



Being influential has never been more important to individual and team success.

As organisational life becomes increasingly complex and competitive, being able to successfully deal with the political dimension at work has become a key skill.

Effectively Navigating Organisational Politics

BUSINESS IMPACT STUDY



C H A L L E N G E

A global insurance company recognised through their Hay evaluations and exit interviews that within the top talent quadrant, there was a lack of understanding about the realities of organisational politics, networking and stakeholder management.

Within this important population there was a lack of savvy, an ignorance about the “unwritten rules” and an unwillingness to notice the realities of the organisational culture and its resulting politics – both the good and the bad.

The impact of this was that important projects were delayed - or stalled completely. A further knock on effect was a severe talent drain as key individuals became disheartened, disillusioned and eventually resigned “because of the politics around here”. The churn ratio in the talent pool was unacceptable and it was apparent that organisational politics was the recurring theme.

Challenge: delayed projects and high turnover due to top talent being unskilled at organisational politics

Solution: develop the right attitude and skills to effectively navigate organisational politics

Impact: improved levels of talent retention, faster results and a more confident and influential talent pool

S O L U T I O N

With our particular expertise in strategic influencing skills, we were able to engage the client in a “new conversation” about a potentially challenging topic in an open, constructive and enabling manner. We developed a series of Strategic Influence workshops that were creative in their design and innovative in their ability to help these demanding and talented learners understand “the other organisational chart”, the difference between helpful and unhelpful politics and how to cut through political resistance.

The workshops were further supported by online diagnostic tools which assessed each individual’s existing influencing and political styles, ensuring that these emerging leaders understood their personal strengths and areas for development.



“I learned in two days what it might have taken 10 years to otherwise figure out on my own – thank you.”

“Thanks for a superb workshop that was challenging, fun and will certainly make a positive difference.

Your facilitation was expert, sensitive and respectful of each individual.

It was two days very well spent.”

The Politics at Work™ methodology and assessments have been designed and developed by Mike Phipps, Blue Ocean Senior Associate

Over more than a decade, our research findings show three significant disablers which prevent top talent from engaging in positive political activity:

1. **Denial** - A refusal to acknowledge that the organisation is a political place. There is a significant tranche of talented individuals who consider an organisation to be a pure meritocracy, and that hard work and being good at the technical side of their job is enough for advancement and reward. They just do not see organisational politics as something real.

2. **Non-engagement** - When people do accept that an organisation has a political dimension, there are far too many who view politics as something which only their rivals engage in, and that political activity by its nature is something alien to their value set. In short, these people had wrongly decided that they “don’t do politics” A change of mind set was required.

3. **Ignorance** - Politics is a taboo subject in far too many organisations, and as the “elephant in the room”, a very real and vital skill area is being ignored. When asked if they would benefit from developing positive political skills, almost all respondents say they would be interested. However, when asked: “and would you tell your boss that you would attend such a workshop”, the response is more coy; almost half of the respondents would prefer something like “strategic influencing” as workshop title in their public appointments calendar.

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I M P A C T

The workshops and assessments helped strip away the myths and misunderstanding about politics and power at work, changing attitudes and building skills through an interactive and experiential suite of learning events.

Since the first workshop, this intervention is now oversubscribed every year by learners who recognise its value to their careers and work.

The impact has been profound: the organisation reports improved levels of talent retention, and perhaps more significantly, faster results and a more confident and influential population within the talent pool.

The participants emerged from the “strategic influence” experience being able to see the organisation in a subtly different but important way. They had greater skills, savvy and understanding about how things got done, speeding up results and producing a greater return on investment for the organisation.



For more information, please contact:
THE BLUE OCEAN COMPANY
Tel +32 (0)476 552 108 (Brussels)
contact@theblueoceancompany.com
www.theblueoceancompany.com