

NELSON + QUICK

# ORGB<sup>5</sup>

ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

## 11

### Power and Political Behavior

# LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1 Describe the concept of power
- 2 Identify forms and sources of power in organizations
- 3 Describe the role of ethics in using power
- 4 Identify symbols of power and powerlessness in organizations
- 5 Define organizational politics and understand the role of political skill and major influence tactics
- 6 Identify ways to manage political behavior in organizations



## **LO - 11.1**

# **Describe the Concept of Power**

# What is Power

## Power

- *Ability to influence another person*
- ***Influence***: *Affecting the thoughts, behavior, and feelings of another person*
- ***Authority***: *Right to influence another person*

## Zone of indifference

- *Range in which attempts to influence a person will be:*
  - Perceived as legitimate
  - Acted on without a great deal of thought



# Beyond the Book: Football Tickets and Power

- In September 2009, the Washington Redskins sued 72-year-old Pat Hill for failing to pay for her season tickets, which she's held for almost 50 years.
- Hill admitted that she could no longer afford the tickets, which cost \$5300 per year, and asked the organization to release her from the contract.
- The team declined, and sued Hill, seeking payment for the rest of the contract, which runs through 2017.



## **LO - 11.2**

# **Identify Forms and Sources of Power in Organizations**

# Interpersonal Forms of Power

## Reward power

- *Based on an agent's ability to control rewards that a target wants*

## Coercive power

- *Based on an agent's ability to cause an unpleasant experience for a target*

## Legitimate power

- *Based on position and mutual agreement*

## Referent power

- *Based on interpersonal attraction*

## Expert power

- *Exists when an agent has specialized knowledge or skills that the target needs*

# Intergroup Sources of Power

## Control of critical resources

- *One group is said to have power when they control an important resource that is desired by another group*

## Strategic contingencies

- *Activities that other groups depend on in order to complete their tasks*
- *Factors that give a group control over a strategic contingency*
  - *Ability to cope with uncertainty*
  - *High degree of centrality*
  - *Nonsubstitutability*





## **LO - 11.3**

# **Describe the Role of Ethics in Using Power**

# Criteria for Power-Related Behavior to be Considered Ethical

## Utilitarian outcomes

- *Outcome of the behavior should be good for people inside and outside the organization*

## Individual rights

- *Respecting the rights of all individuals*

## Distributive justice

- *Treating all individuals with respect*

# Positive versus Negative Power

## Social power

- *Used to create motivation or to accomplish group goals*
- *Positive face of power*
- *Characteristics*
  - Belief in the authority system
  - Preference for work and discipline
  - Altruism and belief in justice

## Personal power

- *Used for personal gain*
- *Negative face of power*



# Beyond the Book: The Trials of Blago

- Rod Blagojevich, the former governor of Illinois, is a premier illustration of abuse of personal power.
- In exchange for the Illinois' seat in the U.S. Senate, Blagojevich demanded financial compensation for himself and his wife, as well as a position as an ambassador.



## **LO - 11.4**

# **Identify Symbols of Power and Powerlessness in Organizations**

# Kanter's Symbols of Power

- Ability to intercede for someone in trouble
- Ability to get placements for favored employees
- Exceeding budget limitations
- Procuring above-average raises for employees
- Getting items on the agenda at meetings
- Access to early information
- Having top managers seek out their opinion

# Kanter's Symbols of Powerlessness

## First-line supervisors

- *Overly close supervision*
- *Inflexible adherence to the rules*
- *Tendency to do the job themselves*

## Staff professionals

- *Resist change*
- *Try to protect their turf*

## Top executive

- *Focus on budget cutting and punishing others*
- *Use dictatorial, top-down, and communication*

## Managers

- *Make external attributions for negative events*

# Korda's Power Symbols

## Office furnishings

- *Convey messages about power*

## Time power

- *Using clocks and watches as power symbols*

## Standing by

- *Game in which people are obliged to keep their cell phones, pagers, and so forth with them at all times so executives can reach them*





## **LO – 11.5**

**Define Organizational Politics and Understand the Role of Political Skill and Major Influence Tactics**


# Political Behavior in Organizations

## Organizational politics

- *Use of power and influence in organizations*

## Political behavior

- *Actions not officially sanctioned by an organization*
- *Taken to influence others in order to meet one's personal goals*



# Beyond the Book: Evaluate Your Political Potential

## Personal Characteristics of Effective Political Actors:

Articulate	Sensitive	Socially adept
Competent	Popular	Extraverted
Self-confident	Aggressive	Ambitious
Devious	“Organization man or woman”	
Highly intelligent	Logical	

1. Which characteristics do you possess? Which do you need to work on? Ask a friend what characteristics you possess.
2. On the basis of the table, are you an effective political actor? Explain.
3. Can we assume that all of these characteristics are worth having?

# Political Skill

## One's ability to carry out tasks

- *Using their favorable interpersonal relationships*
- *Outside what is formally prescribed by the organization*
- *Should be considered in hiring and promotion decisions*
- *Buffers the negative effects of stressors*
- *Leads to a positive effect on team performance, trust, and support for the leader*

## Dimensions

- *Social astuteness*
- *Interpersonal influence*
- *Networking ability*
- *Sincerity*

**Table 11.2**

## Influence Tactics Used in Organizations

TACTICS	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
Pressure	The person uses demands, threats, or intimidation to convince you to comply with a request or to support a proposal.	"If you don't do this, you're fired. You have until 5:00 to change your mind, or I'm going without you."
Upward appeals	The person seeks to persuade you that the request is approved by higher management or appeals to higher management for assistance in gaining your compliance with the request.	"I'm reporting you to my boss. My boss supports this idea."
Exchange	The person makes an explicit or implicit promise that you will receive rewards or tangible benefits if you comply with a request or support a proposal or reminds you of a prior favor to be reciprocated.	"You owe me a favor. I'll take you to lunch if you'll support me on this."

SOURCE: First two columns from G. Yukl and C. M. Falbe, "Influence Tactics and Objectives in Upward, Downward, and Lateral Influence Attempts," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 75 (1990): 132-140. Copyright © 1990 by the American Psychological Association. Reprinted with permission.

**Table 11.2**

## Influence Tactics Used in Organizations (continued 1)

TACTICS	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
Coalition	The person seeks the aid of others to persuade you to do something or uses the support of others as an argument for you to agree also.	"All the other supervisors agree with me. I'll ask you in front of the whole committee."
Ingratiation	The person seeks to get you in a good mood or to think favorably of him or her before asking you to do something.	"Only you can do this job right. I can always count on you, so I have another request."
Rational persuasion	The person uses logical arguments and factual evidence to persuade you that a proposal or request is viable and likely to result in the attainment of task objectives.	"This new procedure will save us \$150,000 in overhead. It makes sense to hire John; he has the most experience."

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**Table 11.2**

**Influence Tactics Used in Organizations**  
**(continued 2)**

TACTICS	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
Inspirational appeals	The person makes an emotional request or proposal that arouses enthusiasm by appealing to your values and ideals or by increasing your confidence that you can do it.	"Being environmentally conscious is the right thing. Getting that account will be tough, but I know you can do it."
Consultation	The person seeks your participation in making a decision or planning how to implement a proposed policy, strategy, or change.	"This new attendance plan is controversial. How can we make it more acceptable? What do you think we can do to make our workers less fearful of the new robots on the production line?"

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## **LO - 11.6**

# **Identify Ways to Manage Political Behavior in Organizations**



# Managing Political Behavior





# Beyond the Book: Empowering Employees for Quality

- A key element in Toyota's quality control program is empowerment.
- Every employee on the assembly line has access to an andon cord. If they see any quality issues, no matter how small, they can pull the cord to pause production and have the issue resolved.



# Flash of Genius

- This chapter defined power as “the ability to influence another person.” Who has power in this film scene?
- The chapter distinguished influence from authority. What is the example of the use of authority in the scene?
- Which interpersonal forms of power appear in this film scene? Draw examples of your choices from the scene.



# Barcelona Restaurant Group

- Who has authority at Barcelona?
- What forms of interpersonal power do these individuals possess?
- Identify Kanter's symbols of power that are evident at Barcelona Restaurant Group.

# KEY TERMS

- Authority
- Coercive power
- Empowerment
- Expert power
- Influence
- Information power
- Legitimate power
- Organizational politics
- Personal power
- Political behavior
- Political skill
- Power
- Powerlessness
- Referent power
- Reward power
- Social power
- Strategic contingencies
- Zone of indifference

# SUMMARY

- Power is the ability to influence another person
- Interpersonal forms of power are reward, coercive, legitimate, referent, and expert power
  - *Control of critical resources and strategic contingencies are intergroup sources*
- Positive power is social power, which is used to motivate or to accomplish goals
  - *Negative power is personal power, where one uses power for personal gain*

# SUMMARY

- Moss Kanter and Michael Korda both gave symbols of power
  - *Kanter also gave symbols of powerlessness*
- Organizational skills is the use of power and influence in organizations
  - *Political skill is one's ability to get things done through favorable interpersonal relationships while influence tactics manage impressions*
- Managers should be proactive and manage office politics as and when it occurs

