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ويمنع منعاً باتاً نسخها في نسخ متعددة أو إرسالها بالبريد الإلكتروني إلى قائمة تعميم بدون الحصول على إذن مسبق من صاحب الحق القانوني للملكية الفكرية لكن يمكن للمستفيد أن يطبع أو يحفظ نسخة منها لاستخدام الشخصي لأغراض التعلم والبحث العلمي فقط.



GLOBAL
EDITION

Human Relations

Interpersonal Job-Oriented Skills

TWELFTH EDITION

Andrew J. DuBrin



ALWAYS LEARNING

PEARSON

Positive Political Skills

Todd Averett is director, global supply chain design, and sourcing at Payless ShoeSource, the largest family footwear dealer in the Western Hemisphere. The official name of the company is now Collective Brands, Inc. Averett wrote the following about the importance of organizational citizenship behavior at his company:

Most organizational leaders, when asked, would say they prefer to staff their organizations with individuals who are good "organizational citizens"—individuals who go above and beyond the call of duty. In recent years Payless ShoeSource has strived to develop a culture that focuses on principles and values related to organizational citizenship. At Payless, this focus began with the realization at the executive level that



EARNING Objectives

After reading and studying this chapter and doing the exercises, you should be able to

to reach our full potential as an organization, the hearts and minds of our Associates had to be fully engaged in achieving common goals. For Payless, a retailer in a competitive market, this meant moving from a culture of "results at all costs" to a culture driven by "Guiding Values." These Guiding Values are: personal accountability, risk taking and innovation, teamwork, change, and open communication. To change the culture, Payless had to convince employees to let go of longstanding norms and accept, on faith, that living the Guiding Values would bring greater success for both the company and themselves.

Similar to Payless' Guiding Values, the essence of organizational citizenship is employee behavior that goes above and beyond the call of duty. Perhaps more importantly these behaviors represent, or are the manifestations of, beliefs that individuals have about their roles at work.^[1]

The comments by the learning and development director at Payless Shoes emphasize one of the themes of this chapter: Organizational citizenship behavior helps the company, and also good organizational politics because such behavior helps you develop a solid relationship with your manager and coworkers. The proper use of positive political tactics helps build good interpersonal relationships. In turn, these good relationships can facilitate achieving career goals. Recognize, however, that being competent in your job is still the most effective method of achieving career success. After skill come hard work and risk—important success factors.

A fourth ingredient is also important for success—positive political skills. Few people can achieve success for themselves or their group without having some awareness of the political forces around them and how to use them to advantage. It may be necessary for the career-minded person to take the offensive in using positive and ethical political tactics. As used here, **organizational politics** refers to gaining power through any means other than merit or luck. (Luck, of course, is what happens when preparation meets opportunity.) Politics are played to achieve power, either directly or indirectly. **Power** refers to the ability or potential to control anything of value and to influence decisions. The results of such power may take diverse forms like being promoted, being transferred, receiving a salary increase, or avoiding an uncomfortable assignment.

Organizational politics can also be regarded from the standpoint of interpersonal relationships and sizing up the environment. As described by author and speaker Donna Cardillo, office politics refers to understanding the unwritten rules of the workplace that involve getting along with others, getting recognized for one's efforts, and following the protocol of how things get accomplished.^[2]

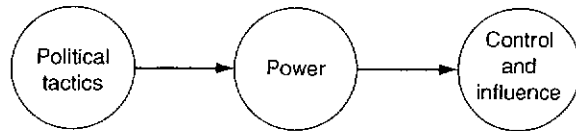
organizational politics

Gaining power through any means other than merit or luck.

power

The ability or potential to control anything of value and to influence decisions.

FIGURE 13-1 Relationship among Politics, Power, and Influence. Political tactics, such as developing contacts with key people, lead to power, which enables one to control and influence others.



As you study this chapter, it will become evident that communication skills and team player skills are necessary for being skilled at politics. Figure 13-1 depicts the relationship among politics, power, and control and influence. Political tactics, such as developing contacts with key people, lead to power, which enables one to control and influence others.

In this chapter, we approach skill development in organizational (or office) politics from several standpoints. Information is presented about such topics as managing your impression, using political tactics to improve interpersonal relationships, and avoiding hazardous political mistakes. To measure your current tendencies toward playing politics, do Self-Assessment Quiz 13-1.

Organizational Politics Questionnaire

Directions: For each of the following statements, check whether you mostly agree or mostly disagree, even if it is difficult for you to decide which alternative best describes your opinion.

	<i>Mostly agree</i>	<i>Mostly disagree</i>
1. The boss or the team leader is always right.	_____	_____
2. It is wise to flatter important people.	_____	_____
3. If you do somebody a favor, remember to cash in on it.	_____	_____
4. Given the opportunity, I would go out of my way to develop friendships with powerful people.	_____	_____
5. I would be willing to say nice things about a rival in order to get that person transferred from my department.	_____	_____
6. If it would help me get ahead, I would take credit for someone else's work.	_____	_____
7. Given the chance, I would offer to help my boss fix something in his or her home.	_____	_____
8. I laugh heartily at my boss's humor, even if I do not think it is funny.	_____	_____
9. Dressing to create a favorable appearance is foolish. At the office, wear clothing that you find to be the most comfortable.	_____	_____
10. Never waste lunchtime by eating with somebody who can't help you solve a problem or gain advantage.	_____	_____
11. I think using e-mail to zap somebody for his or her mistake, and sending copies to key people, is a good idea.	_____	_____
12. If somebody higher up in the organization offends you, look for ways to get even with him or her.	_____	_____
13. Being candid is the best policy even if it means insulting somebody.	_____	_____
14. Obtaining power for its own sake would make me feel wonderful.	_____	_____
15. If I had a legitimate gripe against my employer, I would express my views publicly (such as distributing my comments on a blog or social networking site).	_____	_____

- 1 I would invite my boss or team leader to a party at my home even if I didn't like him or her. _____
 - 2 An effective way to impress people is to tell them what they want to hear. _____
 - 3 Having a school, college, or skyscraper named after me would be an incredible thrill. _____
 - 4 Hard work and good performance are usually sufficient for career success. _____
 - 5 Even if I made only a minor contribution to a project, I would get my name listed as being associated with it. _____
 - 6 I would never publicly correct mistakes made by my supervisor or team leader. _____
 - 7 I would never use my personal contacts to gain a promotion. _____
 - 8 If you happen to dislike a person who receives a big promotion in your firm, don't bother sending that person a congratulatory note. _____
 - 9 I would never openly criticize a powerful executive in my organization. _____
 - 10 I would stay late in the office just to impress my supervisor or team leader. _____
- Total Score _____

Scoring and Interpretation: Give yourself a +1 for each answer you gave in agreement with the answer. Note that I did not use the term *correct answer*. Whether or not an answer is correct is a question of personal values and ethics. Each question that receives a score of +1 shows a tendency toward playing organizational politics. The scoring key is as follows:

- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Mostly agree | 10. Mostly agree | 19. Mostly disagree |
| 2. Mostly agree | 11. Mostly agree | 20. Mostly agree |
| 3. Mostly agree | 12. Mostly disagree | 21. Mostly agree |
| 4. Mostly agree | 13. Mostly disagree | 22. Mostly disagree |
| 5. Mostly agree | 14. Mostly agree | 23. Mostly disagree |
| 6. Mostly agree | 15. Mostly disagree | 24. Mostly agree |
| 7. Mostly agree | 16. Mostly agree | 25. Mostly agree |
| 8. Mostly agree | 17. Mostly agree | |
| 9. Mostly disagree | 18. Mostly agree | |

In an earlier version of this test, based on a sample of 750 men and women managers, professionals, administrators, sales representatives, and business owners, the mean score is 10. Scores of 1 through 7 suggest a below-average tendency to play politics. Scores between 8 and 12 suggest an average tendency to play office politics. Scores of 13 and above suggest an above-average tendency to play office politics and a strong need for power.

Sources: Andrew J. DuBrin, "Career Maturity, Organizational Rank, and Political Behavior Tendencies: A Correlational Analysis of Organizational Politics and Career Experience," *Psychological Reports*, vol. 63, 1988, pp. 531-537; DuBrin, "Sex Differences in Endorsement of Influence Tactics and Political Behavior Tendencies," *Journal of Business and Psychology*, Fall 1989, pp. 3-14.

POLITICAL SKILL AND OTHER HUMAN RELATIONS SKILLS

Political skill does not stand alone, separated from other human relations skills. Here we look at how political skill relates to awareness of one's surroundings, emotional intelligence and social intelligence, relationship building with the leader, and coping with an unjust environment.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 1

Sensitivity to Your Surroundings

For starters, being sensitive to your surroundings and to other people helps make you politically aware. Cultural sensitivity, as described in Chapter 8 about cross-cultural relations



social intelligence

An understanding of how relationships with bosses and colleagues, family, and friends shape our brains and affect our bodies.

and diversity, is a specific type of sensitivity to one's surroundings that deals with sizing up the cultural environment.

Imagine that you are applying for a position at Google doing exactly the kind of work you want. You have seen photos of Google employees, and you have visited its headquarters before your interview just to see what the company looks like. No Google worker including the founders is ever seen in a business suit, yet this fact escapes you. You show up for your interview wearing a business suit and leather shoes as if you were applying for a position as an investment banker trainee at a Wall Street firm. Zap, you are done. The Google employees wearing jeans, casual shirts and blouses, and running shoes think you would be a poor cultural fit despite your intelligence and talent. You were not sensitive enough to the environment to choose the appropriate attire for your interview.

Emotional Intelligence and Social Intelligence

Political skill relates to emotional intelligence because you need to be able to read the emotions of others to establish rapport with them. For example, a person with good emotional

intelligence would ask for a raise when the boss appeared to be in a good mood. Also, the person would avoid asking for a raise when the boss was upset, preoccupied, and in an ugly mood.

Political skill is also directly related to social intelligence, an understanding of how relationships with bosses and colleagues, family, and friends shape our brains and affect our bodies. Social intelligence is a book-length subject, yet we can take away a couple of basic lessons that are linked to positive political skill.^[3] Social intelligence tells us that good relationships act like vitamins, energizing us to perform well. In contrast, bad relationships are like poison that undermines our cognitive efficiency and creativity. The person with good social intelligence would work at having positive relationships with others on the job, so as to being able to concentrate on the task and perform well.

Another aspect of having social intelligence would be to recognize that being arrogant or derisive toward others can cause emotional distress that impairs the brain's ability to learn and think clearly. So a good team player or a manager would relate more positively toward others in order to help attain a productive workplace.

CEO Steve Bennett of Intuit exemplifies a manager who deliberately practices social intelligence. For instance, he gives constructive criticism but avoids angry attacks. During one meeting, he criticized a senior manager who was dominating a meeting even though the subject was not his field of expertise. Bennett attempted to criticize him in a joking way rather than being hostile.^[4]

Relationship Building with the Leader

A major purpose of organizational politics including political skill is to develop good relationships with your superior, as described later in this chapter. More specifically, strong political skills can help you develop a higher quality leader-member exchange (LMX). A new study suggests that having good political skills can help a person develop a positive LMX even when the two parties are demographically different. Previous research had shown that LMXs tend to be more positive when the leader and group member are demographically similar, such as being the same sex or race, or similar in age.

The study in question involved 189 participants in a retail service organization. Seventy-six percent of the sample was white (Caucasian), and 56 percent was women. The average age of participants was 30. Participants all took the political skill inventory presented in Self-Assessment Quiz 13-2, and that has been used in many other studies. Political skill was shown to improve relationships with racially dissimilar leaders and

Political Skill Inventory

Instructions: Using the following 7-point scale, write in each box the number that best describes how much you agree with the statement. 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = slightly agree; 4 = neutral; 5 = slightly agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree.

- 1. I spend a lot of time and effort networking with others.
- 2. I am able to make most people feel comfortable and at ease around me.
- 3. I am able to communicate easily and effectively with others.
- 4. It is easy for me to develop good rapport with most people.
- 5. I understand people very well.
- 6. I am good at building relationships with influential people at work (or at school).
- 7. I am particularly good at sensing the motivations and hidden agendas of others.
- 8. When communicating with others, I try to be genuine in what I say and do.
- 9. I have developed a large network of colleagues and associates at work (or school) who I can call on for support when I really need to get things done.
- 10. At work (or at school), I know a lot of important people and I am well connected.
- 11. I spend a lot of time at work (or at school) developing connections with others.
- 12. I am good at getting people to like me.
- 13. It is important that people believe I am sincere in what I do and say.
- 14. I try to show a genuine interest in other people.
- 15. I am good at using my connections and network to make things happen at work (or at school).
- 16. I have good intuition and savvy about how to present myself to others.
- 17. I always seem to instinctively know the right things to say or do to influence others.
- 18. I pay close attention to people's facial expressions.

Total = Total ÷ 18 =

Scoring and Interpretation: Compute your overall score by adding together your response scores on all the questions and dividing the total by 18. You will have an overall political score between 1 and 7. Larger scores identify people who have higher political skill, and smaller scores identify people who have lower political skill.

Source: Adapted from Gerald R. Ferris et al., "Development and Validation of the Political Skill Inventory," *Journal of Management*, vol. 31, 2005, pp. 126-152.

group member (better LMX scores). It was also found that the quality of the LMX was not due to gender or age. The researchers concluded that political skill enables subordinates who are racially dissimilar to their subordinates to get around the potential relationship problems based on these differences.^[5]

Overcoming the Effects of Injustice

To illustrate further the positive impact of political skill, some evidence suggests that having political skill can help overcome the effects of unfairness in the organization. The study in question was a government agency, and two types of justices were measured by questionnaires—procedural and distributive. Procedural justice is the perceived fairness of the policies and procedures used to make decisions. Distributive justice is how fairly outcomes or rewards are distributed based on these procedures, such as receiving a deserved salary increase. Political skill was measured by the political skill inventory mentioned above, and job performance was measured by supervisory ratings of performance.

The study found that under conditions of injustice, political skill was associated with high performance. Highly politically skilled workers were rated similarly regardless of the level of distributive justice. In other words, having good political skill helped overcome

the effects of low justice. Another finding was that under conditions of impression management, political skill is harmful to performance ratings.^[6] You need political skills to be successful in an unfair system.

IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT AND ETIQUETTE

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 2

Impression Management

A set of behaviors directed at enhancing one's image by drawing attention to oneself.

Being an effective, responsible contributor is not always sufficient to gain the recognition you deserve. It may also be necessary to make others aware of your capability. Impression management is a set of behaviors directed at enhancing one's image by drawing attention to oneself. Often the attention is directed toward superficial aspects of the self, such as clothing and appearance. Yet, impression management also includes doing a good job, telling people about your accomplishments and appearing self-confident. The next sections list specific tactics of impression management and discuss business etiquette. We discuss etiquette here because how you behave in certain situations shapes your image.

Tactics of Impression Management

Managing the impression you create encompasses hundreds of specific tactics, not only by your imagination of what will impress others. Impression management is regarded as the process by which people control the impression others form of them. Part of your power in the organization stems from your formal position, as well as how you are perceived by others. Creating the right image is the practice of impression management.^[7]

Although impression management can be used in a variety of relationships, it is commonly found in the attempt of a worker to please the manager. For example, impression management is frequently used during performance evaluation in order to impress the manager with the worker's accomplishments. Six positive tactics of impression management are described next.

Display Organizational Citizenship Behavior. We mention organizational citizenship behavior in several places in our study of human relations because of its contribution to effective interpersonal relationships. A highly effective and meritorious way of creating a good impression is to step outside your job description to help coworkers and the company. You become admired for going beyond the call of duty.^[8] Organizational citizenship behavior is generally aimed at helping others, yet it is possible that the motive underlying citizenship behavior is to foster a good impression. A prime example is that volunteering for special assignments helping others may provide workers with an opportunity to show off their talents and knowledge, leading to an enhanced image.

Impression management theorists argue that a primary human motive is to be viewed positively by others, and to avoid being viewed negatively. Engaging in organizational citizenship behavior is an effective means of being viewed positively in the sense of having positive motives for engaging in constructive behavior such as collecting relief funds for a coworker whose apartment burned down.

Whether or not organizational citizenship behavior has an element of trying to look good, the balance of evidence is that citizenship behavior helps both individuals and the organization. Based on 168 studies involving more than 50,000 workers, it was found that organizational citizenship behavior helped individuals receive better performance ratings and salary increases. Organizations benefited in such ways higher productivity, lowered costs, and better customer service.^[9]

BACK TO THE OPENING CASE

Todd Averett and other managers at Payless ShoeSource have continued to emphasize the importance of organizational citizenship behavior as a corporate value. One of many positive consequences is that the employees build good relationships with managers,

and are satisfied with their good working conditions. Employee turnover is low by industry standards, and profits are high.



Build Trust and Confidence. A key strategy for creating a positive impression with your immediate superior and higher ranking managers is to build trust and confidence. Project the authentic impression of a person who can be trusted to carry out responsibilities faithfully and ethically. Rather than take action without permission (e.g., spending beyond budget), know the bounds of your authority and work within those bounds. Be aware that your boss has other responsibilities, so do not take more than your fair share of his or her time. You will generate an impression of confidence if you suggest alternative solutions to the problems you bring to your manager.¹¹⁰

Be Visible and Create a Strong Presence. An essential part of impression management is to be perceived as a valuable contributor on the job. Visibility is attained in many ways such as regular attendance at meetings and company social events, being assigned to important projects, and doing volunteer work in the community. Helping in the launch of a new product or redesigning work methods are other ways of attaining visibility and creating a strong presence. Face-to-face visibility is perhaps the best, but electronic visibility can also be effective. This includes making intelligent contributions to company intranets and blogs, and sending e-mail messages of substance to the right people. Saying nice things about your company on social networking sites is valuable also. Terry Bragg observes that many employees are shocked to learn that they were valuable contributors.¹¹¹

Admit Mistakes. Many people believe that to create a good impression, it is best to cover up mistakes. In this way, you will not appear vulnerable. A higher level of political skill is to admit mistakes, thereby appearing more forthright and trustworthy. The simple statement "I goofed" will often gain you sympathy and support, whereas an attempted cover up will decrease your social capital. For purposes of impression management, the bottom line of being wrong is to (a) admit the error, (b) request guidance, (c) step up repair, and (d) learn from it.¹¹² Requesting guidance is important because it conveys the impression that you have humility and that you trust the advice and counsel of others. Here is an example of this tactic in action:

Cindy, a call center operator, is listening on the phone to a woman rant and rave about a \$5.87 charge on her credit card that seems unwarranted. Thinking that she has the telephone receiver covered, Cindy says in a sigh of exasperation to a coworker, "I'm about to scream. I'm talking to the biggest jerk of year right now." Unfortunately "the biggest jerk of the year" heard the comment and reported it to Cindy's supervisor.

During a review of the incident with her supervisor, Cindy said, "Yes indeed I made the comment," and then asked how to deal with the pressures of such an overreacting customer. Cindy offered to send a written apology to the customer. So far, Cindy has learned from her error and not repeated the incident.

Minimize Being a Yes-Person. A conventional view of organizational politics suggests that being a yes-person is an excellent way of developing a good relationship with higher-ups, and generating the impression of a loyal and supportive subordinate. The yes-person operates by the principle, "the boss is always right." Often the boss cultivates yes-person behavior among subordinates by being intimidating, and unapproachable.¹¹³ When working for an emotionally secure and competent manager, you are likely to create a better impression by not agreeing with all the boss's ideas and plans. Instead, express constructive disagreement by explaining how the boss's plan might be enhanced, or an error be avoided.

Assume that you work in the marketing department of Jitterbug, a simplified cell phone that focuses on the senior market. Your boss suggests an advertising theme suggesting that even people with arthritis and who are technically challenged can easily operate a Jitterbug. Your intuition tells you this theme would be a humiliating insult to seniors. So, you respond to your boss, "I know that Jitterbug targets seniors, but I suggest that we tone down the terms "arthritis"

and “technically challenged.” What not be positive and state that the keys are easy to manipulate, and that the Jitterbug is as easy to operate as a land-line phone?”

Create a Healthy Image. A superficial yet important part of impression management is to project a healthy, physically fit appearance. Appearing physically fit in the workplace has gained in importance as many business firms offer workers rewards for being physically fit and avoiding smoking and obesity. Among the rewards offered by employers are electronic gadgets, discounted health insurance, and cash bonuses. At IBM Corp. employees get as much as \$300 annually for exercising regularly, quitting smoking, or logging on to the company’s preventive-care Web site.^[14] Microsoft has a wellness program directed specifically at combating obesity with such features as a personal trainer, custom nutritional plan, and health spa facilities.^[15] From an impression management perspective, being obese at health-conscious companies would be a negative.

Projecting an image of emotional fitness also contributes to a healthy image. *Emotional fitness* would include such behaviors as appearing relaxed, appropriate laughing and smiling, and a minimum of nervous mannerisms and gestures. Being physically fit helps project emotional fitness. When managing the impression you create, be mindful of the advice offered by William L. Gardner III. He urges that you be yourself. When selecting an image, do not attempt to be somebody you are not because people will see through that facade. Gardner concludes, “Make every effort to put your best foot forward—but never at the cost of your identity or integrity!”^[16] Impression management is geared toward looking good, but not creating a false impression.

You need good political skills to be effective at impression management. A study of 204 employees working on environmental issues indicated that when employees with good political skill use impression management tactics, they are likely to receive higher job performance ratings from their supervisor. In contrast, individuals low in political skill who engage in impression management tend to be seen less positively by their supervisors.^[17] In other words, you need a little finesse and sensitivity to people to be good in office politics.

Another essential part of impression management is to avoid creating a negative impression through such behaviors as being absent or late frequently, speaking poorly, or talking in a meeting while the presenter is speaking. The discussion of etiquette helps guide a person away from behaviors that would bring him or her negative attention.

Skill-Building Exercise 13-1 gives you an opportunity to try out a highly practical application of impression management.

SKILL-BUILDING EXERCISE 13-1

The Elevator 30-Second Speech

A long-standing suggestion in career development and impressing higher-ups is to make a 30-second impromptu presentation when you have a chance encounter with a key person in your organization. If you work in an office tower, the chance encounter is likely to take place in an elevator—and it is generally frowned upon to have long conversations in an elevator. So the term *elevator speech* developed to describe a brief opportunity to impress a key person. Imagine that you have a chance encounter with a high-ranking executive in your area on the elevator, escalator, parking lot, or during a company picnic, or some other location. You then give that person a 30-second pitch geared to make a positive impression. Because you must boil your pitch down to 30 seconds, you will need to prepare for a long time. (Credit President Abraham Lincoln with that insight.)

About six different pairs (impresser and person to be impressed) will carry out this role-play in front of the class. The evaluators will put themselves in the role of the key person who was the target

of the 30-second evaluation. Consider using the following scale, and answering the two questions:

- _____ Wow, I was impressed. (5 points)
- _____ I was kind of impressed with the person I ran into. (4 points)
- _____ He or she left me with at least an average impression (3 points)
- _____ I found the person to be somewhat annoying. (2 points)
- _____ That person I met left with a terrible impression. (1 point)

1. What I liked about person’s 30-second pitch?
2. What I saw as possible areas for improvement?

Find a mechanism to feed back some of your observations to the role players. Volunteer to present the findings in class, give the person your comments on note paper, or send him or her an e-mail or text message.

Business Etiquette

A major component of managing your impression is practicing good etiquette. Business etiquette is a special code of behavior required in work situations. The term *manners* has an equivalent meaning. Both *manners* and *etiquette* generally refer to behaving in a refined and acceptable manner. Jim Rucker and Jean Anna Sellers explain that business etiquette is much more than knowing how to use the correct utensil or how to dress in a given situation. Businesspeople today must know how to be at ease with strangers and with groups, be able to offer congratulations smoothly, know how to make introductions, and know how to conduct themselves at company social functions.^[18]

Studying etiquette is important because knowing and using proper business etiquette contributes to individual and business success. People who are considerate of the feelings of others, and companies that are courteous toward customers, are more likely to succeed than their rude counterparts. Another perspective on etiquette is that it is a way of presenting yourself with the kind of polish that shows you can be taken seriously. So many people are rude and uncivil today that practicing good etiquette will often give you a competitive advantage.^[19]

Business etiquette includes many aspects of interpersonal relations in organizations, as described in the following discussion.^[20] We have already discussed in Chapter 5 several aspects of etiquette in relation to the digital workplace. What is considered proper etiquette and manners in the workplace changes over time and may vary with the situation. At one time, addressing one's superior by his or her first name was considered brash. Today it is commonplace behavior. A sampling of etiquette guidelines is nevertheless helpful. A general principle of being considerate of the feelings of work associates is more important than any one act of etiquette or courtesy. Keep in mind, also, that you will find a few contradictory statements in writings about etiquette.

Etiquette for Work Behavior and Clothing. Work behavior etiquette includes all aspects of performing in the work environment, such as completing work on time, punctuality, being a good team player, listening to others, and following through. For instance, having the courtesy to complete a project when it is due demonstrates good manners and respect for the work of others.

Clothing might be considered part of general work behavior. The casual standards in the information technology field, along with dress-down days, have created confusion about proper office attire. A general rule is that *casual* should not be interpreted as sloppy, such as torn jeans or a stained sweatshirt. Many companies have moved back toward emphasizing traditional business attire, such as suits for men and women. In many work situations, dressing more formally may constitute proper etiquette.

Introductions. The basic rule for introductions is to present the lower ranking person to the higher ranking person regardless of age or sex. "Ms. Barker (the CEO), I would like you to meet my new coworker, Reggie Taylor." (Observe that the higher ranking person's name is mentioned first.) If the two people being introduced are of equal rank, mention the older one first. Providing a little information about the person being introduced is considered good manners. When introducing one person to the group, present the group to the individual. "Sid Foster, this is our accounts receivable team." When being introduced to a person, concentrate on the name and repeat it soon, thus enhancing learning. A fundamental display of good manners is to remember people's names and to pronounce them correctly. When dealing with people senior to you or of higher rank, call them by their last name and title until told otherwise. (Maybe Ms. Barker, above, will tell you, "Please call me Kathy.")

It is good manners and good etiquette to remember the names of work associates to whom you are introduced, even if you see them only occasionally. If you forget the name of a person, it is better to admit this than to guess and come up with the wrong name. Just say, "I apologize, but I have forgotten your name. Tell me once more, and I will not forget your name again."

Both men and women are expected to extend their right hand when being introduced. Give a firm, but not overpowering, handshake, and establish eye contact with the person you are greeting. However, some people are concerned about handshakes being unhygienic,

business etiquette

A special code of behavior required in work situations.

so be willing to use the modern fist-to-fist light touch often used in social life. If the other person extends the fist, you do the same.

Robert Soligo, Interview with the Author and Interview Report on Different Ages. Social etiquette is based on chivalry and the gender of the person, whereas business etiquette is based on generally equal treatment for all. Women should no longer be treated differently when approaching a door, riding in an elevator, or walking in the street. According to the new rules, the person in the lead (no matter the gender or age) should proceed first and hold the door for the others following. However, a man should still follow a woman when using an escalator. When using stairs, a man usually follows a woman going up and precedes her going down. Men no longer have to walk next to the street when walking with one or two women. Elders should still be respected, but not in such ways as holding doors open for them, helping them off with their overcoats, or getting coffee for them.

Unless you are good friends who typically hug when meeting, it is best to avoid touching others of the same or opposite sex except for a handshake. Some people believe that nonsexual touching is part of being charming and warm, yet many workers are offended when touched by another worker. The subject is controversial because public figures often drape their arms around others, and physical touching is part of the ritual of offering congratulations in sports. Of note, many athletic coaches have switched to fist-to-fist touching to say hello or offer congratulations to teenagers and young children to avoid being charged with sexually suggestive contact.

Dining. Etiquette surrounding meals involves planning for the meeting, making seating arrangements, bill paying, tipping, using proper table manners, and appropriate drinking of alcoholic beverages. We all know not to slurp spaghetti one strand at a time, pour ketchup over sauce, or leave a 50 cent tip. The key point is not to draw negative attention to you. Less obvious are the following guidelines:

- Arrange seating for meal meetings in advance.
- Establish with the server who will be paying the check.
- Place your napkin on your lap immediately after being seated.
- Bread should not be used to push food onto a fork or spoon.
- Attempt to pace your eating to those of others at the table.
- The wait staff, not the diners, should be responsible for moving plates around the table.
- Circulate rolls and bread to the right, not the left.
- Order an alcoholic beverage only when invited to do so by the person sponsoring the meal, and then only if he or she does. Do not get drunk or even high.

Working in a Cubicle. Workplace cubicles were invented by fine arts professor Bob Probst in the 1960s, and they have been praised and condemned ever since. The praise generally relates to saving the company money on office space and having more open communication. The condemnation usually relates to lack of privacy, and therefore ties in directly with workplace etiquette.

Cubicles represent a major etiquette challenge because a variety of coworkers and superiors can observe your everyday work behavior.^[21] Among the many etiquette challenges for the cubicle dweller are: (a) speaking low enough into a wired phone so as not to annoy others or reveal confidential information, (b) not allowing a personal cell phone ring during the workday, (c) not displaying material on the computer that others might find offensive, unless the subject is business related, (d) not wearing a sports cap indoors unless an acceptable part of the company culture, and (e) not taking care of personal hygiene such as dental flossing, hair spraying, or nail clipping.

Cubicle sizes have been shrunk recently to save on company real estate. As a result, people work even closer to each other physically. The etiquette challenges just mentioned have thereby intensified, particularly with respect to invading the privacy of others.^[22]

Cross-cultural Relations. What constitutes proper etiquette may differ from culture to culture. Be alert to differences in etiquette in areas such as gift giving, dining, drinking

alcoholic beverages, and when and where to discuss business. A culture must be studied carefully, including asking questions, to understand what constitutes proper etiquette.

Many of these differences in customs were described in Chapter 8. Violating these customs is poor etiquette. For example, using the index finger to point is considered rude in most Asian and Middle Eastern countries. Also, people in Middle Eastern countries tend to stand as close as two or three inches from the person with whom they are talking. To back away is interpreted as an insult. An American visitor to China nearly lost a major sale because after receiving a business card from the Chinese company representative, he stuffed it in his pocket without first carefully reading the card. Proper etiquette in China is to carefully read the giver's business card, and perhaps holding it with both hands out of respect. We emphasize again that stereotypes such as those just mentioned refer to typical behavior and are accurate perhaps only about 70 percent of the time.

Suppose you are in doubt about the proper etiquette for any situation, and you do not have a handbook of etiquette readily available. As a substitute, observe how your host or a successful person in the group behaves.

Interaction with People with Physical Disabilities. Many able-bodied people are puzzled by what is proper etiquette in working with people with disabilities. Be as natural and open as you can. In addition, consider these guidelines for displaying good manners when dealing with a physical disability:

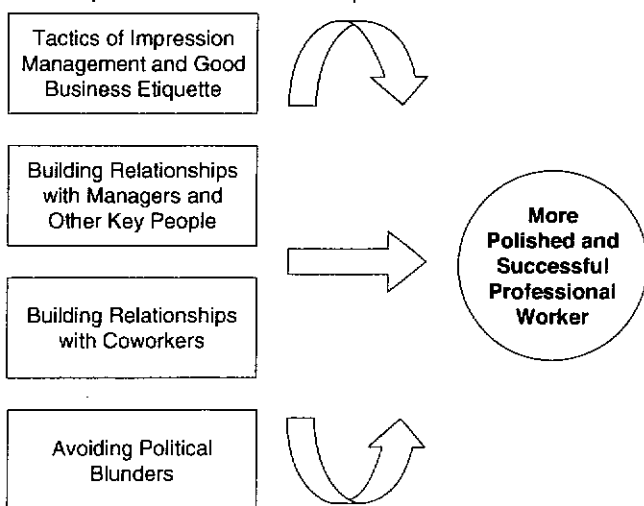
- Speak directly to a person with a disability, not to the person's companion.
- Don't assume that a person with a disability needs help. If someone is struggling, ask for permission to assist.
- When talking to a person in a wheelchair, place yourself at that person's eye level.
- When speaking to a person with impaired vision, identify yourself and anyone who may be with you. Do not shout when speaking to a blind person.
- To get the attention of a deaf person, tap the person's shoulder or wave your hand.
- Treat a person with a disability as you would anyone else except for the differences noted in this list.¹²³¹

As shown in Figure 13-2, impression management combined with managing relationships and avoiding political blunders contributed to being a more polished and successful professional worker.

Skill-Building Exercise 13-2 gives you an opportunity to practice appropriate etiquette in several situations.

FIGURE 13-2 Relationship between Positive Political Behaviors and Individual Success

Impression management, building relationships with influential people, and avoiding political blunders all contribute to being a more polished and successful professional worker



Business Etiquette

An effective way of improving business etiquette is by using your best manners in real-life situations. Role-playing etiquette scenarios can also contribute to helping you develop the right mental set for using good etiquette.

Scenario 1: Dining Etiquette. A small group of students plan to conduct a high-etiquette meal at a local family restaurant during nonpeak hours. Pretend the stainless steel utensils are fine silver and that the glasses are crystal. Each class member uses his or her best etiquette. At the same time, each group member carefully observes the etiquette displayed by the other members.

At the conclusion of the meal, critique each other's etiquette. If you were courteous enough to invite your instructor to your high-etiquette meal, get his or her feedback.

Scenario 2: Telephone Etiquette. Two people using cell phones are separated by about six feet. Several pairs of students might conduct phone conversations covering such matters as discussing customer complaints, inquiring about a job, or asking about product availability. (Note: The students merely *pretend* they are using the phone, rather than waste phone minutes. However, should phone minutes not be an issue a real phone call will add to the authenticity of the exercise.) Students not making the calls will carefully observe the callers. Look for examples of good and poor telephone etiquette. Feedback will be provided after the phone conversations are completed.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH MANAGERS AND OTHER KEY PEOPLE

The political purpose of building good relationships with managers is to gain power through such means as being recommended for promotion and key assignments. A good relationship with the boss is also important for the basic purpose of receiving a good performance evaluation. Building these good relationships is also important because it helps create a positive, supportive work environment for you. Good relationships can also be established with managers for the nonpolitical purpose of trying to get the job accomplished. The strategies and tactics described next are outlined in Figure 13-3.

Network with Influential People

A basic success strategy is developing contacts, or **networking**, with influential people. In addition to making contacts, networking involves gaining the trust and confidence of the influential people. (Networking for job finding is described in Chapter 17.) Before you can network with influential people, you must identify who those power players are.^[24] You might make observations of your own, such as listening for whose names are mentioned frequently by people in the company. Asking the opinions of others about which people influence decision making can be illuminating. Sometimes a person without a fancy job title might be a highly influential person. An example is that an administrative assistant might exert heavily influence the decisions of his or her boss.

networking

Developing contacts with influential people, including gaining their trust and confidence. Also, contacting friends and acquaintances and building systematically on these relationships to create a still wider set of contacts that might lead to employment.

FIGURE 13-3 Strategies and Tactics for Building Relationships with Managers and Other Key People

1. Network with influential people.
2. Help your manager succeed.
3. Understanding unwritten boundaries.
4. Volunteer for assignments.
5. Flatter influential people sensibly.
6. Use information power.
7. Appear cool under pressure.
8. Laugh at your manager's humor.
9. Express constructive disagreement.
10. Present a clear picture of your accomplishments.

Networking also takes place with people inside and outside the organization who are not your managers. Developing contacts with influential people is likely to pay big career dividends. A standard procedure is to create a card or computer file of the people in your network and update it frequently. To keep your network effective, it is necessary to contact people on your list periodically. Developing a network of influential people requires alertness and planning. You have to identify influential people and then think of a sensible reason to contact them. Here are a few possibilities:

- Send an e-mail message to a high-ranking manager, offering a money-saving or revenue-producing suggestion. A related tactic is to inform the person of something of significance you did that might lie directly in his or her area of interest. Social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter can be used for networking with influential people. An influential person who joins such a site is usually open to making new contacts. (You may find, however, that many influential people are not willing to become your “friend.” However, you will often be able to at least send them a message.)
- Do a standout job as a member of a task force or committee that includes a high-ranking official.
- Discuss your career plans with a neighbor who has an outstanding position.
- Take the initiative to develop a friendship with an influential person who is a member of your athletic club, YMCA, YWCA, or place of worship.

Networking is so often used—and abused—that suggestions and guidelines for networking etiquette have emerged. A starting point is to be clear, concise, and specific when making requests of networking contacts. Explain, for example, that you want to become an industry specialist and would like to acquire specific information. Be frank about the amount of time you would want from the network member, such as 15 minutes per month of e-mail and telephone contact.

After making contact with a potential network member, explain the benefit this person is likely to derive from his or her association with you. Provide a *benefit statement* for interacting with you and helping you with your career.¹²⁵¹ Indicate specifically how this person might benefit from you being in his or her network. (If a person is in your network, you are also in that person’s network.) If the potential network member is more powerful than you, it is still possible to think of what benefit you might be able to provide. Two examples follow:

- I would like to contact you a few times a year about career concerns. In return, I would be happy to help you identify some groups on Twitter that might be worthwhile for our company to contact.
- In return for my receiving career advice from you from time to time, I would be happy to collect information for you about how people in my area perceive one of your products. I have lots of useful contacts in my community.

Avoid being a pest. Many influential people are bombarded with requests to be part of someone’s network, so ask for a modest amount of time and assistance. Good networking etiquette is to request a collaborative relationship in which you give as much as you get. The benefit statement just mentioned will place you in a collaborative relationship with the influential person.

Help Your Manager Succeed

The primary reason you are hired is to help your manager achieve the results necessary to succeed. Avoid an adversarial relationship with your manager. Also figure out both obvious and subtle ways of ensuring the manager’s success. One subtle way of increasing your manager’s chances for success is to help out that person when he or she is under attack from another department. One example would be to supply information to support your manager’s position on a controversial issue. Also keep in mind the cornerstone tactic of performing your job superbly. Your manager will then share in your success.

A specific relationship-building advantage of helping your manager succeed is that he or she is likely to develop loyalty toward you in such matters as recommending you for a bigger salary increase, and giving you a better performance evaluation. And during a downsizing, you are less likely to be tapped for job loss.

Understand Unwritten Boundaries

A person skilled at positive organizational politics is able to read unwritten rules about who has the authority to do what. According to psychologist Judith Sills, there exist **unwritten boundaries**, or dividing lines of behavior appropriate to different roles. Many workers struggle with office problems that are boundary issues in disguise. Sills observes that boundaries for office interactions are like the rope lanes in a swimming pool. The purpose of the ropes is to enhance safety, but they can be budged or even removed depending on need, skill, and circumstance.

Unwritten boundaries deal with such issues as when it is appropriate to correct your boss, how much anger to display, which influential people you can invite to a social engagement, and whose speech or appearance you can criticize. A person with an exaggerated sense of his or her worth may have trouble that a boundary exists at all, such as one woman who felt free to protest angrily when her boss changed something in her report.^[26] Two other examples of unacceptable boundary crossing are (a) a man who told a vice president that his hairpiece looked phony, and (b) a woman who told her boss that she needed to upgrade her information technology skills to be a credible leader.

An example of successful boundary crossing took place when an accounts receivable specialist sent an unsolicited e-mail to the director of marketing. The young worker said that he grew up in Mexico and would be happy to provide input for the company's plans to penetrate the Mexican market. Although the accounts receivable worker was from outside of the marketing department, he was invited to participate in a focus group about expanding into the Mexican market.

Look for indicators as to whether boundaries can be crossed in your company. First, count the layers in your company's organization structure. The more layers (or more hierarchical) the company, the less welcome boundary crossing is likely to be. Look for established border crossings. Observe where people of different rank in the company mix. Among the possibilities are the fitness center, the cafeteria, and after-hours drinks. Make your first attempts at border crossing at those places.^[27]

Volunteer for Assignments

An easily implemented method of winning the approval of superiors is to become a "hand raiser." By volunteering to take on assignments that do not fit neatly into your job description, you display the kind of initiative valued by employers. At the same time, you are practicing organizational citizenship behavior. Among the many possible activities to volunteer for are fundraising campaigns assigned to your company, project membership, and working overtime when most people prefer not to (e.g., on a Saturday in July). Task force and committee assignments are also useful for being noticed by key people in the organization. Offer to help coordinate a charity campaign such as the United Way. As a team member, volunteer to assume any leadership responsibility you think you can handle. If your team offers rotating leadership assignments, express an interest in taking your turn.

Flatter Influential People Sensibly

One of the most effective relationship builders is to flatter people sensibly and credibly. Despite the risk of being called obsequious or a cheap office politician, the flatterer wins. A study on how to advance in big business pointed out that a company's top employees tend to be equal in performance. Advancing was based on image (30%) and contact time with the manager (50%). Flattery can play a big role in both.^[28] Another study indicated that even at the highest positions in business, flattery helps a person get ahead. Specifically, ingratiating yourself to the CEO, including flattery, was a major factor in receiving an appointment as a board of director at major companies. Not carefully

monitoring (carefully scrutinizing) the CEO's activities also worked in a person's favor for obtaining a board appointment.^[29] You might interpret not finding fault with a CEO to be a subtle form of flattery.

Flattery is likely to be effective because most people want to receive accolades, even if they are not completely warranted. People who pay us compliments are likely to be treated kindly in turn.^[30] Remember, however, the discussion about recognition in Chapter 11 suggesting that less technically oriented people are often the most receptive to praise and flattery. Flattery geared toward the more technically oriented person might have to be more concrete and tied to specific accomplishments. Recent evidence supports the idea that constructive compliments are not overblown. Descriptions of what went right are more effective than evaluative phrases, such as "magnificent" or "extraordinary." An effective, general-purpose piece of flattery is to tell another person that you are impressed by something he or she accomplished. Rather than telling an influential person that he or she is a genius, you might say to a manager after a meeting.^[31] "Everyone in the meeting was listening so attentively when you gave your report. And the industry statistics you found really drove home the point."

Another way of flattering somebody is to listen attentively. If you actively listen to the other person, he or she will feel flattered. The person might think, "What I have to say is valuable. This person really cares about what I have to offer." Flattery can also take the form of quoting another person, or referring to something he or she said to you earlier.

During the next two weeks, try flattering an influential person. In the interim, do Skill-Building Exercise 13-3.

Use Information Power

Power accrues to those who control vital information. At the same time, being a source of useful information will help you build constructive working relationships with managers. You will be relied on as an important contributor. Controlling vital information includes knowing how to gain access to useful information that others do not know how to retrieve. Many workers are aware of the mechanics of using the Internet, but fewer have the skills to use the Internet to retrieve commercially useful information. During a tight labor market, for example, human resource specialists can acquire power if they know how to use the Internet to find talented people who might want to join the company. These specialists have knowledge beyond using commercially available Internet recruiting services.

Information power is closely related to *expert power*, which refers to having valuable expertise. If your expertise or skill is in high demand at the moment, power will flow in your direction. Currently, an important type of expert power is being able to use social

SKILL-BUILDING EXERCISE 13-3

Flattering an Influential Person

A perceptive, intelligent reader like you has probably already guessed the nature of this role-play. One student plays the role of a newcomer to the organization who is seeking to advance, or at least to secure, his or her position in the organization. Another person plays the role of a vice president of marketing who is visiting the newcomer's department. The company holds this vice president in high esteem because he or she recently spearheaded the introduction of a highly successful product, a *smart mattress*. The mattress adjusts to the temperature requirements and firmness of its user. In some models, the two sides of the mattress can have different settings to adapt to the heat and firmness preferences of two users sharing the same mattress.

The newcomer is asked to escort the vice president to another part of the building. The walk should take about five

minutes, giving the newcomer an opportunity to work in some flattery. Fortunately, the newcomer has read the sales literature about the smart mattress, and has even tried out one in the factory showroom. Although the vice president is not naive, he or she is proud of his or her accomplishments. The two role players conduct the five-minute walk, perhaps circling the classroom.

Observers rate the role players on two dimensions, using a 1-to-5 scale from very poor to very good. One dimension is "effective use of flattery." The second dimension is "acting ability." A few observers might voluntarily provide feedback to the role players in terms of sharing their ratings and observations. The course instructor might also provide feedback.

networking sites to gain publicity for products (including creating a buzz for the product) and to recruit employees.

Appear Cool under Pressure

Showing signs of panic generally hurts your reputation with influential people. In contrast, appearing to be in emotional control when things around you are falling apart helps convey the impression that you are worthy of additional responsibility. Being cool under pressure is part of emotional stability, and it is a key leadership characteristic. Coolness under pressure is often displayed during a crisis such as a flood, hurricane, or fire. The manager who can get the operation, including store, factory, hospital, or call center, back and running within a week is perceived to work extraordinarily well under pressure. Many managers at McDonald's and Wal-Mart enhanced their relationship with corporate executives because they responded so quickly and positively, to the ravages of Hurricane Katrina. Locating and aiding displaced employees were part of the heroic efforts of these managers.

Laugh at Your Manager's Humor

When you indicate by your laughter that you appreciate your manager's sense of humor, it helps establish rapport between the two of you. An indicator of good two-way communication between people is that the two parties comprehend each other's subtle points. Most humor in the workplace deals with subtle meanings about work-related topics. To implement the tactic of laughing at your manager's jokes, do not worry excessively about having heard the joke before.

Express Constructive Disagreement

At one time the office politician thought an effective way of pleasing the boss was to be a "yes-person," as mentioned earlier. A more intelligent tactic in the modern business world is to be ready to disagree in a constructive manner when you sincerely believe that the boss is wrong. In the long run, you will probably earn more respect than if you agree with the boss just to please him or her. Constructive disagreement is based on a careful analysis of the situation and is also tactful.

The right way to disagree means not putting your manager in a corner or embarrassing your manager by confronting him or her loudly or in public. If you disagree with your boss, use carefully worded, inoffensive statements. In this way, you minimize the chances of a confrontation or hostile reaction. Remember the smart mattress mentioned in Skill-Building Exercise 13-3? Suppose the marketing vice president claims that the mattress is geared exclusively toward the senior citizen market, and you disagree. You might say, "I think that marketing our smart mattress to seniors is a breakthrough. Yet, I also see some other possibilities. There are loads of cold-sensitive young people who wanted a heated mattress. Also, a lot of young people with athletic injuries or orthopedic problems would welcome an adjustable mattress. Does my thinking make any sense?"

The reason constructive disagreement helps you build a good relationship with most managers is that the boss comes to respect your job knowledge and your integrity. However, if you are working with a very insecure boss, he or she may be taken aback by disagreement. In that case, you have to be extra tactful in expressing disagreement.

Present a Clear Picture of Your Accomplishments

"What have you done for me lately?" is a question on the minds of many managers. To the extent that you can clearly document what you have accomplished recently, as well as in the past, you are therefore likely to enhance your relationship with your manager. You can help your manager better understand your contributions by explaining exactly what work you are doing, problems you are solving, and the successes you are attaining. Document legitimately what you have accomplished, and communicate it in a factual, matter-of-fact manner. The occasional FYI e-mail provides useful documentation, providing you do not appear to be bragging.^[32] A collection agent might

to her boss, "In March, I collected an average of \$310 from my block of delinquent accounts. So far, I have collected at least something from 25 out of the 31 accounts currently assigned. We should be getting something from three more of these delinquent accounts."

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH COWORKERS AND OTHER WORK ASSOCIATES

Another strategy for increasing your power is to form alliances with coworkers and other work associates. You need the support of these people to get your work accomplished. When you are being considered for promotion, coworkers and other work associates may be asked their opinion of you. Under a peer-evaluation system, the opinion of coworkers about your performance counts heavily. Long-term research conducted by Tom Rath of the Gallup Organization with many thousands of employees emphasizes the importance of friendships and alliances in the workplace. Rath concludes that employees who have a best friend in the office are more productive and more likely to have positive interactions with customers, share ideas, and stay longer on the job. Also, many employees succeed or fail based on the support and involvement of best friends.^[33] (The term *best* appears to imply that the contact is not simply an acquaintance or someone on your contact list on a social networking Web site.)

Another perspective on the importance of cooperation in the workplace is that cooperation enhances happiness and satisfaction. Long-term research by the University of California psychology professor Richard Schuster says that it is natural for humans, as well as other animals, to want to cooperate. Schuster posits that evolution has prodded us toward enjoying the company of other people, and toward cooperation. He adds that social behavior is its own reward.^[34]

Figure 13-4 lists eight strategies and techniques for developing good interpersonal relationships at or below your level. The information about developing teamwork skills presented in Chapter 6 is also relevant here.

Maintain Honest and Open Relationships

Although being honest may appear to contradict organizational politics, it is representative of the nature of positive politics. Openness and honesty also helps build trust among coworkers. Giving coworkers frank but tactful answers to their requests for your opinion is one useful way of developing open relationships. Assume that a coworker asks your opinion of an e-mail he intends to send to his supervisor. As you read it, you find it somewhat incoherent and filled with spelling and grammatical errors. An honest response to this message might be: "I think your idea is a good one. But I think your e-mail needs more work before that idea comes across clearly."

Accurately expressing your feelings, whether positive or negative, also leads to constructive relationships. If you have been singled out for good performance, let other team

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 4

“If you want to be happier and more engaged at work, considering developing a few strong friendships at the office, maybe even one with your boss.”

—Tom Rath, head of the Gallup Organization's Workplace Research and Leadership Consulting, and author of *Vital Friends*^[35]

FIGURE 13-4 Strategies and Tactics for Developing Relationships with Coworkers and Other Work Associates

1. Maintain honest and open relationships.
2. Make others feel important.
3. Be diplomatic.
4. Exchange favors.
5. Ask for advice.
6. Share constructive gossip.
7. Minimize microinequities.
8. Follow group norms.

members know that you are happy and proud. If you arrive at work upset over a personal problem and appearing obviously fatigued, you can expect some reaction. A coworker might say, "What seems to be the problem? Is everything all right?" A dishonest reply would be "Everything is fine." In addition to making an obviously untrue statement, you would also be perceived as rejecting the person who asked the question. If you prefer not to discuss your problem, an honest response would be, "Thanks for your interest. I am facing some problems today. But I think things will work out."

Another advantage of honest and open relationships is that they foster collaboration, which improves teamwork and organizational performance. When John Thain was the chairman and chief of Merrill Lynch & Co., he said, "Fostering teamwork, collaboration, and cross-selling enable us to generate innovations and ideas to give us the best competitive advantage."¹³⁶

One of the swiftest ways of breaking down honest and open relationships with coworkers is to **backstab**—an attempt to discredit by underhanded means, such as innuendo, accusation, or the like. The backstabber will pretend to be your friend, but will say something negative behind your back in an attempt to discredit you. For example, your rival might say to the manager, "I'm worried about the health of _____. She seems so preoccupied that it's difficult to get her attention to talk about any work problems." During times of less job security, including downsizings due to mergers, workers are more likely to say negative things about coworkers to gain advantage. Also, when a promotion is at stake, coworkers are more likely to say negative things about each other to a common boss.¹³⁷

backstab

An attempt to discredit by underhanded means, such as innuendo, accusation, or the like.

Make Others Feel Important

A fundamental principle of fostering good relationships with coworkers and others is to make them feel important. Visualize that everyone in the workplace is wearing a small sign around the neck that says, "Please make me feel important."¹³⁸ Although the leader has the primary responsibility for satisfying this recognition need, coworkers also play a key role. One approach to making a coworker feel important would be to bring a notable accomplishment of his or hers to the attention of the group. Investing a small amount of time in recognizing a coworker can pay large dividends in terms of cultivating an ally. Expressing an interest in the work of others helps them feel important. A basic way to accomplish this end is to ask other employees questions that express an interest in their work, such as the following:

- How is your work going?
- How does the company use output from your department?
- How did you establish all the contacts you did to be so successful in sales?
- How did you develop the skills to do your job?

Expressing an interest in the work of others is also an effective tactic because so many people are self-centered. They are eager to talk about their own work, but rarely pause to express a genuine interest in others. Expressing an interest in the work of others is also effective because it is a form of recognition.

Self-Assessment Quiz 13-3 gives you an opportunity to think about your tendencies toward making others feel important.

Be Diplomatic

Despite all that has been said about the importance of openness and honesty in building relationships, most people fail to be convinced. Their egos are too tender to accept the raw truth when faced with disapproval of their thoughts or actions. Diplomacy is still an essential part of governmental and office politics. Translated into action, diplomacy often means finding the right phrase to convey disapproval, disagreement, or discontent. Here is an example of a delicate situation and the diplomatic phrase used to handle it.

During a staff meeting, a coworker suggests that the entire group schedule a weekend retreat to formulate a strategic plan for the department. The boss looks around the room to gauge the reactions of others to the proposal. You want to

How Important Do I Make People Feel?

Directions: Indicate on a 1-to-5 scale how frequently you act (or would act if the situation presented itself) in the ways indicated below: very infrequently (VI); infrequently (I); sometimes (S); frequently (F); very frequently (VF). Circle the number underneath the column that best fits your answer.

	VI	I	S	F	VF
1. I do my best to correctly pronounce a coworker's name.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I avoid letting other people's egos get too big.	5	4	3	2	1
3. I brag to others about the accomplishments of my coworkers.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I recognize the birthdays of friends in a tangible way.	1	2	3	4	5
5. It makes me anxious to listen to others brag about their accomplishments.	5	4	3	2	1
6. After hearing that a friend has done something outstanding, I shake his or her hand.	1	2	3	4	5
7. If a friend or coworker recently received a degree or certificate, I would offer my congratulations.	1	2	3	4	5
8. If a friend or coworker finished second in a contest, I would inquire why he or she did not finish first.	5	4	3	2	1
9. If a coworker showed me how to do something, I would compliment that person's skill.	1	2	3	4	5
10. When a coworker starts bragging about a family member's accomplishments, I do not respond.	5	4	3	2	1

Total Score _____

Scoring and Interpretation: Total the numbers corresponding to your answers. Scoring 40 to 50 points suggests that you typically make people feel important; 16 to 39 points suggests that you have a moderate tendency toward making others feel important; 10 to 15 points suggests that you need to develop skill in making others feel important. Study this chapter carefully.

say: "What a stupid idea. Who needs to ruin an entire weekend to do something we could easily accomplish on a workday afternoon?" The diplomatic response is: "I've heard that retreats sometimes work. But would spending that much time on the strategic plan be cost effective? Maybe we could work on the plan during one long meeting. If we don't get the planning accomplished in that time frame, we could then consider the offsite."

E. Judge Favors

An important part of human interaction on and off the job is to reciprocate with others. Exchanging favors with others can make it easier for people to accomplish their work because they are able to call on assistance when needed. The adept political player performs a favor for another employee without asking a favor in return. The favor is then cashed in when a favor is needed. Several examples of workday exchanges are as follows:

- A paralegal agrees to help another overburdened paralegal in the same law office, knowing that the other paralegal will reciprocate if needed in the future.
- A credit manager agrees to expedite a credit application for a sales representative. In reciprocation, the sales rep agrees not to commit the company to a delivery date on the next sale until the customer's credit has been evaluated.
- An assistant restaurant manager agrees to substitute for another assistant manager on New Year's Eve. A month later the first person asks the second to take over her shift so that she can get away for the weekend.

JOB-ORIENTED INTERPERSONAL SKILLS IN ACTION

Linda Noeth, Training and Development Manager for Unisys Inside Sales and Marketing, Describes Cooperative Work Relationships

Linda Noeth, the training and development manager for Unisys inside sales and marketing, reflects back on some of her job experiences in these words:

I remember my surprise when I realized that the birthday celebrations at my new company involved more than someone just bringing in cake. This meant everyone on the birthday person's team brought something. I soon learned that this exuberance was just the top of the facility's "food paradigm," a tradition that underlay fundamental rules critical to the success of the business.

For example, not only did we celebrate birthdays frequently, we also celebrated teamwork and goal accomplishment. I learned that managers and employees were encouraged to recognize not only exceptional performance but steady dependable performance, and reward it appropriately. Whether it was a formal monetary award, a pat on the back or a giant cookie, there was an expectation that good work would be appreciated.

The generosity of the birthday celebrations carried over to the extraordinary amount of charitable giving and volunteerism the employees at my new company donated. Again, there were no formal guidelines. No one said you must give, but there was an intangible attitude

that said we would reach out and help others around the holidays, but year-round.

While observing the management in my realization, I recognized the upbeat feeling of our organization, in some part be attributed to the fact that most supervisors and managers were able to relax and our reasons to celebrate as well. Not only were they approachable, but I found they were comfortable enough in their roles to be good sports. They dressed for Halloween, they washed employees' cars to raise money for the holiday party, and they allowed themselves to be spoofed during the annual kickoff meeting.

Again, there were no formal procedures to follow for this type of management behavior, but I knew it was part of the group's paradigm and it had a huge impact on the work environment.

Questions

1. In what way does this case history illustrate positive office politics?
2. What would be at least two interpersonal skills you would need to succeed in the work group described in this case?
3. How could the office birthday celebrations and the other giving contribute to the success of the business? Are the activities described in the case just a frivolous waste of time?

Source: Linda Noeth, "All Those Unwritten Rules of the Office Also Have a Policy," *Democrat and Chronicle*, Rochester, New York, February 8, 1991, p. 2E.

Exchanging favors is yet another form of cooperation in the workplace. The accompanying Job-Oriented Interpersonal Skills in Action provides additional insight into the advances of cooperation among workers.

Ask for Advice

Asking advice on technical and professional topics is a good way of building relationships with other employees. Asking for advice from another person—someone whose job does not require giving it—will usually be perceived as a compliment. Asking advice transmits the message, "I trust your judgment enough to ask your opinion on something important to me." You are also saying, "I trust you enough to think that the advice you give me will be in my best interest." Asking advice is also a subtle form of flattery because it shows that you value the person's judgment.

To avoid hard feelings, inform the person whose advice you are seeking that his or her opinion will not necessarily be binding. A request for advice might be prefaced with a comment, such as "I would like your opinion on a problem facing me. But I can't guarantee that I'll be in a position to act on it." As with any other political tactic, asking for advice must be done in moderation. Too much advice asking can make you appear to be indecisive or a pest.

Share Constructive Gossip

An effective way of building workplace relationships is to share constructive gossip with others. Gossip has been defined in many ways, but as used here refers to talk about other people, usually assumed to be based on fact.^[39] Gossip serves as a socializing force because it is a mode of intimate relationships for many employees. Workers get close to each other through the vehicle of gossip. It also serves as the lifeblood of personal relationships on the job. If you are the person supplying the gossip, people will develop positive attitudes toward you. Constructive gossip is unofficial information that supports others, is based

constructive gossip

Unofficial information that supports others, is based on truth, and excepts confidential information.

truth, and respects confidential information. Given these restrictions, here are two samples of positive gossip:

- "I heard that business is really picking up. If this week is any example, the company's profits for the quarter will far exceed expectations."
- "I heard yesterday that the director of public relations just got engaged to a cool guy she met on a cruise."

Minimize Microinequities

A potent way of alienating coworkers is to snub them, or put them down, in a small way without being aware of your behavior. A **microinequity** is a small, semiconscious message we send with a powerful impact on the receiver. A microinequity might also be considered a subtle slight. The inequity might take the form of ignoring another person, a snub, or a sarcastic comment. Understanding microinequities can lead to changes in one-on-one relationships that may profoundly irritate others.^[40]

Imagine that you are in line in the company cafeteria with three coworkers. You turn around and notice an old friend from school who is visiting the company. Next, you introduce your old friend to two of the coworkers with you, but not the third. That coworker is likely to feel crushed and irritated, and it will take you awhile to patch your relationship. Looking at a microinequity from the standpoint of the receiver, a work associate might say to you, "Some computer illiterate sent me an e-mail this morning without the attachment he said was there." You respond, "Excuse me, but that *computer illiterate* was me."

To overcome giving microinequities, it is important to think through the consequences of what you are doing and saying before taking action. In the cafeteria situation above, you might say to yourself, "Here comes time for an introduction, and this is not easy for me. I will remember to introduce everybody to my old friend."

Follow Group Norms

A summary principle to follow in getting along with coworkers is to heed **group norms**, the unwritten set of expectations for group members. Group norms also take the form of social cues about how to act, and therefore contribute to the organizational culture. Representative group norms include the following: (1) help coworkers with problems if you have the right expertise, (2) do not wear formal business attire on casual dress days, (3) have lunch with your coworkers at least once a week, (4) do not complain to the boss about a coworker unless his or her negative behavior is outrageously bad, (5) do not take a sick day unless you are really sick, (6) take your turn in bringing snacks to a meeting at least once a month, and (7) side with your coworkers rather than management when there is a dispute between the two groups.

If you do not deviate too far from these norms, the group will accept much of your behavior. If you do deviate too far, you will be subject to much rejection and therefore lose some of your power base. Yet if you conform too closely to group norms, higher level management may perceive you as unable to identify with management. Employees are sometimes blocked from moving up the ladder because they are regarded as "one of the gang."

Some of the relationship building described in the above eight strategies and tactics is now being done on company social networking sites. These sites are being used to connect employees who have limited opportunity to meet face-to-face, or who simply prefer the Internet for most of their social interactions. Often the company social networking sites are supplemented with Web sites such as Facebook and Twitter because so many employees from the same firm might be members. For many workers, social networks provide a desirable way of communicating because they include photos, videos, and personal information like hobbies and music preferences all of which are good for relationship building.

Skill-Building Exercise 13-4 provides an opportunity to practice several of the techniques for building interpersonal relationships with coworkers and other work associates.

microinequity

A small, semiconscious message we send with a powerful impact on the receiver.

group norms

The unwritten set of expectations for group members.



Getting Along with Coworkers Role Play

An inventory auditor in a department store chain decides to take action aimed at getting along better with coworkers. In each of the following two scenarios, one person plays the role of the inventory auditor. Another person plays the role of an employee whom the auditor is attempting to cultivate.

Scenario 1: Exchanging Favors. The auditor decides to strike a bargain with a store associate. (The role player decides what this exchange of favors should be.) Unknown to the auditor, the store associate is concerned about an inventory audit because he or she is worried about being accused of stealing merchandise.

Scenario 2: Expressing an Interest in Their Work. The auditor decides to express an interest in a tech fixer because he or she can be a valuable ally when conducting an inventory audit. The

inventory audit is computerized, and the appropriate software is confusing and crashes frequently. The tech fixer has a heavy work load and is not prone toward small talk, but he or she does get excited talking about information technology.

For both scenarios, observers rate the role players on two dimensions, using a 1-to-5 scale from very poor to very good. One dimension is "effective use of human relations techniques." The second dimension is "acting ability." A few observers might voluntarily provide feedback to the role players in terms of sharing their ratings and observations. The course instructor might also provide feedback.

After these scenarios have been completed, the class might discuss favors they have exchanged on the job that helped build relationships. Strive for at least five students to present examples of exchanges that enhanced their working relationships.

AVOIDING POLITICAL BLUNDERS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 5

A strategy for not losing whatever power you have accumulated is to refrain from making power-eroding blunders. Committing these politically insensitive acts can also prevent you from attaining power. Self-Assessment Quiz 13-4 will get you started thinking about blunders. Several leading blunders are described in the quiz.

1. Criticizing your manager in a public forum. The oldest saw in human relations is to "praise in public and criticize in private." Yet in the passion of the moment, you may still surrender to the irresistible impulse to criticize your manager publicly.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUIZ 13-4

The Blunder Quiz

Directions: Check whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
1. It's fine to criticize your manager in a meeting as long as the criticism is valid.	_____	_____
2. If I objected to a decision made by top management, I would send a company-wide e-mail explaining my objection.	_____	_____
3. I am willing to insult any coworker if the insult is deserved.	_____	_____
4. I see no problem in using competitors' products or services and letting my superiors know about it.	_____	_____
5. If I thought the CEO of my company were way overpaid, I would send him or her an e-mail making my opinion known.	_____	_____
6. Never bother with company-sponsored social events, such as holiday parties, unless you are really interested.	_____	_____
7. I would not attend a company social function if I had the chance to attend another social activity of more interest to me.	_____	_____
8. I am very open about passing along confidential information.	_____	_____
9. I openly criticize most new ventures my company or department is contemplating.	_____	_____
10. I avoid any deliberate attempt to please or impress coworkers or superiors.	_____	_____

Scoring and Interpretation: The greater the number of statements you agree with, the more prone you are to political blunders that can damage your interpersonal relationships and your career. You need to raise your awareness level of blunders on the job.

As a result, the manager will harbor resentment toward you and perhaps block your chances for advancement.

2. **Bypassing the manager.** Many people believe that because most organizations are more democratic today, it is not important to respect the layers of authority (the chain of command). In reality, following etiquette is highly valued in most firms. Going around the manager to resolve a problem is therefore hazardous. You might be able to accomplish the bypass, but your career could be damaged and your recourses limited. It is much better to work out differences with your manager using standard methods of resolving conflict.
3. **Displaying disloyalty.** Being disloyal to your organization is a basic political blunder. Making it known that you are looking for a position elsewhere is the best-known form of disloyalty. Criticizing your company in public settings, praising the high quality of competitors' products, and writing angry internal e-mail messages about your company are others. You may not get fired, but overt signs of disloyalty may place you in permanent disfavor.
4. **Being a pest.** Common wisdom suggests that diligently pressing for one's demands is the path to success. This may be true up to a point, but when assertiveness is used too often it becomes annoying to many people. The overpersistent person comes to be perceived as a pest, and this constitutes a serious political blunder. An example of being a pest would be asking your manager every month when you are going to receive the raise you deserve.
5. **Being (or being perceived as) a poor team player.** An employee is expected to be a good team player in almost all organizations because cooperation makes collective effort possible. If you are a poor team player, or are perceived as such, your chances for promotion will diminish because you will be recognized as having poor interpersonal skills. Among the ways to be perceived as a poor team player are to engage in social loafing, miss many department meetings, take too much credit for group accomplishments, and minimize your interactions with coworkers. In short, if you ignore all the advice about team play presented in Chapter 6, you will be committing a political blunder.
6. **Burning your bridges.** A potent political blunder is to create ill will among former employers or people who have helped you in the past. The most common form of bridge burning occurs when a person departs from an organization. A person who leaves involuntarily is especially apt to express anger toward those responsible for the dismissal. Venting your anger may give a temporary boost to your emotional well-being, but it can be detrimental in the long run.
7. **Indiscreet behavior in private life.** Employees are representatives of the company, so their behavior off the job is considered to contribute to their performance—particularly for managers, supervisors, and professionals with visible jobs. Embarrassing the company will often lead to dismissal, combined with a negative reputation that will be difficult to shake for purposes of future employment. Indiscreet behavior in private life that can lead to dismissal includes being caught shoplifting, a citation for drunk driving, being arrested for a drug offense, charges of sexual harassment or rape, and assault and battery.
8. **Making derogatory comments about your employer on the Internet.** Large numbers of employees in recent years have been reprimanded or fired because they wrote nasty comments about their company on a blog or social networking site. (One such comment on Twitter: "Our CEO should hire a bodyguard. He rakes in millions yet fires thousands.") As we all know, a rant about your company or boss on a social networking site becomes a permanent record, and will almost inevitably be referred to a company executive. Even if you are not fired or severely reprimanded for your public display of hostility, you will have lost considerable political capital—even if your rant is merited.

If you want to overcome having committed a blunder, avoid defensiveness. Demonstrate that you are more interested in recovering from the blunder than in trying to share the

blame for what happened. Focus on solutions to the problem rather than fault. Suppose you have been too critical of your team leader in a recent team meeting. I that your attempts to be constructively critical backfired and that you will choose words more carefully in the future.

Another way to patch up a blunder is to stay poised. Admit that you made a mistake and apologize, but don't act or feel inferior. Mistakes are inevitable in a competitive work environment. Avoid looking sad and distraught. Instead, maintain eye contact with people when you describe your blunder.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUIZZES IN OVERVIEW

Four self-assessment quizzes were presented in this chapter. Collectively they should help you gain awareness of the importance of positive politics, and also point you toward developing political skills. Self-Assessment Quiz 13-1 measured your tendency toward engaging in political behavior on the job, whereas Self-Assessment Quiz 13-2 is designed to measure political skill or ability. Self-Assessment Quiz 13-3 measured your tendency toward a key aspect of relationship building: making others feel important. Self-Assessment 13-4 measured your tendency to suffer from "foot-in-the-door disease" or committing political blunders.

Concept Review and Reinforcement

Key Terms

organizational politics 279
power 279
social intelligence 282
impression management 284

business etiquette 287
networking 290
backstab 296
constructive gossip 298

microinequity 299
group norms 299

Summary

Positive political tactics help build good interpersonal relationships. Organizational politics refers to gaining power through any means other than merit or luck. Power refers to the ability or potential to control anything of value and influence decisions. Organizational politics can also be regarded from the standpoint of interpersonal relationships and sizing up the environment. Political skill is related to awareness of one's surroundings, emotional and social intelligence, relationship building with the leader, and coping with an unjust environment.

Impression management is one aspect of organizational politics. Managing the impression you create encompasses a wide range of behaviors designed to create a positive influence on work associates, including display organizational citizenship behavior, build trust and confidence, be visible and create a strong presence, minimize being a yes-person, and create a healthy image. Also, attempt to be authentic, be aware that political skill is needed to manage one's impression, and avoid creating a negative impression.

A major component of managing the impression you create is business etiquette. The general principle of etiquette is to be considerate of the feelings of work associates. Areas of business etiquette include the following: work behavior and clothing, introductions, relationships between men and women and between people of different ages, working in a cubicle, cross-cultural relations, and

interaction with people with disabilities. (Etiquette related to the digital world was covered in Chapter 5.)

Political strategies and tactics for building relationships with managers and other key people include networking with influential people, helping your manager succeed, understanding unwritten boundaries, volunteering for assignments, flattering influential people sensibly, using information power, admitting mistakes, appearing cool under pressure, laughing at your manager's humor, expressing constructive disagreement, and presenting a clear picture of your accomplishments.

Political strategies and tactics for developing relationships with coworkers and other work associates include maintaining honest and open relationships, making others feel important, being diplomatic, exchanging favors, asking for advice, sharing constructive gossip, minimizing microinequities, and following group norms.

A strategy for not losing whatever power you have accumulated is to refrain from making political blunders. Political blunders can also prevent you from attaining power. Representative blunders include criticizing your manager publicly, bypassing your manager, displaying disloyalty, being a pest, being a poor team player and burning your bridges, indiscreet behavior in private life, and making derogatory comments about your employer on the Internet. If you want to make up for a blunder, avoid defensiveness and stay poised.

Questions for Discussion and Review

1. To what extent are office politics skills important for a person who is technically competent and hardworking?
2. In what way might organizational citizenship behavior be part of playing office politics?
3. Identify three jobs in which you think practicing good business etiquette would be extremely important.
4. A physically able man encounters his vice president, a frail woman, as they are both entering an airport. From an etiquette perspective, should the man ask to carry the woman's bags to the check-in counter? (The man does not have a suitcase with him.)
5. It has been observed that corporate employees who work mostly from their homes put more effort into building their networks than people who work in a traditional office. Why might this be true?
6. It has been said that although most business people can see through flattery, the technique still works. How would you explain this observation?
7. Okay, animal lovers among our readers, it's not new. What evidence can you present to support contention that nonhuman animals cooperate?
8. Give an example of a *microinequity* that you have been subjected to, or that you observed happen to another person. Explain why the incident is a microinequity.
9. In what way might being politically incorrect be a political blunder?
10. Why might the study of organizational politics be more relevant to people with at least several years of work experience than to career beginners?

The Web Corner

<http://money.cnn.com/quizzes/>

(Quiz about knowledge of office politics.)

<http://lovequizzes.net/firms.com/boss.html>

(Quiz about your relationship with your boss.)

<http://www.ExecutivePlanet.com>

(Guide to international business culture and etiquette in more than 35 countries.)

Internet Skill Builder: Sharpening Your Compliments

An important part of being a skilled office politician, as well as a government one, is to compliment people effectively.

The information about flattery contained in the chapter gave you some ideas about how to use compliments effectively. Search the Internet for a few more useful suggestions for giving compliments to others. A good starting point for this assignment is www.KissMcGoodnight.com because it provides intelligent suggestions about giving compliments. Try out this week the best idea you find in this skill-builder assignment. Observe the results of your compliments and you can refine your technique.

Developing Your Human Relations Skills

Personal Relations Case 13.1

Over Pete

Pete was enjoying his career as a real estate agent at Barclay Properties, a real estate development company. The business model adopted by the founders of Barclay is to purchase and then rehabilitate distressed office buildings. Many of the older buildings the company rehabilitated were then converted into mixed used, such as office space, and loft condominium apartments. Part of the plan was to restore majestic older buildings, thereby fitting into the environmental trend of preserving what is rather than consume enormous amounts of energy and material in the construction of new office towers.

As Barclay Properties continued to expand, seven agents were working full-time all of whom reported to Pete Logan, the company cofounder. Gupta's major responsibility was to find tenants as well as condominium buyers for the rehabilitated buildings. His passion for the business, combined with his knowledge of the business and sales skills, enabled him to become the leading agent in terms of sales volume.

Katie Logan specialized in supervising rehabilitation of older buildings. Her role required that she spend considerable time with architects, construction firms, and local planning boards. Ralph Parsons, the other cofounder, concentrated his efforts more in finding properties and working with financial institutions to fund the projects. Logan and Parsons agreed that Barclay had expanded enough to warrant hiring a manager to provide leadership to the sales group. Katie Logan enjoyed working with the real estate agents, but she was too occupied with other activities to provide much assistance or direction to the agents.

Logan and Parson agreed jointly that it would be a plus for the firm to offer the promotion to sales director to one of the seven agents. The new director of sales would continue to contribute as a sales agent, but would also function as the manager of the group. After considerable discussion, the director of sales position was offered to

Sara Morales who readily accepted the offer. For the previous year, Morales was the third highest producer in terms of dollar volume.

After learning of Morales' appointment, Pete Gupta demanded an explanation from Logan and Parsons. He said angrily, "I am the number one agent here, and you didn't even discuss the promotion with me. What's going on?"

Logan responded, "Ralph and I are well aware that you are a star performer, and we expect that you will make Barclay a long-term career. But we needed more of a team player for the sales director position. We see you as an individual star who doesn't get too involved with the rest of the sales group. The buzz we obtained from your colleagues is that you are great with clients, but that you are a lone wolf. You don't appear to have too much interest in working as a team member. You never share your expertise with the guys and gals in the group."

Gupta replied, "I thought the name of this game is bring in the big bucks. Spending time with colleagues seems less important."

Parsons said in response, "Sales volume is obviously very important. But we needed a little more of an internal person for this position."

Case Questions

1. In what way does this case study relate to lateral relations?
2. What do you think of the logic behind the decision of Logan and Parsons to pass over Pete Gupta?
3. What tactics should Gupta use if he wants to reverse his image as a lone wolf?
4. How ethical was it for the cofounders to listen to "buzz" about Gupta to help them reach their decision?
5. What should Logan and Parsons do to increase the chances that Gupta will not quit because he was passed over for promotion?

Interpersonal Relations Case 13.2

Lunch 2.0 for Free

A few months after Google, Inc., fired Mark Jen for blogging about work, he slipped into one of the company's cafeterias to score a free lunch with friends. He had no idea that he was also helping to launch a nationwide phenomenon. "We thought this was a great way to check out different companies and also get a free lunch," said Jen, now a programming manager at Tagged, Inc., a San Francisco-based online social network.

That lunch went so well, and the group decided to make it a regular event: They began meeting at corporate cafeterias around the Bay Area in an effort to rub elbows with employees at other technology companies—and share some of the free food that many tech companies provide. They posted their lunch schedule on a blog, and opened the meetings to anyone interested. "We are in Silicon Valley, which has a lot of tech companies," says Jen. But he says that employees "don't really branch out and meet other people from other companies."

The concept—dubbed Lunch 2.0 by its founders—has grown into a social networking phenomenon that now draws hundreds of engineers, venture capitalists, and even summer interns to various companies for free meals and conversations. It used to be that the group, which initially consisted of fewer than 10 people, practically had to sneak through company doors. Some attendees would get in with friends who were employees, while others sneaked by security. (Google, where it all started, allows employees to bring guests to the company cafeteria. Jen got in with a friend who worked there.)

But now, as the lunches have begun to draw larger crowds, companies are inviting in the Lunch 2.0-goers as a way to woo potential hires and push their products to influence bloggers who attend. Employers ranging from social networking company Facebook, Inc., to Microsoft Corp. have hosted Lunch 2.0 events.

And the idea is spreading. Similar lunch groups have already sprouted in Seattle and Germany, followed by chapters in Bangalore and Los Angeles. The Lunch 2.0 founders have received inquiries from employees who want to start chapters in New York, Atlanta, and Singapore.

"Lunch 2.0 builds positive brand associations for those who attend and those who hear about it later in conversation, posted photos, and blog entries," says Jeffries, a consultant to start-ups in Silicon Valley. Although the events are now hosted by companies, they still have a "guerrilla feel, like the tech community sneaking the gate and taking over the company."

Other than name tags, the events are unstructured and hardly swanky. For one thing, everyone shows up in jeans, typical of the Bay Area culture. One time, about 20 people showed up at a Plaxo lunch in Mountain View, California, to eat Popeye's chicken. "We went for the comfort food," says John McCrea, the vice president of marketing, adding that a couple of employees decided to stay for the event.

Lunch 2.0 attendees aren't necessarily looking for a job. Some show up just to talk shop. Others simply want a free meal outside their own cafeterias. "It's a good applicant pool because they are gainfully employed people who are geared toward passively looking for a job," says Tey Scott, recruiting manager at Time Warner Cable and AOL. A recent lunch at AOL drew about 200 people into the company's Mountain View office for pizza. The company had set up a table with information for prospective hires.

Attendees say the casual atmosphere makes it easy to interact with higher-ups at a company while getting a glimpse of the networking environment. For instance, Mike Miller, a former senior staff engineer at Intel Microsystems, Inc., met both a senior recruiter and LinkedIn Chief Executive Dan Nye at the company's Lunch 2.0 event.

"I thought it was really cool," says Miller, who says he enjoyed playing Wii, and took home a ball for his kids. "It was a high energy atmosphere." After the lunch, the recruiter contacted him for an interview. Miller was hired as a principal software engineer in July.

Recently representatives of employee recruiting firms have started to attend Lunch 2.0 lunches. Vendors of recruiting services have also been noticed at the events.

Case Questions

How might you use Lunch 2.0 events to assist your career? (Note that these lunches have expanded to other occupations as well as information technology workers.)

What do you think of the ethics of people who attend a Lunch 2.0 gathering just to get a free lunch?

3. If you were your company's organizer of Lunch 2.0, what steps would you take to keep recruiting firms and recruiting vendors off the premises?

Source: Anjali Athavaley, "The Power Lunch, Cafeteria-Style," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 29, 2007, pp. D1, D8. Permission obtained through the Copyright Clearance Center. www.Seattlelunch20.com, accessed January 4, 2010.