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"Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn't mean politics won't take an interest in you."

Pericles

We are all aware that workplace politics exist. It might be something that we would prefer to ignore. Managers and leaders live in a world of conflict and scarce resources.



[For Organizations](#)



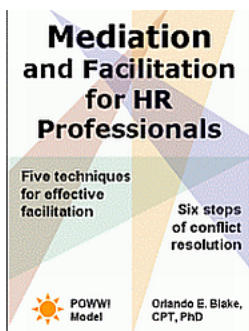
The central task of management is to mobilize the resources needed to advocate and fight for the unit's or the organization's goals and objectives. **A good leader is an advocate and negotiator who understands politics and is comfortable with conflict.**

Workplace politics is neither good nor bad, although it is important for us to distinguish between ethical and unethical political behavior. Being politically savvy is not about pushing others down or being untruthful to advance your own cause. Instead, it means **building networks and relationships** with people inside and outside your company who can provide useful information and assistance. It means not picking fights over issues that aren't critical. It means informing others in the company about your contributions and accomplishments, and asking for advice and help, particularly from those senior to you.

Much of what often frustrates us at work has much to do with workplace politics as with any other challenges or problems we face each day. Workplace politics is not a new concept or fad. It is something that will always be part of going to work. Workplace politics exist in every organization to some degree, so you need to be able to recognize their effect and navigate their dynamics.

Workplace politics are a natural result of the fact that

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Mediation and
Facilitation for HR
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Managing conflict in modern organizations is a fact of life for HR

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POWW! provides easy to implement methods, models, and checklists to give you the edge in recognizing and resolving workplace disputes. All of the cases and methods come from real world experiences.

POWW! Mediation and Facilitation for HR Professionals

by: Orlando Blake PhD

Testimonials

"Great! Easy to work with and very insightful about how to navigate relationships and organizations"

- **Andrew Theising, Director E-Commerce, Guess? Inc.**

"Very positive. You both did a GREAT job... I am very excited that we parlayed an opportunity to utilize your obviously strong coaching skills. Thank you!"

Elaine Babcock, Human Resources Manager, Southwest Gas Corp.

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Dr. Orlando Blake

Dr. Blake's 25 years

people think differently and want to act differently. This diversity creates a tension that must be resolved through political means.

Questions about your Organization's Politics?
Scroll down to link to our free assessment!

Conflict in Organizations... It's a matter of perception

Different people perceive the same events differently. One person may find a series of events to be very political, with some people benefiting at the expense of others. While another person may not recognize these events as political at all. Some managers believe not playing the political game is often seen as a good thing, even a badge of honor. Some managers see it as proof of their integrity. They are going to succeed because of job performance alone. Jeffrey Pfeffer says, "They couldn't be more wrong. Research finds that **a person's political skills are key to building a successful career-for the good of both themselves and their company.**"



I have distilled the essence of workplace politics and organizational conflicts into three basics. All conflict and political behavior can be seen stemming from:

1. Allocation of resources - which are usually scarce.
2. Ideology - a system of ideas and ideals, especially one that forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy.
3. A combination of both; allocation of resources and ideology.

I will explain...

Allocation of Scarce Resources: Most important decisions involve allocating scarce resources, i.e. who gets what. Scarce resources and enduring differences put conflict at the center of daily operations and make power a critical asset.

Typically in the workplace this is in the form of who gets the biggest budget (or expense accounts). Is it Sales? Marketing? Production? Logistics? And who gets squeezed?

Ideology: The workplace is characterized by coalitions of people and interest groups. People have enduring differences in values, beliefs, information, interests and perceptions of reality. Once you understand the belief system at play in the workplace you will know why the events unfolding are the way they are.

Combination of Both: Goals and decisions emerge from bargaining and negotiations among competing stakeholders

business of experience includes senior executive positions for Warner Bros and Guess? Inc. Orlando is a Founding Fellow of the Institute for Professional Coaching Association at Mclean Hospital a Harvard Medical School Affiliate and a Certified Performance Technologist from International Society of Performance Improvement. Dr. Blake has authored of more than 7 books covering TQM, Conflict Resolution, Career and Personal development, and Leadership.

jockeying for their own interests. I use the following to explain; P₃ = Paradigm Predict Process™. A combination of how resources are allocated and the paradigm (based on management ideology) will tell you about the workplace politics in play. For example, during a downsizing, the CEO can be on the alert for instances of back stabbing and transparent attempts to please him or her.



Make Effective Use of Workplace Politics

To make effective use of organizational politics, leaders we must be able to make appropriate use of specific political strategies and tactics. Remember that **ethical behavior is regarded as an important requirement for effective leadership**. As one of many guidelines, The Center for Business Ethics at Bentley College has developed six questions to help evaluate the ethics of a specific decision. Before engaging in a particular influence act or political tactic, they recommend that a person seek answers to the following questions;

- Is it right? (based on absolute principles of moral rights)
- Is it fair? (based on absolute principles of justice)
- Who gets hurt? (the fewer the better)
- Would you be comfortable if the details of your decision or actions were made public in the media or through electronic mail? (based on the principle of disclosure)
- What would you tell your child, sibling, or young relative to do? (based on the principle of reversibility)
- How does it smell? (based on common sense and intuition)

Become familiar with the sounds of workplace politics now... Wouldn't it be wonderful if you had a tool that told you exactly which workplace decisions were politically oriented? The Organization Politics Detector will help you sort out politically packed statements.

Assess your Organization now...



Sincerely,

Orlando Blake, PhD, CPT

The Blake Group

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