



Managing Organizational Politics

Dr S B Hegde

*Ex. President- Manufacturing (Cement Industry) and Visiting Professor,
Pennsylvania State University, United States of America.*

Date of Submission: 12-01-2023

Date of Acceptance: 28-01-2023

1. Preamble

The likelihood is that organisational politics will come up in your career, whether you work in a restaurant or in multinational company; this problem frequently gets a bad shape. We have all heard stories of co-workers taking credit for the work of others or bootlickers being passed over for promotions. Research reveals office politics cannot be avoided. How you handle the office politics is matters.

2. Business and Organizational Politics: Which Is Better?

It is true that organisational politics can be a negative force in businesses. Employees can easily become sidetracked from the task at hand, which breeds resentment and lowers morale among the team. Usually, the result is a decline in productivity and job performance. Business executives also frequently waste a lot of time handling office politics.

3. Organizational Politics: Causes and Effects

The fact remains that some employees are in positions of authority and power greater than others. It's a level playing field, which makes politics easy.

Additionally, some individuals are just more politically astute than others. Additionally, they are not afraid to use these abilities to their advantage in order to outperform rivals.

Office politics frequently revolves around competition for limited resources. This competition makes corporate politics inevitable regardless of the constraints on time, money, or supplies.

Power battles

Organizational politics may have their roots in internal power struggles. Some workers participate in office politics to advance their careers and establish their value. It frequently comes at the expense of others. The outcomes include sabotage, finding fault, or assigning blame.

Inability To Adapt

Every business must prepare for change. However, some of us adjust and adapt to change better than

others. Additionally, resentments can spill over into office politics when there are winners and losers.

Not Enough Clarity

Politics in organisations are frequently caused by misunderstanding and a lack of clarity. When there is uncertainty, the rumour mill is at full tilt. Office politics are caused by accusations, false assumptions, and feelings of injustice.

Jealousies

A poisonous concoction is created when there are feelings of favouritism, schmoozing, underappreciation, and power imbalances. Additionally, it frequently leads to infighting, scheming, and manipulation through office politics.

Lack of faith

Whether it's directed at management or among co-workers, a lack of trust is a potent motivator for organisational politics.

Reward Programs

Many businesses provide some kind of incentive programme to motivate workers to go above and beyond. It might be a raise, a bonus, or a company vehicle. But if competition becomes unhealthy, it might backfire. To make sure they receive the reward rather than a colleague, some employees may engage in organisational politics.

4. Management Techniques for Organizational Politics

Concerned that workplace politics at your company may have gotten out of hand? The good news is that you can take action. Use these tactics to restore the balance if organisational politics have tipped toward being destructive rather than constructive.

1. Lower the level of uncertainty at work

As we've seen, one of the main factors contributing to organisational politics is a lack of transparency and information access. You can attack this issue head-on by lowering uncertainty in the workplace.

Make sure all workers have equal access to information. The perfect place to begin is on the



company intranet. The intranet levels the playing field in terms of information because it serves as the central repository for all corporate data, policies, news, and updates.

2. Encourage group collaboration

Use collaborative working to address issues with mistrust, petty jealousies, and departmental silos. Collaboration between teams improves communication and fosters stronger interpersonal ties among employees. Additionally, collaboration helps to temper any unhealthy competitive tendencies because competition for internal resources is a major factor in organisational politics.

3. Keep a Groundswell of Hearing

Managers must maintain communication with employees in the same way that politicians must do with their constituencies. What kind of attitude is prevalent among your staff? Regular one to one meetings are one way to find out.

And maintain an open-door policy so that employees feel comfortable approaching you with problems. Create a broad network of solid connections within the company as well so you can access a range of viewpoints.

A survey is a different way to check in with the staff. You can keep tabs on opinions and trends over time with the help of an annual employee engagement survey. A pulse survey is more useful in this situation, though. Pulse surveys are quick, snappy, and concise ways to get feedback. They will also assist you in preventing problems before they arise.

Additionally, make sure the pulse survey is anonymous. Employees won't have to worry about negative consequences and can give you their honest opinions.

4. Act as A Good Example

Management provides many of the behavioural cues that employees follow. From the top, they pick up on the company culture and proper conduct. It is crucial that managers serve as positive role models for their employees.

Try to avoid engaging in office politics yourself as a manager. Instead, adopt a positive outlook, abstain from office rumours, and never berate an employee in front of others for their work. Promote cooperation and teamwork as a substitute for destructive office politics.

5. Be Open-Minded

An additional essential tool to prevent office politics is transparency. If you do have reward systems in place, for instance, be open and transparent about the standards. Clear communication and candour will go a long way toward dispelling the myths that feed office politics.

Additionally, make sure to assign duties and responsibilities in accordance with experience and expertise. This will not only increase employee job satisfaction but also remove any justification for engaging in organisational politics.

6. Don't favour anybody

Every manager wants to make sure that the best employees are acknowledged. Retaining the organization's top talent makes sense. However, doing so at the expense of others should be avoided because it will only fuel resentment.

At work, perceptions are important. You can't ignore similar behaviour in your closest ally if you discipline one staff member for arriving late to a meeting. And if you permit your deputy to work remotely, you ought to permit others to do the same. Giving some people special treatment while ignoring others can quickly backfire.

7. There should be no tolerance for damaging organisational politics

Have a strict no-tolerance policy for any form of negative office politics. Make it abundantly clear that actions like lobbying, sabotage, and backstabbing are neither encouraged nor rewarded. Additionally, it is forbidden to engage in unfair practises like favouritism and preferential treatment.

8. Get Involved When It's Needed

Finally, don't hesitate to intervene if necessary. But be sure to pick your battles wisely. You shouldn't get involved in every little argument. However, there are times when intervention is the only course of action because if you turn a blind eye, the problem is likely to get out of hand.

It's possible that one person is causing the conflict. Or maybe workplace politics are being fueled by a generalised feeling of unhappiness. To address the underlying issue, meet with the person or bring everyone together.

5. Meetings about organisational politics

The following advice will help you get ready for meetings to handle office politics.

1. Pay Close Attention

As it results in understanding, attentive listening is a useful skill. The other party will be less defensive if they believe you understand where they are coming from. Additionally, they'll be more receptive to your perspective in return. A solution that is acceptable to all parties will be found with the aid of open communication.

2. Keep Your Eyes on the Goals of the Organization



Follow the organization's priorities when handling any type of conflict at work. What are you hoping to accomplish as a company? The objectivity of organisational objectives can help defuse conflict when emotions are running high. Additionally, it offers a common framework for problem solving.

3. *Avoid taking sides*

Be impartial if there are two or more parties involved. Stay away from picking sides. Instead, add some objectivity by concentrating on the aims and purposes of the organisation. By doing so, you will direct the unfavourable energy in a more constructive and impartial direction.

4. *Seek out win-win situations*

Organizational politics typically have conflicts of interest at their core. The best and most enduring solutions are those that result in victories for all parties involved. Look for a solution that benefits all parties rather than leaving one side feeling like a loser. Everyone will then be inspired and motivated to see it through.

5. Concluding Remarks

Office politics are a necessary component of the workplace, but they aren't always as destructive as we might believe. Negative environments, low team morale, and decreased productivity can result if they are not addressed. However, it can also have a beneficial effect on achieving business objectives, particularly when managing change management programmes.

Keep an eye on the situation, act in an honest and open manner, and encourage teamwork to reduce the negative effects.

About the Author

Dr S B Hegde is a Recipient of 'Global Visionary Award' for his contribution to the cement industry in November 2020. He has more than 30 years of experience in cement manufacturing, quality assurance, production, product development and research and development (R&D) in 'Leadership Roles' in Major Cement Companies both in India and overseas.

Dr SB Hegde has been an integral part of the industry and has worked as an expert consultant for various international bodies in the cement domain. He is currently 'Visiting Professor of Pennsylvania State University', United States of America.