OFFICE POLITICS

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Overview

- Weapons of Influence
- Cialdini’s Key Influencers
- Politics: Reframe
- Influence, power, authority
- Influence processes
- Political strategy and tactics
Weapons of Influence

- Trigger features and fixed action patterns
  - Provide a reason / “Because…”
  - Heuristics: “You get what you pay for”
- Perceptual contrast
  - Perceiving two different things side by side as more different than they really are
- Weapons of influence
  - People who go from social encounter to social encounter requesting that others comply with their wishes and succeed frequently
  - Can be exploited: saber-toothed blenny
Cialdini’s Key Influencers

- Reciprocity
- Commitment and Consistency
- Social Proof
- Liking
- Authority
- Scarcity

The Principle of Reciprocity

- We dislike the feeling of indebtedness and will attempt to repay
- Exploitation: can trigger unfair exchanges
- Tactic: Rejection than retreat
  - Parties more satisfied with the final arrangement – more willing to go along with future arrangements
  - Parties feel more responsible for outcome – more likely to live up to the agreement.
Be aware...

- Non-reciprocation
  - Implied obligations to reciprocate
  - Victims immune to counter-reason
- Reciprocity and bad turns
  - Bad turns are also reciprocated

"don't get mad... get EVEN"
Consistency bias:
- We desire to be and appear consistent with our past actions / words / beliefs
- Drives us to act in ways to justify an earlier decision
- Inconsistency seen as undesirable personality trait
- Benefits of consistency:
  - Justify mental shortcuts
  - Avoid harsh consequences of thinking

Commitment can drive consistency

Tactics:
- Priming with trivial requests
- Written commitments
- Public commitments
- Make something difficult to obtain
- Lowballing
  - “Because you’re a good boss…”
Social Proof

- Basis: We look to others for correct behavior
- Examples:
  - Canned laughter in comedy shows
  - Tip jars are not left empty
  - Auction shills
  - Frank Sinatra: fans passing out
  - Advertising: “best-selling” “fastest growing”
  - Advertising: testimonials
Social Proof

- Exploitation:
  - False priming
  - The greater the number of people who find an idea correct, the more the idea will be correct / political correctness
  - Momentum creates its own consensus

- Pluralistic ignorance

- Amplifiers of social proof:
  - Uncertainty
  - More people
  - Similarity of others to ourselves

Liking

- Basis: we prefer to say “yes” to the request of those we like rather than those we don’t

- Factors:
  - Attractiveness
  - Similarity
  - Compliments
  - Familiarity & common goals
  - Association

- How to Win Friends and Influence People, Dale Carnegie
Currencies of Influence

- **Inspiration:**
  - Vision
  - Excellence
  - Ethics

- **Relationship:**
  - Understanding
  - Acceptance
  - Backing

- **Personal:**
  - Gratitude
  - Esteem
  - Comfort

- **Position:**
  - Recognition
  - Visibility
  - Reputation
  - Belonging
  - Contacts

- **Task:**
  - Resources
  - Assistance
  - Support
  - Response
  - Information

**Authority**

- **Basis:** the greater the perceived authority of a person, the more likely people are to comply

- **Symbols of authority:** doctor’s white coat, police officer badge, academic titles, bespoke business suits, fancy cars

- **Deference to authority can overpower good decision-making**

- ‘Bad employees’ don’t like authority
Scarcity

- Basis: we are more motivated to act if we believe we are going to lose something
- Examples:
  - “Available for a limited time…”
  - “These are going fast…”
  - Short deadline to make deal
- Psychological Reactance: hate to lose freedoms or previously granted rights

Review: Cialdini’s Six Key Influencers

- Reciprocity
- Commitment and Consistency
- Social Proof
- Liking
- Authority
- Scarcity
Is Politics a Dirty Word?

Why We Hate Politics

- Illogical / “black box” decision making
- Don’t understand the rules of the game
- Often see with unethical behavior
- Feel like we lack control
- See as illegitimate
Paradigm Shift / Reframe

- Politics is competition for scarce resources.
- ‘Soft skills’ are real skills.

You Are Not a Bystander

- “Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn’t mean politics won’t take an interest in you.”  
  Pericles, 495BC – 429BC

- “…But the chief penalty is to be governed by someone worse if a man will not himself hold office and rule.”  
  Plato, 428BC – 424BC

- Moral of the story: influence or be influenced
Power and Authority

- Power is the ability to make someone do something they would otherwise not do
- Power is a source of influence
- Authority is different than power

Types of Power

- Legitimate
- Reward
- Coercive
- Expert
- Referent
- Information
What is Influence?

- Influence is the **process** by which we obtain what we want by affecting the **thoughts, feelings, and behaviors** or others who are able to make decisions that affect ourselves and over whom we may have limited or no formal authority.

More on influence

- Goals of influence: promotion, favor, bonuses, access to resources, policy change, etc.
- Influencing is not a negotiation—no explicit exchange or trade.
- Biggest obstacle: target is indifferent to your outcome.
- Org charts don’t explain influence and power.
The Need for Influence

- Performance: I need to do my job well
- Goals: I need it to get what I want
- Self-efficacy / avoid learned helplessness

Organizational Types

Results orientation

- Competitive
- Cooperative

Relationship orientation

- Compartmented
- Collegiate
Behaviors that influence

- Pull behaviors:
  - Fishing
  - Enthusing
  - Wallowing
  - Revealing

- Push behaviors:
  - Suggesting
  - Reasoning
  - Asserting
  - Coercing

Rules of influencing

- Influence = bank account.
- Not everyone accepts all types of currencies.
- Your job as an influencer is to identify the audience’s preferred currency.
- Cater to others’ self-interest.
- Consistently reciprocate good turns.
Planning to Influence

- **G.A.M.E.**
  - Generate objectives
  - Arrange access
  - Mobilize allies
  - Execute strategy

Generate Objectives

- What are your main objectives and sub-objectives?
- What are the conditions necessary and sufficient to achieve your objectives?
Access: Stakeholder Registry

- List each stakeholder
- Characteristics of each stakeholder
- Key issues for stakeholder
- Positively or negatively disposed to proposal?
- Salience of decision to stakeholder
- Ability to influence decision
- Who can influence this stakeholder

Arrange Access – Player Relationships
Arrange Access – Tips

- GOYA and GOTT
- Communicate proactively
- Establish relationships before you need them
- Go through the usual channels
- Listen for issues and inhibitions in meetings
- Always prepare – never go to “hear someone out”
- Cover players in your inner circle before outer circle

Mobilize Allies – Lewin’s Force Field Model

Forces for change

PLAYERS

ARGUMENTS

EVENTS

Forces against change

PLAYERS

ARGUMENTS

EVENTS
Mobilize Allies – Interest/Power Matrix

- Keep satisfied
- Actively engage
- Monitor
- Keep informed

Winning Allies

- Goal: strengthen your position with allies and separate adversaries from theirs
- Can bring opponents to your side temporarily – common interest
- Don’t ramrod change – bring allies with you
Winning Allies – Agenda

- ID potential ally
- Analyze ally’s motivation, influencers, power, interests, and inhibitions
- Assess resources relevant to ally
- Evaluate relationship with ally
- Select influencing approach
- Implement and monitor approach

Execute Strategy

- Keep influence goals SMART
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Attainable
  - Relevant
  - Time-bound

- Target may make uncertain commitments, qualify statements, and not share your urgency
Influencing for Results

- Realize that change may make some people worse off
- Evaluate whether others share concern and/or urgency
- Ideas not judged solely on merit – emotional
- Apathy and resistance:
  - “Not invented here”
  - “We already tried that”
- Beware takeover by others with more power
- Sometimes better to turn opponent to neutral than turn neutral to ally

Political Strategy and Tactics

- Consensus generates its own momentum
- Slowing change: call for more analysis, studies, reassessments: focus on fear
- Salami strategy: attack a slice at a time
- Call in prominent critic of opponent
- Find fault in the details: nice in theory but...
- Unanswered flaws fester
- Brandolini’s BS Asymmetry Principle
- Raise cost of objections:
  - Anticipate
  - Put it in writing
- Leveraging, lobbying, leaning
Persuasion

- Storytelling is powerful
- Have a theme:
  - “The demand curve slopes downward”
  - “If the glove doesn’t fit, you must acquit”
- High ground maneuver
- Linguistic kill shot

Resources

- Influence, Gavin Kennedy
- Strategic Negotiation, Gavin Kennedy
- How to Win Friends and Influence People, Dale Carnegie
- Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion, Robert Cialdini
- Pre-suasion, Robert Cialdini
- Win Bigly, Scott Adams
- McKinsey Multi-Stakeholder Model
- Hanzawa Naoki (TV – Japanese)