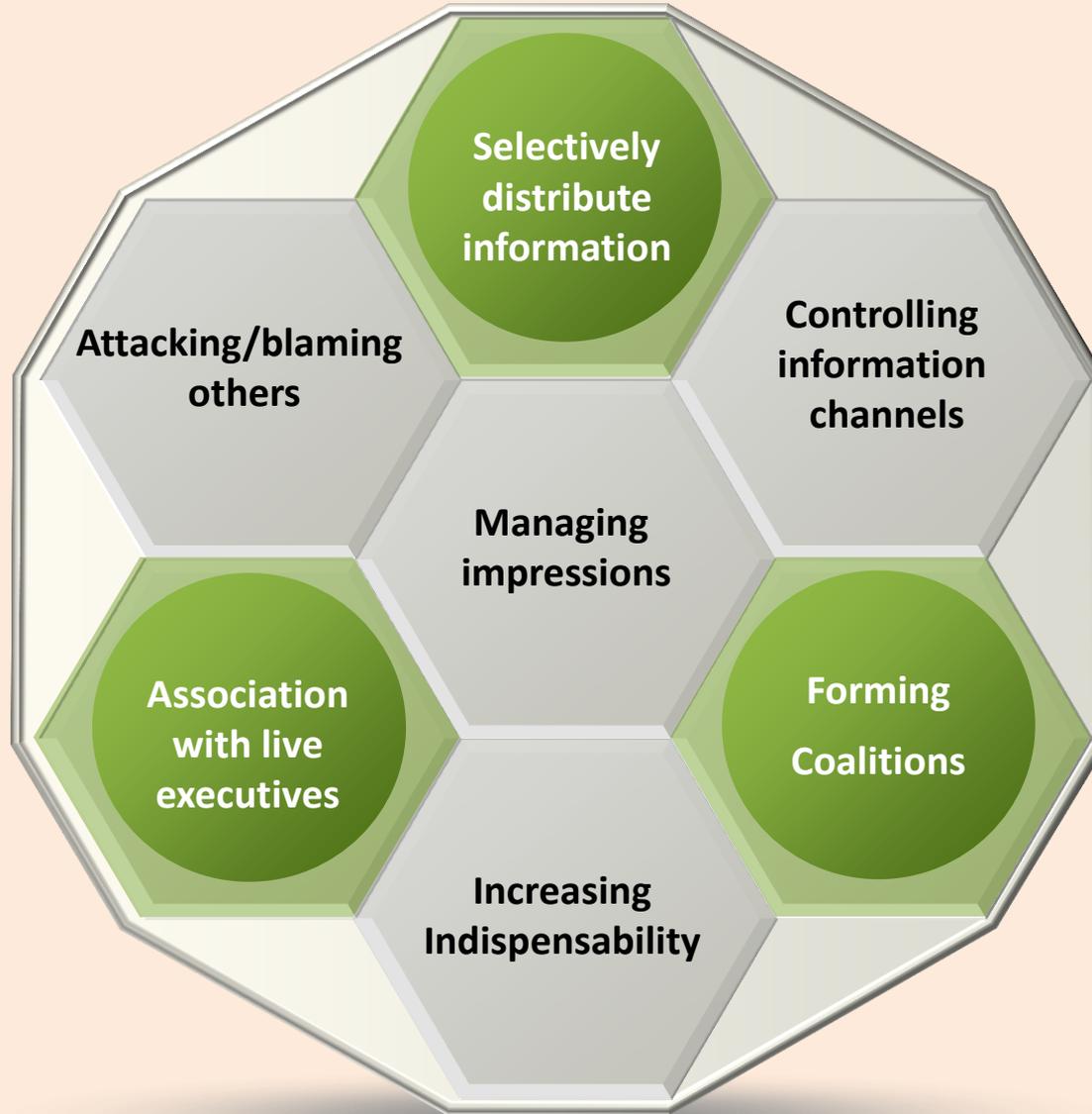
Expert

“Politics refers to the structure and process of the use of authority and power to affect definition of goals, directions and the other parameters of the organization”

Decisions are not made in a rational or formal way but rather through compromise, accomodation and baraining

– M L Tushman

Types of organizational politics



Case Study – ABC enterprises



Peter is an overambitious young man

1990

1993

1994

1998

1999



Peter joined ABC company with diploma-electrical as Technical Assistant



Completed BE-Electrical



Got promoted as Engineer sales in 1994 in recognition for BE - Electrical



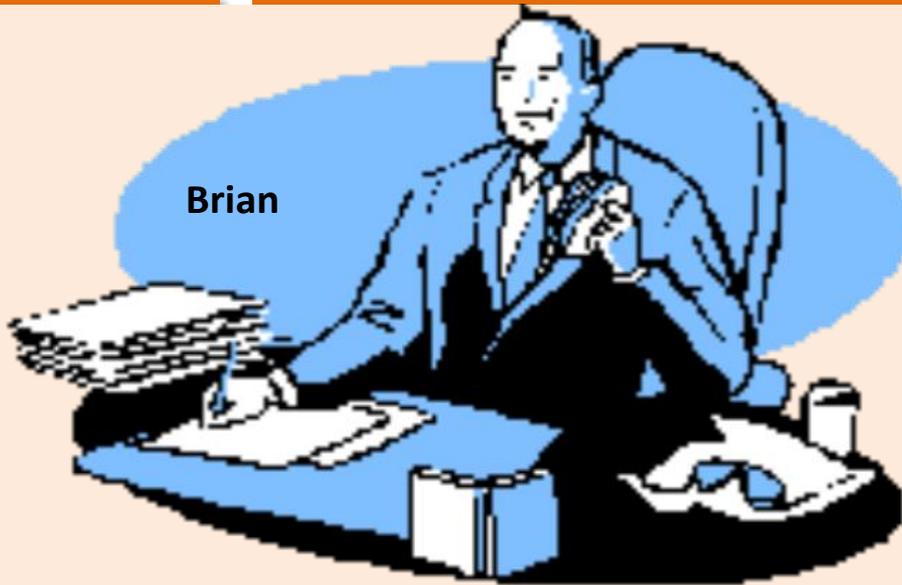
Peter got promotions in quick succession as he excelled himself in new role and was able to become Senior Manager - marketing



In between he completed MBA-Marketing (part-time) and Ph.D in 1999



Case Study – ABC enterprises



Now, Peter eyed on the things beyond his jurisdiction. He started complaining against Tom (Section head) and Mike (Unit Chief) with Brian (Executive Vice President)



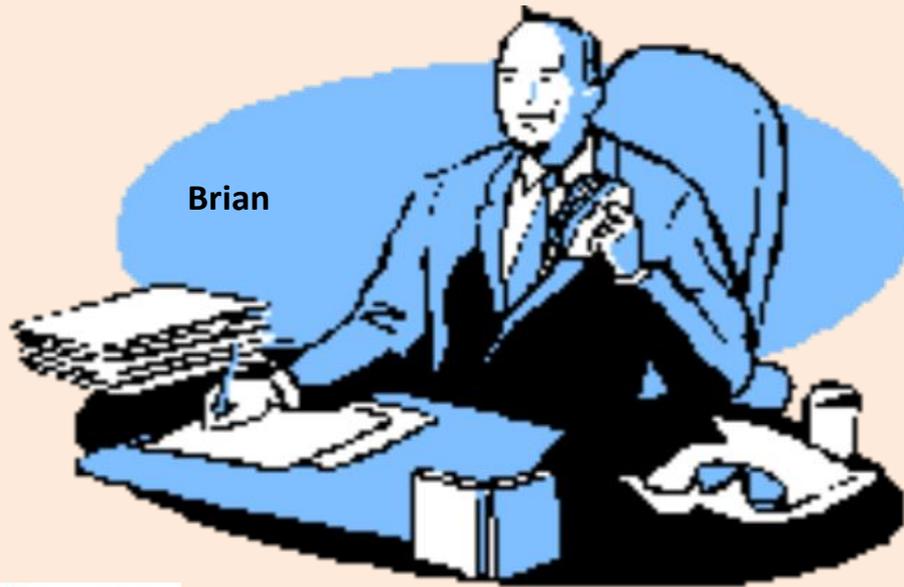
Tom
Section head



Mike
Unit Chief

The complaints include delay on executing orders, poor quality, customer rejections and so on. Most of the complaints were corrected or managed

Case Study – ABC enterprises



Brian

Brian was convinced and requested Peter to head production section so that things could be stream-lined there. Peter became section head and Tom was put in Sales



Tom

Section
Head

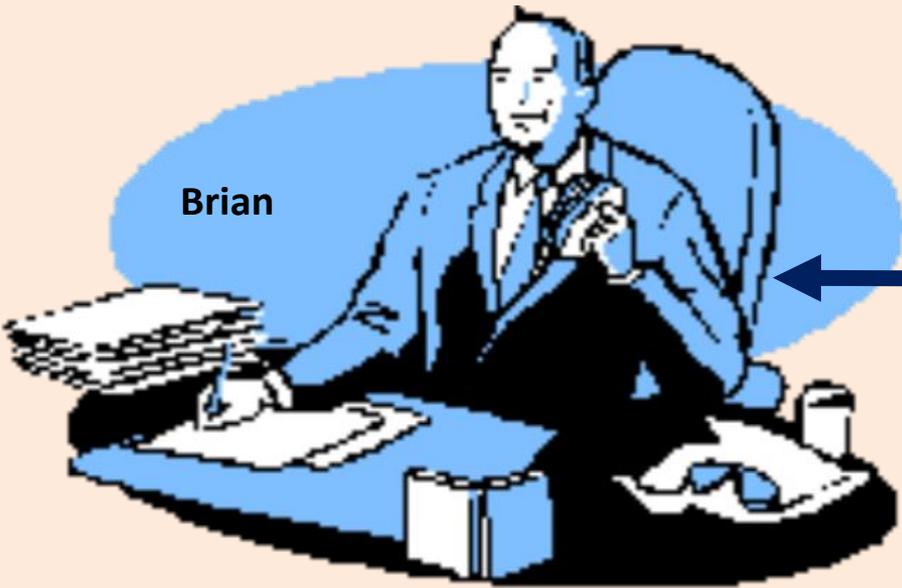


Peter

Sales

Peter started prevailing on Brian on sales and quality in his control along with production. Tom was now subordinated to Peter

Case Study – ABC enterprises



Mike
Unit Chief

Unable to bear the humiliation,
Mike quit the company

Success had gone in Peter's head as he had everything going in his favour – Position, Money and Power. He divided workers, ignored Mike and established direct link with Brian

Case Study – ABC enterprises

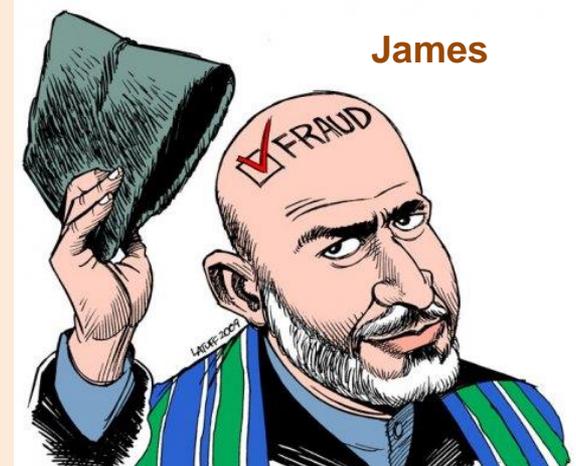
Peter



Peter was promoted to General manager. He became like a psychopathological condition characterized by delusional fantasies of wealth, power, or omnipotence

Things had to end at sometime. There were complaints against Peter as he inducted his brother-in-law James, as an engineer who was a corrupt by nature. James stole copper worth USD 20,000 and was suspended. Peter tried to defend James but failed in his effort

James



Corruption charges in tune of USD 80,000 were also leveled against James.



Case Study – ABC enterprises



Sales



Production
Lead

In 2003, Peter was sent back to his old position – Sales. Tom was promoted and was asked to lead the head of Production. Roles got reversed. Tom became boss to Peter again.

Unable to swallow the insult, Peter resigned

Case Study – ABC enterprises

Back home, Peter started his own consultancy claiming himself as an authority in quality management. He poached on his previous company and peaked up two best brains in quality

From 1990–2003, Peter's career growth had a steep rise and sudden fall

Questions

What political strategies did Peter use to gain Power?

What would you do if you were



Peter



Tom



Mike



Brian

Bring out the ethical issues involved in Peter's behavior

Power is the ability to influence people and events

Managers need to use Power effectively

Closely related to Power is Politics. Politics relates to the ways people gain and use power in organization

Political activities in an organization are inevitable and managers should handle them carefully

Power and Politics are present in all organizations

Contents

The political element at work

Definition of political behavior at work

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Dealing with office politics

Power and politics

Objective criteria for assessing trust behavior

Responding to key political behavior

What is organizational trust?

The organization's willingness, based upon its culture and communication behaviors in relationships and transactions, to be appropriately vulnerable based on the belief that another individual, group, or organization is competent, open and honest, concerned, reliable, and identified with common goals, norms, and values

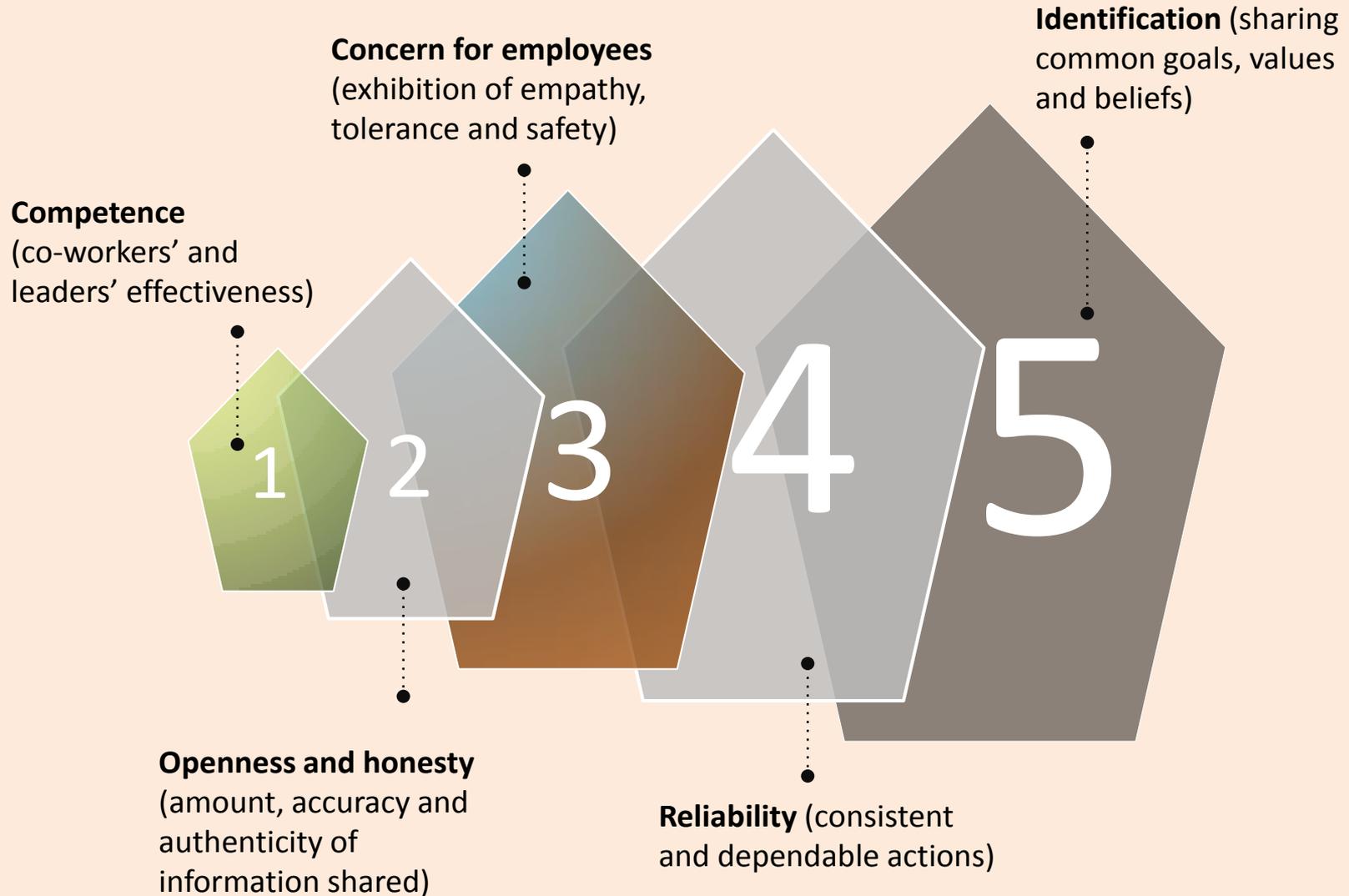


Measuring organizational trust



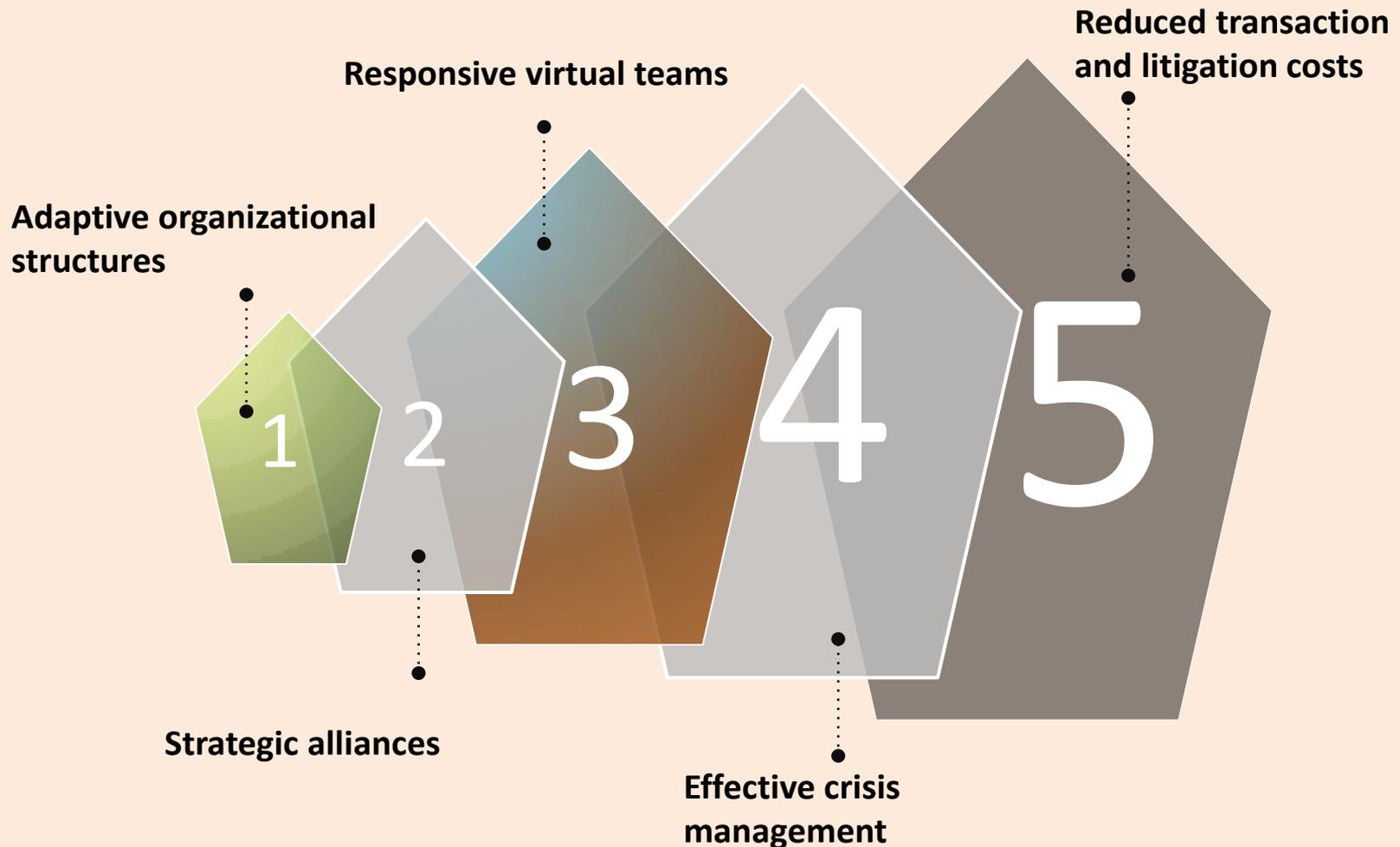
Measuring “Organizational Trust” gives communicators not only research findings about the importance of organizational trust, but, perhaps more importantly, a tool to measure the trust in their organization

Five factors create organizational trust



Benefits of high-level trust in an organization

Trust in an organization proves to be statistically significant in creating job satisfaction and perceived organizational effectiveness



Nature of organizational trust

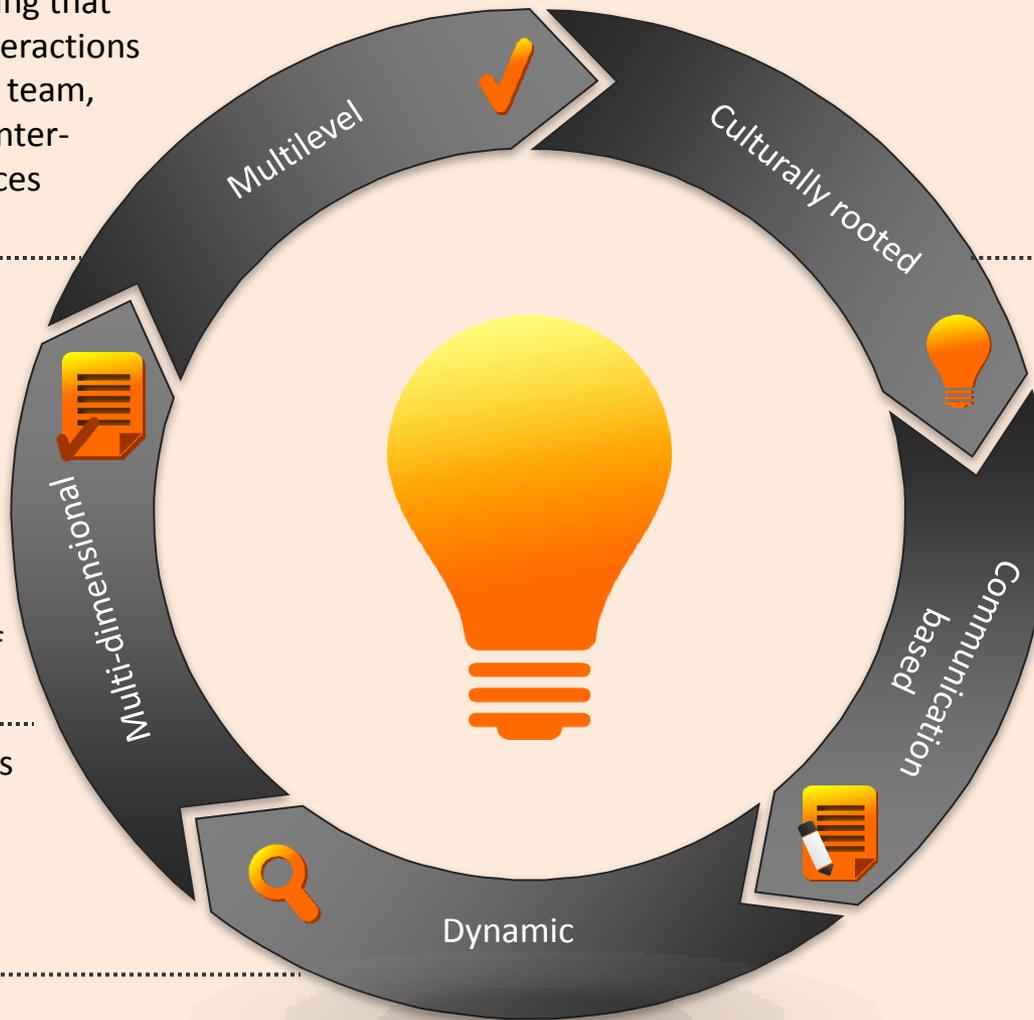
Multi-leveled, meaning that trust results from interactions that span co-worker, team, organizational, and inter-organizational alliances

Multi-dimensional, meaning that trust consists of multiple factors at the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral levels, all of which affect an individual's perception of trust

Dynamic, meaning trust is constantly changing as it cycles through phases of building, stabilizing, and dissolving

Culturally-rooted, meaning trust is closely tied to the norms, values, and beliefs of the organizational culture

Communication-based, meaning trust is the outcome of communication behaviors, such as providing accurate information, giving explanations for decisions, and demonstrating sincere and appropriate openness



Why is organizational trust important?



Trust is more than a social virtue. It is an economic imperative for business resilience in a global marketplace

We are faced daily with creating "on-the-spot" agreements and relationships with coworkers, leaders, customers, and other organizations to make things happen. With every business transaction, we create these spontaneous connections – sometimes without face-to-face contact – and we do so in good faith and trust. Our day-to-day work requires that we, and our work teams and organizations, make good efforts and judgments about trust with others. There are serious consequences for not being able to do this well

Model of Organization trust

Competence

Competence, as it relates to organizational trust, involves the extent to which we see not only our co-workers and leaders as being effective, but also our organization as a whole.

Openness and Honesty

Openness and honesty are the words used most often when people are asked what contributes to organizational trust. This dimension involves not only the amount and accuracy of information that is shared, but also how sincerely and appropriate it is communicated

Concern for Employees

Concern for employees includes the feelings of caring, empathy, tolerance, and safety that are exhibited when we are vulnerable in business activities. Sincere efforts to understand feelings contribute to high trust levels in any relationship

Reliability

Reliability is determined by whether or not a co-worker, team, supplier, or organization acts consistently and dependably. In other words, can we count on them to do what they say?

Identification

Identification measures the extent to which we hold common goals, norms, values, and beliefs associated with our organization's culture. This dimension indicates how connected we feel to management and to co-workers

Organizational trust survey

How much the statement describes my organization

1

2

3

4

5

Very Little

Little

Some

Great

Very great

I can tell my immediate supervisor when things are going wrong

1

2

3

4

5

My immediate supervisor follows through with what he/she says

1

2

3

4

5

I am highly satisfied with the organization's overall efficiency of operation

1

2

3

4

5

My immediate supervisor listens to me

1

2

3

4

5

I feel connected to my peers

1

2

3

4

5

Organizational trust survey

How much the statement describes my organization

1

2

3

4

5

Very Little

Little

Some

Great

Very great

I am free to disagree with my immediate supervisor

1

2

3

4

5

Top management is sincere in their efforts to communicate with employees

1

2

3

4

5

My immediate supervisor behaves in a consistent manner from day to day

1

2

3

4

5

I feel connected to my organization

1

2

3

4

5

I am highly satisfied with the overall quality of the products and/or services of the organization

1

2

3

4

5

Organizational trust survey

How much the statement describes my organization

1

2

3

4

5

Very Little

Little

Some

Great

Very great

I have a say in decisions that affect my job

1

2

3

4

5

My immediate supervisor keeps confidences

1

2

3

4

5

I receive adequate information regarding how well I am doing in my job

1

2

3

4

5

I am highly satisfied with the capacity of the organization to achieve its objectives

1

2

3

4

5

I receive adequate information regarding how I am being evaluated

1

2

3

4

5

Organizational trust survey

How much the statement describes my organization

1

2

3

4

5

Very Little

Little

Some

Great

Very great

Top management listens to employees' concerns

1

2

3

4

5

Top management keeps their commitments to employees

1

2

3

4

5

I am highly satisfied with the capability of the organization's employees

1

2

3

4

5

I feel connected to my immediate supervisor

1

2

3

4

5

I receive adequate information regarding how my job-related problems are handled

1

2

3

4

5

Organizational trust survey

How much the statement describes my organization

1

2

3

4

5

Very Little

Little

Some

Great

Very great

My immediate supervisor is concerned about my personal well being

1

2

3

4

5

My values are similar to the values of my peers

1

2

3

4

5

I receive adequate information regarding how organizational decisions are made that affect my job

1

2

3

4

5

Top management is concerned about employees' well being

1

2

3

4

5

My immediate supervisor keeps his/her commitments to team members

1

2

3

4

5

Organizational trust survey

How much the statement describes my organization

1

Very Little

2

Little

3

Some

4

Great

5

Very great

My values are similar to the values of my immediate supervisor

1

2

3

4

5

I receive adequate information regarding the long-term strategies of my organization

1

2

3

4

5

My immediate supervisor is sincere in his/her efforts to communicate with team members

1

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My immediate supervisor speaks positively about subordinates in front of others

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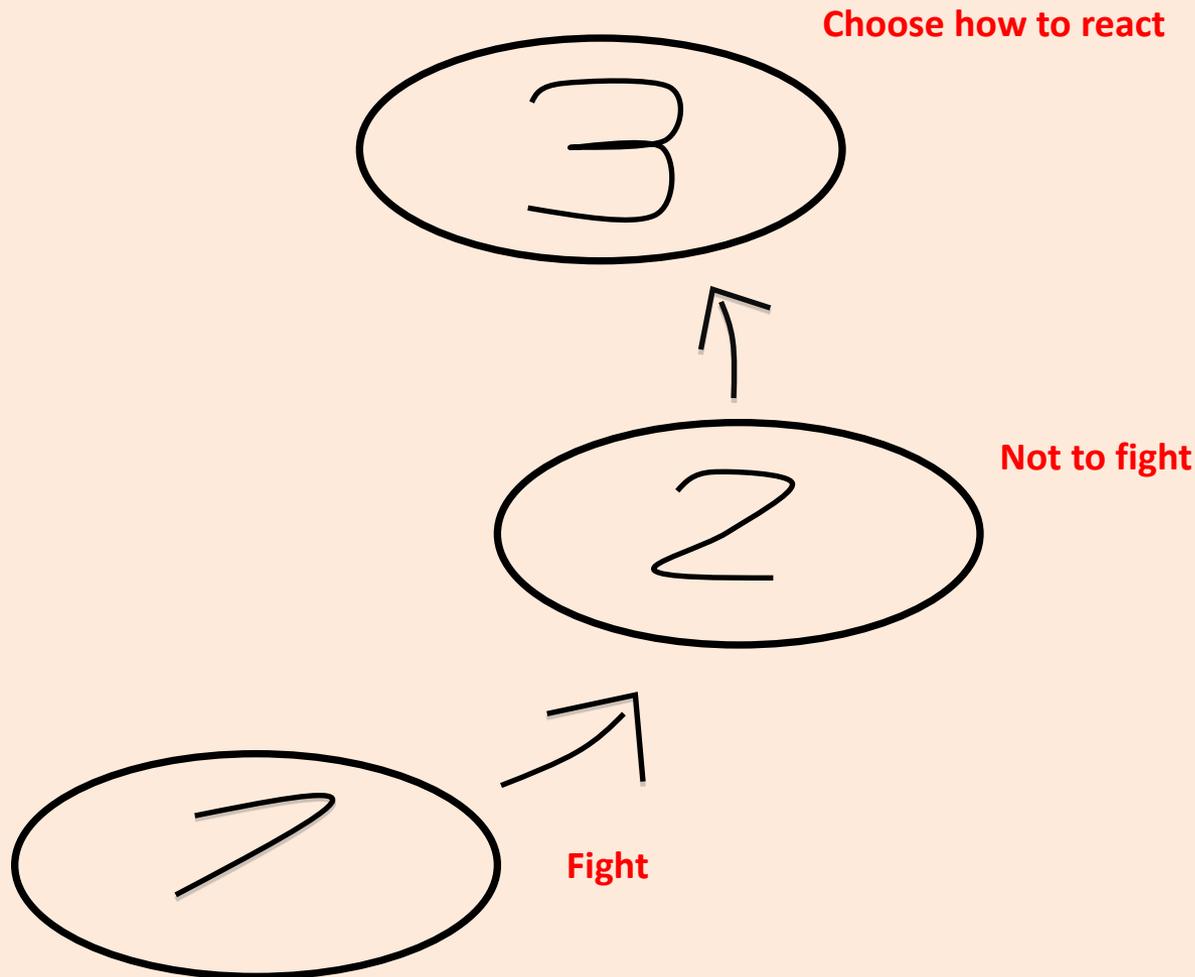
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Beware of your choice



- The most common reactions to politics at work are either fight or flight
- It's normal human reaction for survival in the wild but bit takes more than just instinctive reactions to win in office politics
- Instinctive fight reactions will only cause more resistance to whatever you are trying to achieve; while instinctive flight reactions only label you as a pushover that people can easily take for granted
- Winning requires you to consciously choose your reactions to the situation
- Recognize that no matter how bad the circumstances, you have a choice in choosing how you feel and react
- So, how do you choose?

Know what you are trying to achieve

When conflicts happens, it is very easy to be sucked into tunnel-vision and focus on immediate differences. That's a self-defeating approach

Chances are you will only invite more resistance by focusing on differences in people's positions or opinions.

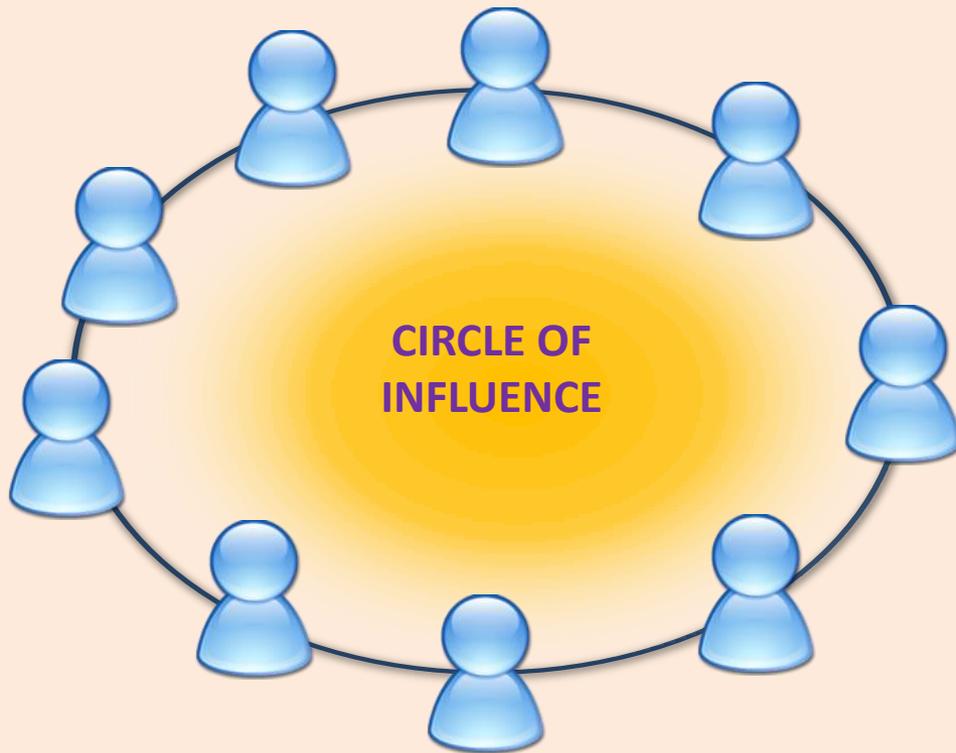
The way to mitigate this without looking like you are fighting to emerge as a winner in this conflict is to focus on the business objectives. In the light of what is best for the business, discuss the pros and cons of each option

Everyone wants the business to be successful; if the business do not win, then nobody in the organization wins

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 can be entrusted with bigger responsibilities

Focus on your circle of influence



In an organization, there are often issues which we have very little control over. It is not uncommon to find corporate policies, client demands or boss mandates which affects your personal interests

Bitching and complaining are common responses to these events that we cannot control. But think about it, other than that short term emotional outlet, what tangible results do bitching really accomplish? In most instances, none

Instead of feeling victimized and angry about the situation, focus on the things that you can do to influence the situation – your circle of influence

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

Constraints are all around in the workplace; with this approach, your boss will also come to appreciate you as someone who is understanding and positive

Do not take sides

- In office politics, it is possible to find yourself stuck in between two power figures who are at odds with each other
- You find yourself being thrown around while they try to outwit each other and defend their own position for getting the job done
- They do not agree on a common decision for a project, and neither of them want to take ownership of issues; they are too afraid they will get stabbed in the back for any mishaps
- In cases like this, focus on the business objectives and don't 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 so that no one can claim “I didn't say that”.
- By not taking sides, you'll help to direct conflict resolution in an objective manner
- You will also build trust with both parties

Do not 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. But do not do that

People tend to remember moments when they were humiliated or insulted. Even if you win this argument and get to feel really good about it for now, you will pay the price later when you need help from this person

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

Seek to understand, before being understood

- The reason people feel unjustified is because they felt misunderstood
- Instinctively, we are more interested in getting the others to understand us than to understand them first.
- Top people managers and business leaders have learned to suppress this urge
- Once the other party feels that you understand where he/she is coming from, they will feel less defensive and be open to understand you in return
- This sets the stage for open communications to arrive at a solution that both parties can accept
- Trying to arrive at a solution without first having this understanding is very difficult – there is little trust and too much second-guessing

Win-Win strategy

- Learn to think in terms of **“how can we both win out of this situation?”**
- This requires that you first understand the other party’s perspective and what is in it for him. Next, understand what is in it for you
- Strive to seek out a resolution that is acceptable and beneficial to both parties
- People simply do not like to lose. You may get away with win-lose tactics once or twice, but very soon, you will find yourself without allies in the workplace
- Thinking win-win is an enduring strategy that builds allies and help you win in the long term⁵

Summary

- Workplace Politics is all about how you deal with human communications and relationships.
- Be aware you have a choice - Recognize that no matter how bad the circumstances, you have a choice in choosing how you feel and react.
- Know what you are trying to achieve - By learning to steer the discussion in a positive direction, you will learn to disengage from petty differences and position yourself as someone who is interested in getting things done.
- Focus on your circle of influence - Constraints are all around in the workplace; with this approach, your boss will also come to appreciate you as someone who is understanding and positive.
- Do not be biased - By being unbiased, you'll help to direct conflict resolution in a constructive manner. You'll also build trust with both parties. That'll help to keep the engagements constructive and focus on business objectives.
- Do not get personal - People tend to remember moments when they were humiliated or insulted. Even if you win this argument and get to feel really good about it for now, you'll pay the price later when you need help from this person.
- Think Win-Win - "how can we both win out of this situation?" This requires that you first understand the other party's perspective and what's in it for him. Next, understand what's in it for you.