



THE DEPARTMENT MANAGER'S **GUIDE** TO WINNING **OFFICE POLITICS**

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INTRODUCTION

Every market will usually have one or several mad minds – whatever the market is, you won't miss a tint of madness. Most people think the way to win such politics that arise at the place of work is through avoiding such talk. This is where the majority go wrong and end up getting swallowed by the very thing they try to run away from.

Nevertheless, some will maneuver their way through all that murky waters and emerge victorious – some people were just made to thrive in every situation. But this is actually false – this is an art that has to be learned and perfected like any other.

That notwithstanding, it's not a lot of people who put effort to perfect this art. Hence, they just go with the flow and either get swallowed with the office politics or they get too left out. That said, there is a manner in which you can swerve through office politics and emerge unscathed.

Nevertheless, you need to be careful not to get noticed. If people notice your tactics, they may want to get you drowned down with all the problems that they get into. You, thus, should not appear as too obvious in this game – it's a play that has rules which you should be willing to follow.



RULE 1: PREVENTION OUTDOES CURE

This rule applies in every single aspect – whatever stupid thing you can think of is far off better when avoided at all costs other than dealing with the consequences. Office politics has a manner of putting you in the center of it all even when you have nothing to do with it. Consider a case where your boss is said to give more consideration to the female counterparts. You are a girl and you would be a fool to deny these claims. But if you join the complaints and voice out your issues and your boss emerges as the lucky victim, you are likely to have a rough time going forward if you were against him, if you won't get fired all in all.





The boss chose Mary Jane for the position of Department Manager – Don't you think this favoritism's streak has gone on for a long time?

An angry fellow employee will try to engage after noticing your disinterest.

It is what it is. Probably she did something to deserve a reward. But anyway, these things will always happen in the office setting – nothing new at all.



Such a response is likely to keep your attackers at bay – just keep it vague and general. But don't put yourself in a trap.

Therefore, evading office politics is not only the wiser route to follow, but it also saves you a lot of trouble.

RULE 2: **NOBODY LIKES A WHINER**

There's a saying that goes along the lines of, «All is fair in love and war.» One thing you need to understand is, as long as you working your way up the office ladder, you are at war. You are at war with a lot of haters who might not come forward with their actual intentions. You, therefore, need to be careful when in the presence of every single individual you are with.



When you accept that everything that happens is fair, then you just made the very first step in emerging successful in office politics. You are required to take in whatever comes your way with vigor and elegance. If possible, make sure you cut down on the complaints. If anything, you should be giving appraisals to your workplace, primarily because your attitude goes a long way to establish your position and influence in the company.



RULE 3: YOUR PRESENCE SHOULD BE FELT

You don't win such nasty politics by escaping – you have to be felt every once in a while. You need to make sure the larger percentage realize your value at work or else you risk being dispensable. Otherwise, there is absolutely no need to be present if your importance cannot be felt. In often cases, you will find employees losing their positions because the top management never realized their level of participation. Do not work too hard to prove how relevant you are to the company. You just need to do good – let it shine and illuminate your path for you. It's only a matter of time before they start giving you due credit.



Don't put in too much effort if you don't think they are noting your level of contribution. Otherwise, you are likely to pass off as desperate or with a motive - nobody likes that. Come out naturally and participate where you think your expertise is needed. One thing you always need to ensure is that you remain relevant. You not only need to be seen, but you also need to be felt. The more they depend on you, the more power you have over them.



RULE 4: BACK UP YOUR BOSS

You don't win such nasty politics by escaping – you have to be felt every once in a while. You need to make sure the larger percentage realize your value at work or else you risk being dispensable. Otherwise, there is absolutely no need to be present if your importance cannot be felt. In often cases, you will find employees losing their positions because the top management never realized their level of participation. Do not work too hard to prove how relevant you are to the company. You just need to do good – let it shine and illuminate your path for you. It's only a matter of time before they start giving you due credit.





If you are ever backed into a corner where you have to make a choice between your boss and your fellow employees, wisdom needs to be used, but ultimately, you should be found to support your employers' cause, whatever it is. The stronger you stand by your employer, the more dependable an employee you prove to be.

RULE 5: **ALWAYS AT YOUR UTMOST BEST**

You might not be perfect at whatever you do, but you can be good at the very least. This you can achieve through doing what is expected of you better than they expect it. If it is going to work, you would rather go earlier than usual than risk being late. This will give you the slight peace that you are on the safe side – you will not need to worry about what might arise.



Some people get sloppy since they are not actually «doing their own work but someone else's.» This mentality had cost most employers a lot in the form of profits. Trust me; this is the worst thing an employer may hook you up with. It simply means you are a loss to the company, and you don't want to start giving your boss reasons to let go of you unless that's exactly what you want.

Having said that, you should try perfecting your every move – as long as you are in the work setting. You need to be conscious of how you conduct yourself. Make sure you follow the rules or else risk creating loopholes for your enemies to incriminate you. As long as they can't find dirt on you, you are on the safe side.



RULE 6: **SHINE WITH THE REST**

The success of any office depends on the cooperation among its members – if they all unite and work towards attaining a certain goal, then anything is possible. A man once said the best investment you can ever make is on people. Once you put your efforts in developing others, the resulting effect will be that others will reciprocate the actions you display. You should consider making everyone else better than you.



This gives others the impression that you are a team player. This gives you the support you may need amongst your colleagues. Supposing you are ever in a sticky situation, getting support from the rest will always come in handy to smoothen the road for you. Once you dedicate your efforts to improving others, you leave them indebted to you. You will always be assured of back up when you need it. If you don't get it though, remember what we said earlier on – everything is fair in this war.



RULE 7: **BE ON THE LOOKOUT**

The one advice I've carried since childhood – don't be too trusting with people. It's very hard to detect the green snake in the green grass especially when this particular snake decides to make calculated moves. In other words, if your enemy isn't ready to be recognized, they will do a pretty handy job in hiding and staying away from the limelight.





It's therefore upon you to always be on the lookout for individuals who are out to get you. Always go with your instincts but make sure that is followed by a thorough investigation. That said, your antennas need to be always out. You need to identify that force that is always against your opinions in meetings. The ones who will always disagree with you or cut you short once you try looking for time with them. If possible, try getting the support of others without making it look too obvious.

Your supporters can be a good source of information since rarely will you know everything. If you are good at coiling words, always be in front of the rest by finding out what they know that you perhaps don't. Knowledge has the power to give you your next moves in this powerful game – make sure it works to your advantage.

RULE 8: STRENGTH IS POWER

Certain things you do or say in front of people highlight your weakness. Thus, you need to take care of your every move. Do not show them how powerless you can be in any circumstance. Your might is your saving grace. Do not try to wimp out when your backstabber tries to put you down in front of your colleagues.



What you can do here is stand your grounds and find the answer that will give you the upper hand. Never seem to be unsure of your proposals or suggestions as this gives the impression that you are undecided. Be calm and sure of whatever you say – even when you actually don't know exactly what you are saying.

The key is in internalizing your thoughts before you actually put them in words – it gives you the chance to access the different angles you might approach your argument and the varied angles you may decide to argue from. The wiser thing to do when confronted by a mouthy employee is to face your opponent. Once you run away, you give them the impression that they can do it again and again and this will definitely lead them to take advantage over you. Quietly confront your opponent and if they face you in public, do not back away at any cost.



CONCLUSION

This 8 rule formula is here to guide you through any office relation. Whether you're at the lowest level of employment or you are the manager, or even the boss, the rules apply to one and all. The departmental managers will especially find these rules useful as they apply mostly from their level. They act as the guiding factor and generally summarize whatever they are taught in managing. They also provide a way for managers to promote team cooperation and hence achieve a conducive work atmosphere – the kind that every supervisor looks for.



FINAL THOUGHTS

Simplicity outdoes complexity in a way that sophistication cannot match up to. Most people fail in the work setting as they aim a level of sophistication that is unknown to them. They thus do all the wrong things, and even do all the right things in a way that they shouldn't do. The best thing to do when in an employment setting is seek to remain simple. Remember this is not your job – you found it as it is and will probably leave it the same way. You thus need to follow the simplest rules set in place and observe all forms of courtesy. Try keeping out of people's way but still remain relevant while you are at it.





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