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# LET'S PLAY



# OFFICE POLITICS

Tips & Strategies to Help You  
Understand and Successfully  
Navigate the Office Politics  
on Your Job!

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## INTRODUCTION

**“The person who says ‘I’m not political’ is in great danger. Only the fittest will survive, and the fittest will be the ones who understand their office’s politics.”**

--Jean Hollands, Growth & Leadership Center

Far too many people these days put their faith in office politics and believe their careers will either soar or plunge as a result of them.

Office Politics are a fundamental part of the daily grind. Sometimes people who cannot succeed on their own merit play them, and oftentimes, those who pursue personal hidden agendas at the expense of co-workers or followers participate.

But no worker can afford to ignore them, whether he/she chooses to play them or abstain.

**To successfully navigate the office politics in your business world will require that you become politically savvy.**

## Step I: Learn How the Game is Played



There's a tremendous amount of pressure and stress being placed on you right now just thinking about the subject of *Office Politics!*

Why? Because we have either experienced negative situations or been caught in someone else's political traps.

However, Office Politics are not all bad; it's all about *how* you play the game.

Test your *political savviness* by responding to the following statements. Check all that apply.

### Test Your Political Savviness



1. There's no such thing as Office Politics. I don't believe in them and consider myself to be above such foolishness.
2. I enjoy the thrill of Office Politics—the intensity and the competition.
3. I hate the mind games people like to play in my office.
4. Office Politics are for management and anyone else who wants to be a manager. I'm just a low-level professional or associate, so they don't apply to me.
5. In staff meetings, there are too many hidden agendas and "*elephants-in-the-room*" that are obvious to the discerning, but are being ignored.

### Office Politics Assessment



6. Certain co-workers like to blow things out of proportion and create office drama.
7. I'm not sure that everyone in my office can be trusted. Most of the time they are only looking out for themselves.
8. I just want to do my work and get on with my career. I don't have time to play office games.

## Interpreting the Results

Consider the following advice for each statement you checked in the previous assessment.

### Statement # 1

As long as there are two or more people in a company, there will always be Office Politics. If you are wise, you will learn how to successfully navigate Office Politics without being sucked into the havoc and mess they can cause.

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### Statement # 2

There is nothing innately wrong with playing Office Politics. Enjoy the thrill and intensity, but also be considerate of others while taking advantage of **ethical** opportunities to advance your career.

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**Statement  
#3**

No one likes to be manipulated and humiliated—especially at work. Mind games are especially cruel. Refrain from using these tactics to get your way. You can advance without them and you'll be healthier and more satisfied when you do.

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**Statement  
#4**

Most people recognize Office Politics when they see them in action, but by then it's too late. Whether you are the CEO or the janitor in your organization, you will either learn how to stay above the fray or become a victim. It's up to you.

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**Statement  
#5**

Hidden agendas keep the fires of Office Politics burning! These situations, issues, challenges or obstacles either cannot be brought out into the open or are skirted because of fear of reprisal or rejection. **You must learn to discern hidden agendas and find ways to address the issues they contain.**

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**Statement  
#6**

In the workplace, melodrama happens when a minor concern or conflict is embroidered and overstated in such a way that it becomes larger-than-life and blown way out of proportion to the original issue. Many people often complain about the level of melodrama in their offices. Refrain from engaging in office melodrama yourself and tactfully call others to account when you are victimized by it.

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**Statement  
#7**

Trust usually doesn't exist in large quantities when everyone is only looking out for himself/herself. Someone has to risk, be vulnerable and open up to trust. Will it be you or will you continue to lament the hopelessness of it all?

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**Statement  
#8**

In some ways, this is a "*head-in-the-sand*" response to the frustration caused by not understanding the rules of the Office Politics game. Don't bury yourself. You need to play the game in positive ways to increase your interpersonal relationship skills. Stop fighting and learn how to play efficiently and effectively.

## Step 2: Identify Your Game Piece

Read the following descriptions to determine which game piece you tend to use when playing Office Politics.



### THE UNSUSPECTING

The *Unsuspecting Game Piece* represents the naïve player who gets sucked into taking sides in office political spats. This individual is easy to deceive, easily swayed by emotions, and is usually convinced that one side is right until more objective facts are introduced.

### THE DOUBLE-DEALER

The *Double-Dealer Game Piece* represents political con artists and sharks who are only interested in how they can advance or gain power. These people *pretend* to be concerned with the fate of all in the office, yet systematically promote their own personal hidden agendas.

### THE POLITICALLY AWARE

The *Politically Aware Game Piece* represents sensible individuals who have an understanding of office politics and how they impact leaders and co-workers alike. These individuals have learned how to successfully navigate office politics by keeping an eye out for changes in their work environment's state of mind.

## Step 3: Choose Your Method of Play



There are as many ways to play Office Politics as there are players. There is no one sure route you can take to guarantee success in playing the game. However, the method of play usually becomes a battle line that is drawn between two opposing sides:

### SEPARATE & DESTROY

This strategy is launched from an “*all-about-me*” platform usually by an individual who has chosen the “double-dealer” game piece. People who use this method are always looking for the main chance, and opportunities to get ahead even if it means stepping on others or engaging in unethical behavior.

### COLLABORATION

This strategy is based on relationships and mutual cooperation. A person who uses this method recognizes that he/she cannot succeed alone; it takes a group effort.

### HOW TO PLAY

1. The game requires a minimum of two players.
2. Learn the rules as you play the game.
3. Don't get trapped in someone else's agenda.
4. Don't take it personally.

5. Watch out for office “pets” (co-workers who are given preferential treatment).
6. Avoid making enemies as you play.
7. Win with honor as you realize your dreams and aspirations, and progress in your career.
8. Avoid permanent damage to your career caused by annoying, irritating or exasperating co-workers, bosses and other stakeholders.



## Step 4: Use Strategy & Discernment

Answer the following questions to develop a clear picture of how you will use strategy and discernment to succeed in office politics.

- What will be your method of play?

What steps will you take to become *politically savvy*?

How will you use ethical influence to impact others?

## Step 5: Develop Strategic Moves



Answer the following questions to develop a clear picture of how you will use strategy and discernment to succeed in office politics.

- Do you need to change your strategy when playing office politics? Should you be more or less aggressive?

- Have you thought through the basic moves you will use to play the game? What are they?

- What are your hidden agendas? Are you able to discern the hidden motives of others?

- Are you prepared to accept accountability for the consequences that will result from your playing the game?