Influence, Power, and Politics (An Organizational Survival Kit)
Outline

Influencing Others

- Nine Generic Influences
- Three Influence Outcomes
- Practical Research Insights
- Strategic Alliances and Reciprocity

Social Power and Empowerment

- Five Bases of Power
- Practical Lessons from Research
- Employee Empowerment
- Making Empowerment Work
Outline (continued)

**Organizational Politics and Impression Management**

- Definition and Domain of Organizational Politics
- Impression Management
- Keeping Organizational Politics in Check
The Tug-of-War between Self-Interest and Mutuality of Interest

Organizational contributors
• Individual
• Groups

Influence tactics

Empowerment
Motivation
Team building
Communication
Leadership

Mutuality of Interest (organizational effectiveness)

Self-Interest

Political tactics
Nine Generic Influence Tactics

1. *Rational persuasion.* Trying to convince someone with reason, logic, or facts.

2. *Inspirational appeals.* Trying to build enthusiasm by appealing to others’ emotions, ideals, or values.

3. *Consultation.* Getting others to participate in planning, making decisions, and changes.

4. *Ingratiation.* Getting someone in a good mood prior to making a request; being friendly, helpful, and using praise or flattery.

5. *Personal appeals.* Referring to friendship and loyalty when making a request.
Nine Generic Influence Tactics

6. **Exchange.** Making express or implied promises and trading favors.

7. **Coalition tactics.** Getting others to support your effort to persuade someone.

8. **Pressure.** Demanding compliance or using intimidation or threats.

9. **Legitimating tactics.** Basing a request on one’s authority or right, organizational rules or polices, or express or implied support from superiors.
Skills and Best Practices: How to Turn Your Coworkers into Strategic Allies

1. Mutual respect
2. Openness.
3. Trust.
4. Mutual benefit.
Five Bases of Power

- **Reward power:** Promising or granting rewards.
- **Coercive power:** Threats or actual punishment.
- **Legitimate power:** Based on position or formal authority.
- **Expert power:** Sharing of knowledge or information.
- **Referent power:** Power of one’s personality (charisma).
How Much Power Do You Have?

• Are you surprised by your “power profile,” as indicated by this instrument? Explain.

• Is it possible to get a realistic and valid assessment of one’s power with a self-report instrument such as this? Are selective perception and self-serving bias problems? Explain.

• Which source of power works best in today’s workplaces? Which is the worst? Explain.

• Why do leaders with great referent power (charisma) tend to come to a bad end (e.g. Joan of Arc, John F. Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, Jr.). Charisma, anyone?

• As a manager, what can and should you do to use your power responsibly and ethically?
Empowerment

Empowerment
sharing varying degrees of power with lower-level employees to tap their full potential
Randolph’s Empowerment Model

The Empowerment Plan

Share Information

Create Autonomy
Through Structure

Let Teams Become
The Hierarchy

Remember: Empowerment is not magic; it consists of a few simple steps and a lot of persistence.
Delegation

- **Delegation** granting decision-making authority to people at lower levels
**Organizational Politics and Impression Management**

**Organizational politics:** “Involves intentional acts of influence to enhance or protect the self-interest of individuals or groups.”

**Political Tactics:**
1. Attacking or blaming others.
2. Using information as a political tool.
3. Creating a favorable image.
4. Developing a base of support.
5. Praising others (ingratiation).
6. Forming power coalitions with strong allies.
7. Associating with influential people.
8. Creating obligations (reciprocity).

**Impression management:** “The process by which people attempt to control or manipulate the reactions of others to images of themselves or their ideas.”
Levels of Political Action in Organizations

Distinguishing Characteristics

- **Network Level**
  - Cooperative pursuit of *general* self-interests

- **Coalition Level**
  - Cooperative pursuit of *group* interests in *specific* issues

- **Individual Level**
  - Individual pursuit of *general* self-interests
Practical Tips for Managing Organizational Politics

- Reduce System Uncertainty
- Reduce Competition
- Break Existing Political Fiefdoms
- Prevent Future Fiefdoms
Impression Management

Getting others to see us in a certain manner
A Definition of Power

Power

A capacity that $A$ has to influence the behavior of $B$ so that $B$ acts in accordance with $A$’s wishes.

Dependency

$B$’s relationship to $A$ when $A$ possesses something that $B$ requires.
Contrasting Leadership and Power

**Leadership**
- Focuses on goal achievement.
- Requires goal compatibility with followers.
- Focuses influence downward.

**Research Focus**
- Leadership styles and relationships with followers

**Power**
- Used as a means for achieving goals.
- Requires follower dependency.
- Used to gain lateral and upward influence.

**Research Focus**
- Power tactics for gaining compliance
**Bases of Power: Formal Power**

**Formal Power**

Is established by an individual’s position in an organization; conveys the ability to coerce or reward, from formal authority, or from control of information.

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**Coercive Power**

A power base dependent on fear.

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**Reward Power**

Compliance achieved based on the ability to distribute rewards that others view as valuable.
Bases of Power: Formal Power (cont’d)

Legitimate Power

The power a person receives as a result of his or her position in the formal hierarchy of an organization.

Information Power

Power that comes from access to and control over information.
Bases of Power: Personal Power

Expert Power
Influence based on special skills or knowledge.

Referent Power
Influence based on possession by an individual of desirable resources or personal traits.

Charismatic Power
An extension of referent power stemming from an individual’s personality and interpersonal style.
Dependency: The Key To Power

* The General Dependency Postulate
  - The greater B’s dependency on A, the greater the power A has over B.
  - Possession/control of scarce organizational resources that others need makes a manager powerful.
  - Access to optional resources (e.g., multiple suppliers) reduces the resource holder’s power.

* What Creates Dependency
  - Importance of the resource to the organization
  - Scarcity of the resource
  - Nonsubstitutability of the resource
Power Tactics

Ways in which individuals translate power bases into specific actions.

Influence Tactics:

- Legitimacy
- Rational persuasion
- Inspirational appeals
- Consultation
- Exchange
- Personal appeals
- Ingratiation
- Pressure
- Coalitions
Factors Influencing the Choice and Effectiveness of Power Tactics

- Sequencing of tactics
  - Softer to harder tactics works best.

- Skillful use of a tactic
  - Experienced users are more successful.

- Relative power of the tactic user
  - Some tactics work better when applied downward.

- The type of request attaching to the tactic
  - Is the request legitimate?

- How the request is perceived
  - Is the request accepted as ethical?

- The culture of the organization
  - Culture affects user’s choice of tactic

- Country-specific cultural factors
  - Local values favor certain tactics over others.
Power in Groups: Coalitions

Coalitions

Clusters of individuals who temporarily come together to achieve a specific purpose.

- Seek to maximize their size to attain influence.
- Seek a broad and diverse constituency for support of their objectives.
- Occur more frequently in organizations with high task and resource interdependencies.
- Occur more frequently if tasks are standardized and routine.
Sexual Harassment

- Unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

The U.S. Supreme Court test for determining if sexual harassment has occurred:

- whether comments or behavior in a work environment “would reasonably be perceived, and is perceived, as hostile or abusive.”
Political Behavior

Activities that are not required as part of one’s formal role in the organization, but that influence, or attempt to influence, the distribution of advantages or disadvantages within the organization.

Legitimate Political Behavior
Normal everyday politics.

Illegitimate Political Behavior
Extreme political behavior that violates the implied rules of the game.