

## How to Get a Job and Keep It: Managing Work Relationships

**Q1: Developing and maintaining peer relationships at work, will make you feel great about going to work. What are the benefits for developing relationships with your peers?**

A1: Information, connecting with others, sense of accomplishment through their support, greater chance for opportunities, and help when there's trouble. These are significant factors that can bring success to your goals. They can also add to your career satisfaction.

**Q2: Conflict is defined as a sharp disagreement or opposition of interests or ideas. It's a natural part of any workplace and you don't want it to impact your performance. So how should we handle conflict when it arises?**

A2: First, identify the issue, then the persons involved in the conflict. Try to get all persons to agree to resolve it quickly and efficiently.

**Q3: One of the biggest challenges for managers in the workplace is handling and resolving conflict. What percentage of their time is spent resolving conflicts?**

A3: 25 percent of a manager's time is spent resolving conflicts. This can lead to lower performance for the team, lower morale, and an increase of absenteeism.

**Q4: Avoiding conflict may be the easiest way to deal with it, but it doesn't make it go away. What are some of the more common causes of conflict in the workplace?**

A4: Poor communication, difference in values, differing interests, lack of resources, different personalities, and poor performance. By learning to resolve conflict constructively, you can turn a potentially destructive situation into an opportunity for creativity and enhanced accomplishment.

**Q5: A good way to handling workplace conflict is preventing it all together. What are some prevention strategies you can do to avoid conflict?**

A5: Think before you speak, document the issue, set limits in the workplace (if the company has policy pertaining to conflicts, let it be known), be cordial and friendly, don't overreact, and take control of potentially volatile situations. Remember, the best defense is a good offense. If prevention doesn't work, then collaboration or compromising are the most productive forms of addressing the conflict.

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**Q6: The ultimate goal in resolving a conflict is to achieve a positive outcome. We can create a more positive work environment by actively resolving the issues as they occur. What are some steps to achieve this goal?**

A6: Be clear what the causes are and agree there will be differing perceptions of the issue, state why you want the conflict resolved and the reasons to work on it, communicate how you want it resolved, stick to the issues, and take a time out and resume at a later time if needed.

**Q7: 67% of American workers believe having friends at work, makes it more enjoyable. Yet it's not without potential pitfalls! How can you keep workplace friendships from interfering with work?**

A7: Create boundaries, maintain discretion, don't let friends pawn off their work on you, keep your personal life activities away from work, avoid workplace cliques, and keep a professional attitude at all times. It's a good idea to never put yourself into a position where your workplace friends can do anything that will get you into trouble.

**Q8: The term "office politics" has a negative connotation. They are the tactics that people play to gain advantage in the workplace. On the other hand, good "office politics" can help promote a cause and yourself. So, why are workplace politics inevitable?**

A8: Gaining a promotion is important and this can create competition between individuals. People can also compete for limited resources. This can be a kind of "tribal conflict", competing to fulfill their needs and objectives.

**Q9: Playing "positive politics" helps if you're having difficulties with a coworker or your boss. What are some strategies can you do to help create "positive politics?"**

A9: Asking for periodic counseling from senior management, performing deliberate acts of kindness, doing important tasks that are visible, and simply being courteous, friendly, and using good manners.

**Q10: Workplace politics sidestep the formal organization chart. If you closely watch for a while, you can re-map the organization chart based on political power and have a good idea where the power and influence lay.**

**Now that you have better understanding of how the existing relationships work, begin building your network accordingly. As you build these network relationships, what are some positive actions you can take to promote you and your team's successes?**

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A10: Gain access to information, promote achievements, improve relationships, attract attention for opportunities, or ways to make you and your team look good by including your team in any accomplishments that you make.

**Q11: Let's begin to look at the types of difficult people and how to spot them. These include: "toxic" coworkers, bad bosses, bullies, and negative people. Now that you know who these people are, what are some ways to deal with them?**

A11: Evaluate your circumstances, overcoming the fear of confrontation and conflict, make your move by taking the initiative in repairing your relationship, and taking action when it happens rather than delaying.

It's important to always maintain your character, keep the conflict confidential, make the most of the situation, and most of all, you should rise above the confrontation by analyzing both sides if possible.

**Q12: Career satisfaction with coworkers and supervisors, begin by creating effective relationships. No matter your education, experience, or title, you need to be able to work well with others. What four attributes are needed, to be successful in your career?**

A12: Play well together with others, support team building with coworkers, manage gossip, and contribute your ideas even when you think they aren't important. The bottom line: You won't get far in your organization if you can't get along with your colleagues.

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## WRAP UP:

- ⇒ Conflict occurs in every organization and avoiding it may be the best way in managing it. Should it become necessary to resolve conflict, the following steps should be used to achieve positive outcomes.
  - Be clear on the causes of the conflict.
  - Identify the reasons to work on it.
  - Decide how you want it resolved.
  - Stick to the issues, don't make it personal.
  - If it becomes necessary, take a time out and resume at a later time.
  
- ⇒ Having friends at work is important for most American workers, but it's important to keep the friendship from interfering with work. To prevent any interference you should:
  - Create boundaries.
  - Use discretion.
  - Don't let friends "pawn" off their work on you.
  - Keep personal life activities away from work.
  - Never put yourself into a position where workplace friends will get you into trouble.
  
- ⇒ Good and bad office politics have their roles in the workplace. While avoid the bad, focus on "positive politics" and acknowledge the benefits from the outcomes. These include:
  - Do important tasks that are visible to the team.
  - Perform deliberate acts of kindness, and be courteous and friendly.
  - Benefiting from gaining access to information.
  - Promotion from achievements or be considered for opportunities.
  - Improved relationships and boost how you and your team are viewed by others.

## FINAL THOUGHT:

Building and maintaining good working relationships will not only make you more engaged and committed to your organization, but can also open doors to key projects, career advancement, and raises.

Start by identifying the key stakeholders in your organization. These people, as well as your clients and customers, deserve extra time and attention.

Then, devote a portion of your day to laying the foundation of good relationships. Even five minutes a day, if it's genuine, can help to build a bond between you and a colleague. Be honest, avoid gossip, and try to compliment people on a job well done. After all, the more you give in your relationships, the more you'll get back from those around you!