

This Free E-Book is brought to you by [Natural-Aging.com](http://Natural-Aging.com).

**100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment**  
**Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances**  
**Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!**

**Corporate Survival... How to manage yourself in the political playing field!**

**By Edward B. Toupin**

**Corporate Survival... How to manage yourself in the political playing field! by Edward B.**

**Toupin**

In my first corporate job, I had high expectations that promotions were based on a solid work ethic and quality production. I wanted to aim for the top and make it happen. Unfortunately, my ideas of corporate environment were inaccurate. As a grunt, an engineer, and a manager, the games, turf wars, and political thrashings taught me numerous incredible lessons. In the end, I made it to where I wanted to be, but not without bruises, scrapes, and experience.

Now, people come to me with problems that they have within their companies or on their job. They want to learn how they can overcome a situation or better adapt to make it within their companies. For instance, one employee lost out on a promotion because the person in charge favored another person. In such situations, you have to look at both sides. Of course, the scorned employee was upset as his credentials exceeded the promoted employee's. But, when we examined the other side of the coin, one of the prominent actions performed by the promoted employee was that he publicly supported the boss. If you remove emotion from the situation, and apply some "poli-think," it made sense, according to the manager's needs.

You can either fight it, or you can learn how to make it work for you. I'm not condoning politics nor am I saying that you should use political tactics in your everyday life, as this is not only exhausting, but it also takes away from your work and personal time. But, if you can understand your corporate culture and its politics, you can better learn how to handle the situations that are placed before you instead of becoming stressed or frustrated.

---- The Corporate Culture ----

When you enter Corporate America, you have two choices: dig in, go with the punches, and make it into the inner circle, or you can hang back and just do your job. Both postures are very necessary elements of corporate life and both are just as difficult. It all depends on what you want out of your career.

\* The Corporate Being

A Corporation is a living, breathing, and growing entity. It changes on an irregular basis, adapts to its environment, and sometimes performs acts that seem almost ludicrous. In this way, a corporation is very much like a human

being.

You, as a part of this being, must learn how it grows and changes. Most of the time, this information is not evident. However, part of the task of becoming a viable asset to this being is to look beyond the surface and find out where things are going. In this way, you can position yourself to be a positive part of the growth and change.

Many of the political situations that occur within a corporation are a result of this growth and change. These changes cause incredible stress for some individuals; however, the stress can be overcome by not fighting the politics and learning the culture of the organization. You will learn that many of these situations have valid political reasons for why they occur.

Learning the corporate culture is an important step in managing the stresses associated with any job. Take some time to observe the culture at your office. This will not only give you an idea as to how to handle yourself, but it will also help you learn how to handle others.

\* Culture Shock

A corporate culture is a set of behaviors and rules that people use to manage their interactions. These include formal company policies and informal rules that you learn through experience. Many times, management will not tell you the informal rules of the office, but they will use your ability to adapt and learn as a sign of how well you handle yourself. Additionally, behaving in an inappropriate manner for the culture could risk your being labeled as uncooperative by your coworkers.

In any situation, you should analyze the culture, and, if necessary, change your habits accordingly to minimize stress. To evaluate your corporate

culture, you should consider various important aspects of the environment. For instance, communication style, teamwork, chain of command, appearance, management roles, interoffice friendships, politics, individual attitudes, and general workspace environment are important elements to pay attention to so that you can better acclimate to the environment.

After you've learned the culture of your workplace, you should see how it matches your personal style and expectations. To help prevent workplace stress, it's likely that you'll have to adjust some of your own habits. Of course, you should not stifle your originality or become an indistinguishable android. With an understanding of your workplace culture, you can make informed choices about your behavior and work habits, and prevent stressful situations and conflicts.

#### ---- Corporate Games ----

Before you can understand corporate games in the workplace, you must understand one, core definition of the games: a corporate game is an

illegitimate means of getting things done. It is a way that people twist and turn situations to reach a specific goal. However, those people that don't play, risk their careers.

Improperly managing power and politics can make or break your career, cause many sleepless nights, and often has very little to do with your actual job duties. Many people who fail in their jobs do so because of political problems, not skill deficiencies. Many intelligent and capable people aren't as successful as they might be because they haven't learned to cope with office politics. Understanding why you might be having difficulty at work involves understanding the basic elements of office politics and why it exists.

#### \* Politics

Politics and political maneuvering is the interpersonal conflicts and power plays that exist in most organizations. Among the specific actions commonly associated with office politics are intimidation, indirect communications, covert tactics for advancement, manipulation for control, indirectly telling the truth, hiding vulnerability issues, and playing for favors.

Some companies are better than others in the amount of political activity required to do a job. In some companies, playing corporate politics is the only job you have the time to develop. In others, it is only slightly important. Politics is part of the corporate culture of every organization and it's important to understand how it plays into your organization.

## Corporate Survival... How to manage yourself in the political playing field!

### \* Why does it exist?

Politics came about as a way of handling intense competition. Generally, business itself is a competitive game ranging from simple tests of skill to full-blown battles. The game is driven by survival conditions induced by an expanding world market in which companies must continue to change and grow. There's a constant challenge to overwhelm the opposition, reduce costs, and acquire additional resources. All of these attributes trickle down through the ranks to cause individual battles for promotions, rewards, and recognition at all costs.

Another reason for office politics has to do with the hierarchical structure of most organizations. The higher you advance, the less room there is at the top. As long as people battle for the "corner office," workplace maneuvers will reign. This is where the most intense battles occur and where most people find that they are stepped on or pushed aside.

Also, office politics occurs where personal matters are suppressed because they are seen as interfering with the direction and the good of the corporation. Certain arrangements help to keep individual feelings out of corporations as well as prevent the discussion of sensitive issues and the denial of interpersonal conflict. However, since human beings are social

beings, human needs appear in the form of political conflict.

### --- Surviving Corporate Games ---

Whether you decide to play or not, don't get caught in the middle. If you become the individual that battles politics, then you become the scorned of the organization. If you decide to stay out of it completely, then do your job and stay out. Those on the other end of the spectrum that play will respect your decision because that alone gives them less competition in their own battles.

One thing you'll notice is that no one will admit to playing games; however, that is part of the secret of politics. You, on the other hand, cannot confront anyone for playing games; however, you can identify the games and learn how to manage them to suit your needs. Once you figure out how to do this, then your stress level will drop, and you'll be accepted in your environment.

### \* What do you want?

Before you can learn how to use these games to your advantage, you have to set a course and stick with it. This means determining what it is that you

## Corporate Survival... How to manage yourself in the political playing field!

want out of your career. If you roam aimlessly through your career, then you'll get nowhere as you are a benefit to no one, including yourself. If you know what you want and are willing to work to get there, then people will take notice and begin working with you to get where you want to go. The objective of managing corporate games is to benefit those in charge and understand how to use available resources to your own benefit.

\* Learning the game.

People who dislike company politics usually associate it with backstabbing, taking credit for others' work, or getting by on personality rather than performance. For the most part, these are standard characteristics of a political game. However, you don't have to play this way to make it in a political environment. To survive, for our purposes here, political game playing means developing good "people skills." It means contribution, diplomacy, collaboration, cooperation, and conducting a personal public relations campaign. Some of the best ways to handle politics at this level are:

- Keep your eyes and ears open to everything that goes on around you. You can use this information to your own best interests. Listen more to what other people are saying and absorb what they mean.

- Learn how to communicate with others on all levels.

- Resolve disputes quickly and don't allow them to linger and spread. Conflicts interfere with production. Additionally, this will get you into

the rumor mill and eventually have you on the same level as Jack-the-Ripper.

- Compromise positions and issues so that you end up in a win-win situation. You want to always leave the other person with a piece of the pie, if it benefits you.

- Be open and willing to admitting you're wrong. Holding out when you're wrong will only place you in a position of conflict and distrust by others.

- Take on leadership roles when possible. Demonstrate your abilities to lead and manage situations professionally.

- Be professionally assertive without being abrasive.

- Make "acquaintances" within the organization. You don't want to have close friends, nor do you want to make enemies.

## Corporate Survival... How to manage yourself in the political playing field!

– Put the corporate direction ahead of your own. Being part of a forward moving team that supports the company is the way to gain positive looks from the inner-circle.

To accomplish your goals, you'll need to be very people-smart. Playing politics isn't necessarily bad. In fact, it's a key survival skill in most organizations. Many good corporate politicians are both likeable and effective—that's why they make it to the top. Those who refuse to play or battle against the politics may accomplish a lot, but they seldom last long because they don't fit into the overall scheme and are seen as "trouble-makers."

--- What's next? ---

I'm sure that you've read one or more Dilbert cartoons by Scott Adams. They're very humorous, but what makes them humorous is that, for the most part, they represent actual situations in an office environment. If you see any of his cartoons and don't somehow find humor, then you have a lot to learn. Regardless of where you go or what you do, politics in the corporate culture exist.

Political decisions encourage many of the situations that most people despise, including hypocrisy, secrecy, rumors, self-interests, image building, and cliques. However, politics will always be a part of organizations as long as people are involved—to be human is to be political. Whenever people's priorities, values, and interests diverge, some type of political ploy usually takes place. The amount of involvement you choose is entirely up to what you want out of your career.

Remember, it's not a "personal attack," it's a "political approach." If you learn your culture and consider that statement in your daily activities, your work environment can be more enjoyable and less stressful.

Edward B. Toupin is a published author living in The Entertainment Capital of the World. He authors books and articles covering employment to technical-related topics as well as performs technical writing for clients in Denver, Chicago, and New York. Edward consults and creates entirely from his home office in Las Vegas, NV and can be reached at [etoupin@toupin.com](mailto:etoupin@toupin.com) or <http://www.toupin.com>.

### **The Fairness of Office Politics ... Integrity and Political Motivation!**

**By Edward B. Toupin**

I hear many complaints daily about the "unfairness" of politics in corporate America. Employees say that their managers "lie" or issue "personal attacks" against them. Indeed, based on the pure ideals

## Corporate Survival... How to manage yourself in the political playing field!

that we are taught as a child, this might appear to be the case. However, the corporate culture is not the "real world" in which we live out our personal lives. Each corporate culture is its own world with its own rules and reality. To understand this, one must understand the directions and desires of this world and learn how to best adapt to achieve the vision and mission of the corporation.

### ---- Integrity and Politics ----

I have to say that the words "integrity" and "politics" do not belong in the same sentence. This is in no way an insult to corporate politicians, but politics is not a reflection of the integrity of the individual.

The primary purpose of politics is to obtain a result. In some cases, management may not tell the whole truth and might apply "plausible deniability" to escape judgment. However, when an untruth is used, it is primarily to accomplish a task. In this way, managers may not "tell" you directly what needs to be accomplished, but instead they create a gap or an imbalance, which forces the necessity for change and action. The end-result is a desired outcome.

Realize that, of the many reasons for this approach, one of the primary aims is to delegate responsibility to subordinates. If a manager has to constantly tell you what to do and how to perform, then they could very well perform the task themselves. This contradicts the entire purpose of your position as well as the manager's and interferes with the desired result. However, if they create an imbalance in front of you, then you must creatively solve the situation, define a path, and obtain a viable result to attain a rebalance.

### ---- The Thin Line ----

While I say that the present-day ideals of integrity do not apply to corporate politics, indeed, there are some cases where individuals do abuse their political power. As such, ethics and morals do begin to apply. Not only must you, as an employee, understand the reasons and applications of politics, but those who wield the political sword must understand how to apply their power properly without stepping over the line.

The one problem that appears in this situation is in the ability to tell the difference between "a lie" and a "political detour". Indeed, it is a difficult task if you look at it in simplistic terms. However, until a person has gained some experience with corporate cultures, my standard response is, "when you're in the corporate setting, it becomes a political detour". One must not take things personally in the corporate environment, as it is not about the individual; it is about results ---- plain and simple.

However, the political world can step over the line by the power-hungry or untrained corporate politician. The one way to judge such an action is based on your own personal lines. If indeed a

situation seems to purposefully step over into your personal life, then you must make a judgment call. Such situations can occur when your associates are able to create conflict in your personal life.

The one most important lesson to learn is that one should never provide access to one's personal world within the corporate world. Indeed, for congenial interaction, it is accepted that you provide

## Corporate Survival... How to manage yourself in the political playing field!

some basic information about your personal life. However, keep it simple and do not provide any information that could create issues with others. It is important to maintain a distance between the realities in your "personal world" and the realities of your "corporate world".

---- How many of me are there? ----

Indeed, this entire scenario can complicate one's life with the idea of maintaining two different "selves". However, to balance your world with your corporate world successfully, it is best to view your corporate world as a "sub-world" of your entire life. In all cases, all of human interaction is lumped under one world, with a multitude of sub-worlds and environments. You have your corporate world, your "buddy" world, your hobby world, and your family world, as just examples. Indeed, you experience different rules and expectations (i.e., politics) in each. Therefore, by learning the rules of the corporate sub-world, just as you have your other worlds, you can easily integrate and manage the politics to achieve greater success in your career as well as your life.

---- What's next? ----

In the corporate world, it is not a question of ethics or integrity; it is a question of results. Properly trained managers are able to use politics as an effective tool to obtain the results that fall in line with the corporation's vision and mission. You, as the employee, must learn how to separate your personal world from the corporate world so that you can effectively understand the purpose and direction of the corporation without falling prey to your own personal ideals.

Each corporation is as much a living, breathing, and consuming being as is a human. Just as your cells fight for the survival of the human, corporate politics is not about the individual, it is about the survival of the corporation. By understanding where the line exists that separates your two worlds and adapting to the idea that political motivation is about results, then indeed, your interaction within this strange, new world will be more effective and successful.

Edward B. Toupin is an author, life-strategy coach, counselor, and technical writer living in Las Vegas, NV. Among other things, he authors books and articles on topics ranging from career success through life organization and fulfillment. For more information, e-mail Edward at

or visit his

sites at

or

.

The Fairness of Office Politics ... Integrity and Political Motivation!  
Dealing With The Stresses Of The Corporate World  
The 80:20 Rule- Your Formula For Success  
Careers In Finance

Marketing Is A Game

Guerrilla Mailer

Rolodex Pro Contact Manager Software

Tame Your Personal Computer

Scams Exposed

Natural Pain Management



This Free E-Book has been brought to you by [Natural-Aging.com](http://Natural-Aging.com).

**100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment**  
**Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances**  
**Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!**