7 tips for mastering office politics

Administrative Professional
Today

The phrase "office politics" can make people nervous because it has so many bad associations, says job and executive coach Joel Garfinkle. But office politics is real and something you have to deal with in the working world. Realizing it's really more about culture and relationships can help you understand it better and manage it to your advantage.

Garfinkle offers these tips to make office politics work for you.

1. Win hearts and minds. You want to help persuade others to buy into your perspective when disagreements arise. Build a respectable relationship as someone who provides good ideas backed with facts, and you'll have an easier time doing this.

2. Respect your superiors. Going over superiors' heads can make them feel threatened and they may retaliate. Work within the system.

3. Help your boss stand out. Making your boss look bad is a mistake and reflects poorly on you. Find ways to help your boss excel.

4. Manage your reputation. Are you seen as someone who is positive, reliable and likeable? That's important in an office situation, so consider how others see you.

5. Be honest and accurate. Don't gossip or pass along rumors. Ensure you only communicate accurate information and others will come to rely on you in stressful times.

6. Connect with everyone. Instead of always running with the same small clique, connect with people in other departments, work teams and social groups. Building coalitions to support your ideas and projects is vital.

7. Cultivate allies. Are there people who would stand up for you or support you if things get rough? You need to build relationships with people you can rely on, so you can turn to them when you need them.

— Adapted from "Change Your Mindset: Office Politics Isn't a Dirty Word," Joel Garfinkle, Career Advancement Blog.