Navigating Corporate Culture and Politics

Every workplace is different. Each has its own rules, types of people and challenges. Your success on the job and satisfaction with your work experience rests on your ability to navigate the company's culture and politics.

Corporate Culture

Corporate culture defines the basic assumptions, understandings and rules of behavior that direct day-to-day actions in the workplace. Company culture impacts many aspects of your job, including:

- **Employee interaction.** Is there a lot of competition or cooperation? Is it a formal or free-spirited environment?
- **Dress code.** Is it a business casual environment? What defines "acceptable dress?"
- **Communication.** Do you email, talk face-to-face or pick up the phone?
- **Management style.** How do you interact with your manager?
- **Development opportunities.** Will you receive training? How will you stay marketable?

Office Politics

You'll find office politics in companies of every size. They are part of the interactive process of working together toward individual and shared goals. Though the safest reaction is to stay above these dynamics, the more effective strategy is learning to cope with them. You can ask your manager or a mentor for advice and coaching on office politics. Here are some additional tips to help:

- Learn to compliment and not criticize
- Stay above the gossip and don't spread rumors
- Be positive
- Strive to provide the best service to everyone
- Disagree without being disrespectful
- Learn to connect with others

Office Etiquette

Work is probably one of the most important places to be polite and considerate of others. By getting in the habit of using good business etiquette, you're more likely to make an excellent impression:

- Treat everyone with respect
- Be considerate of others' workloads

(Please see the back for more details.)

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- Be on time for meetings
- Return calls and emails in a timely fashion
- Don't make cell phone calls in public places
- Be careful with humor

Cubicle Courtesy

Open workplaces require special attention. Everyone has work to get done, including you. Cubicle courtesy should be a two-way street:

- Use a quiet tone; limit speakerphone use
- Keep socializing to a minimum
- Be mindful of foods and sprays with a strong scent
- Keep your cell phone off or on vibrate
- Knock before entering someone else's cube

Generations at Work

Today it's not unusual for employees of three or four different generations to work side-by-side in a company. Does it work? It can, when employees recognize that each generation has its own outlook, needs and expectations. For example, Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) typically are motivated by security and upward mobility, while Gen Y (born 1977-1998) is driven more by meaningful, challenging work. Be aware of generational differences. By trying to understand the various motivations and styles, you'll forge stronger working relationships with co-workers of all ages.

Set the Stage for Success

The first few weeks and months on the job are critical to your success. Invest some time up front in learning the culture and politics at your company. Your extra work will set the stage for the next career step you take.

Try out different workplace environments to find your best fit, with Manpower. Apply today at **manpower.com.**