



HBR Guide to Office Politics (HBR Guide Series)

Karen Dillon

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Don't let destructive drama sideline your career.

Every organization has its share of political drama: Personalities clash. Agendas compete. Turf wars erupt. But you need to work productively with your colleagues—even difficult ones—for the good of your organization and your career. How can you do that without compromising your personal values? By acknowledging that power dynamics and unwritten rules exist—and navigating them constructively.

The **HBR Guide to Office Politics** will help you succeed at work without being a power grabber or a corporate climber. Instead you'll cultivate a political strategy that's authentic to you. You'll learn how to:

- Gain influence without losing your integrity
- Contend with backstabbers and bullies
- Work through tough conversations
- Manage tensions when resources are scarce
- Get your share of choice assignments
- Accept that not all conflict is bad

Arm yourself with the advice you need to succeed on the job, from a source you trust. Packed with how-to essentials from leading experts, the HBR Guides provide smart answers to your most pressing work challenges.

HBR Guide to Office Politics (HBR Guide Series) Details

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Greg says

Have you ever experienced dealing with a boss who unwittingly holds back your career progress? Have you encountered someone who is always looking to get ahead of you no matter how small the stake is? Have you ever managed a former peer? These and other countless relationship dynamics in our everyday lives are part of the so-called politics of human interactions. So many people are having dreadful lives coming to work due to these political dramas and its myriad ways. These events are present as long as there are two people interacting but there is no better stage for these dynamics to take place but in office. Hence, we have the term office politics.

The problem is that most people are not well-equipped in handling these cases. They either succumb to being the victims or become the bullies themselves. Time and time again without proper advice these people will continue to do it their way, thereby creating the concept of dirty politics. Fortunately, we have a book that can guide all of us through this.

The HBR Guide to Office Politics by Karen Dillon provides a refreshing, practical, and easy to follow insights on how one can navigate the ocean of political dramas at work. Written for any professionals at work, the book is an easy to use guide that one can use whenever he or she encounters a challenging political situation.

The following are the attributes that made the book worth reading by any worker or professional:

- Collaborative ideas. Even though it was written by just one author, this book consists of ideas from different industry experts. The author interviewed experts in communication, leadership, branding, business, and management to come up with a balance and wide perspectives on how one can resolve specific political dilemmas. You can read here the views of Dorie Clark, Ron Ashkenas, Herminia Ibarra, Kathryn Heath, and others. These experts were consulted and their ideas are spread throughout the book.
- Easy to follow book structure. This book is for busy professionals and the structure of the book will really help in getting in to what a person needs to see faster. Each chapter has the same layout: problem; why it happens; and what to do about it. For example, if one has to deal with a bully, he or she has to look at the specific chapter for the topic. The chapter will describe the problem and explain why it happens. Then this is followed by specific steps on how to deal with it.
- Anecdotes. Each chapter includes a snippet of another person's account related to the topic at hand. This clearly put the problem in the right perspective therefore reinforcing the lessons more effectively. Their stories may not be similar to yours but you can relate to some of it by putting yourself in their shoes.

Clearly, one does not have to be totally helpless in dealing with any political situations. These are normal part of our working lives and we owe it to ourselves to develop and learn how to handle these situations. Being politically astute does not mean being a sucked up. It means having the right mindset in dealing appropriately with other people by being sensitive to what is happening within us and around our environment.

I would recommend this book to anyone working with others especially those who are in leadership position.

Braden Wheeler says

I really liked this book. It was well put together and an interesting read.

Ieva Strupisa says

Amazing book, which I would recommend to all people working in the office. It is focusing on how to deal better with difficult boss or complicated colleague - one chapter for each type of person, 16 chapters in total (if I'm not mistaking).

I loved that there are provided real life examples and how the person dealt with a problem. An author provides then a comment, whether this approach was correct or could the issue be solved in a better way. Definitely a reference literature which should be kept at a hand's length.

Darren says

The promise was good: how to navigate through the choppy seas of office politics and avoid making a drama out of a crisis. Learning how to accept and tolerate your co-workers even if their behaviour would otherwise be destructive and make you want to hate them.

There is a broad range of information on offer, compartmentalised in relatively short chapters that cut to the chase. Four main sections frame the book – political challenges with your boss, political challenges with your colleagues, political challenges with your organisation and build your skills.

The advice on offer is broadly sound, relevant and actionable. There is nothing controversial or alarming there but maybe even more advice and hand holding would have been necessary for the reader to admit that there is a problem they wish to address. This can often be the most difficult step – to admit there is a problem. Fixing it might not be easy or even possible, but you cannot do anything until you really know there is an issue and what it is.

Unfortunately this reviewer could not really establish a connection with this book. A certain spark was missing. That is not to say that it is a bad book but it really struggled to stick its head above the crowd. It is reasonably priced and gives a fair amount of value for money, so it could be worthy of consideration even if you don't get totally connected to it. What doesn't work for one might work for another. It just felt a bit defocussed and lacking in identity at times.

There is sadly a need for books like this. As the author noted, a 2011 survey by the UK-based management-consulting company Revelation revealed that 95% of respondents said that manipulation and hidden agendas in the workplace had affected them personally. So if a book like this can reduce even if it cannot replace the problem, it could be a very cheap form of therapy. The company would benefit too, but here let's be selfish and think about our own well-being first.

In conclusion, this is a book worthy of consideration if you even think there is a possibility that office politics are destroying your workplace. It is cheaper than a bottle of spirits and will do you a lot more good in the long run.

HBR Guide to Office Politics, written by Karen Dillon and published by Harvard Business Review Press.

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Choong Chiat says

Despite its Machiavellian-sounding title, this book offers generally benign and simple, at times repetitive, advice on how to handle common inter-personal issues at work. The advice offered can seem somewhat commonsensical and be valid even outside of work.

Kumar S Ayyagari says

Brief but Illuminating

A Great read and a definite recommendation to anyone that needs help with navigating through the quagmire of office politics.

Fraser says

Some helpful strategies for common scenarios experienced in most workplaces.

Anthony says

My key takeaways:

Keep good relationships with everyone (don't forget about gate keepers - secretaries, receptionists, and other seemingly unimportant people, who control information flow).

Find common ground with colleagues. It can be anything: born in the same town, like football, have the same health issue, etc.

Make a boss look good. Report frequently

If there is a conflict, always take a high road, don't be dragged down by emotions. Stay calm, respectful, and objective

Actively listen

Keep linkedn updated

Find what the persons strength are and thing how you can apply his strength to achieve results for organization

Be direct when expressing your intentions. Tell to boss that you want to be effective

kushal says

Careful and insightful. Loaded with practical example which are applicable on a real life scenario

Stephen says

I was hoping for more organizational systems analysis than simply encouragement tips.

Summer Khawaja says

Common sense.

Jen says

My office has been undergoing a rather bumpy transition recently, complete with new boss, possible promotion potential and employees leaving for other office locations, leaving us severely short-staffed. It hasn't been pretty.

I was passed over for promotion before and after reading this, I think it had a lot to do with my decided lack of interest in playing office politics. This book isn't about how to "play the game", but more about how to maintain your dignity and self-respect as you deal with the office politics around you.

Much of it is common sense, but it is great to get refreshers on common sense and to read things from the point of view of someone who has been there and done that a few times. This is definitely a re-read. I do not believe that the information in this book will ever get old or stale and that it would be useful to refresh the topics and ideas in this book every few years or whenever a difficult work situation presents itself.

It was easy to read, was broken down into logical sections and I really enjoyed the use of the pronouns "her" and "she". Usually in a self-help style book, at least in the ones I have read, the only pronoun usage was masculine when referring to a hypothetical person. Unless the gender of the hypothetical person was important to what was being discussed, usually it's male. Both gender pronouns were used here, with the feminine being slightly more used I believe. I didn't do an exact count, but I noticed it a lot. I wasn't expecting it, but I enjoyed it.

I would definitely recommend this book, even for those who don't have an office or office politics to deal with. The situations are general enough that they happen in everyday life, not just in an office environment, but specific enough to assist those reading with office issues. It's more about how to deal with others in a respectful way in order to garner positive results. Helpful for all, not just those in the business world.

My thanks to NetGalley and Harvard Business Review Press for an eARC copy of the book to read and review.

Donna Maguire says

This book is a good guide on the situations that come up on a fairly regular basis or at some point in everyone's career. I really enjoyed the guide, the way that it was broken up in to the different sections, and sub sections and that the paragraphs were kept short and punchy with facts and excellent recommendations. The only thing I didn't really like was when the situations were given with recommendations on how they

should have been handled, brilliant suggestions on paper, but not likely to happen in the real business and office environment for the majority of situations. I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Prabuddha Das says

Good book to refer to if one is tensed with Office. Its on understanding types of the boss, and the behaviour of coworkers. Quite helpful.

Amy says

This is a great, quick read for those facing changes in their office, a new assignment, or new ways to stay engaged without sliding into utter frustration and demotivation. The great thing about this book is that you can read only the parts you need (for now), and save the rest for the future. A great reference to keep on your desk/in your office.
