

Stay Away from Office Politics



Office politics has become an integral part of the workplace, irrespective of the size of the organisation. Individuals trying to grow in a world of competition try to outdo each other at every instance, including playing nasty politics to achieve their goals. Here's how you can stay away, suggests Shreya Biswas.

Be neutral

Ensure you don't become part of any group which is known to garner negative feelings against certain people and groups. "A number of talented candidates have lost out because of this and destroyed their careers," says Ronesh Puri, MD, Executive Access India. If everyone perceives you as neutral they will leave you alone and you will not risk jeopardising your career. Be everybody's and nobody's person. The management might also take your views on crucial matters such as people management, key policy changes in the organisation as valuable, impartial and an honest opinion. As a senior member of the organisation, you will have a better say. Getting into groupism, favouring people of similar caste, creed, colour and religion and trying to derail others' careers serves well in the short run but not in the long run.

Be objective about views

Be fact-based rather than personality-based when people ask you to comment on individuals or issues. Just respond to what you have been asked about. Dragging conversations can only lead you to complicated territories as people might put words in your mouth to show your support for what they have been campaigning for/against. And without any reason you will make foes. Your image might even take a beating as a politicking employee.

Don't exchange opinions

Let curiosity not get the better of you. Avoid giving your opinion on people or personal issues. You can become a victim of Chinese whispers and a friend might turn into a foe only due to your weakness of not resisting a chat around the water cooler. "People tend to twist and turn statements to make it spicier and gossip-worthy," adds Puri. Exaggerations are normal in such situations and develop a lot of negative energy in participants. Result: People forget their main purpose of coming to office-work.

Focus on work

Remember your larger goals in life. The priority for you while in office is work. Stay focused and you will ward off negative energies and influences if any. "Focused and busy individuals tend to bore gossip mongers; they are least interested in people who don't contribute to their gossip and purpose. For you, it's the ideal situation, you can work in peace and reap the benefits of hard work," says A Sudhakar, executive director, HR, Dabur India.

Don't mingle with idlers

People who while away their time in unproductive things can come up with destructive ideas on how to spoil the office environment. They never work, nor will they let you work. "People involving themselves in politics have to do so to cover their drawbacks as professionals. It is best to keep a safe distance from them and strive at achieving your goals," asserts Sudhakar.