

# Political Skill: Gaining Clarity About Politics in the Workplace

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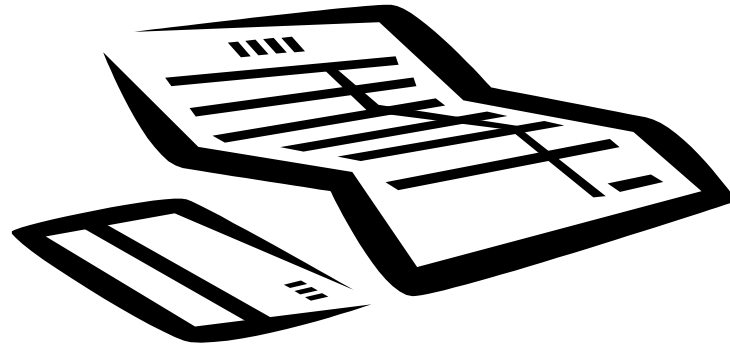
# Outline of Session



We will:

- ▶ Define Workplace Politics
- ▶ Take a Political Skill Inventory
- ▶ Define Political Skill
- ▶ Review tips to develop and navigate workplace politics

# What is your definition of Workplace Politics?





# ▶ FIRST THOUGHTS!

# Definition of Workplace Politics

Activities that are not required as part of a person's formal role in the organization but that influence, or attempt to influence, the distribution of advantages and disadvantage with the organization. ■

Robbins, S. & Judge T. (2009). Organizational Behavior. 13<sup>th</sup> ed. Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, NJ

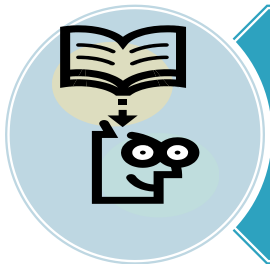
# Definition of Workplace Politics



Both negative and positive.



The pursuit of individual agendas and self-interest in an organization without regard to their effect on the organization's efforts to achieve its goals.



Can influence the relationship between the employee and the supervisor further leading to the development and success of each and every organization.



# Self Assessment



## Social Competence

- Social Awareness
- Relationship Management

Small Group Discussion

## Personal Competence

- Self Awareness
- Self Management

What skills are involved?



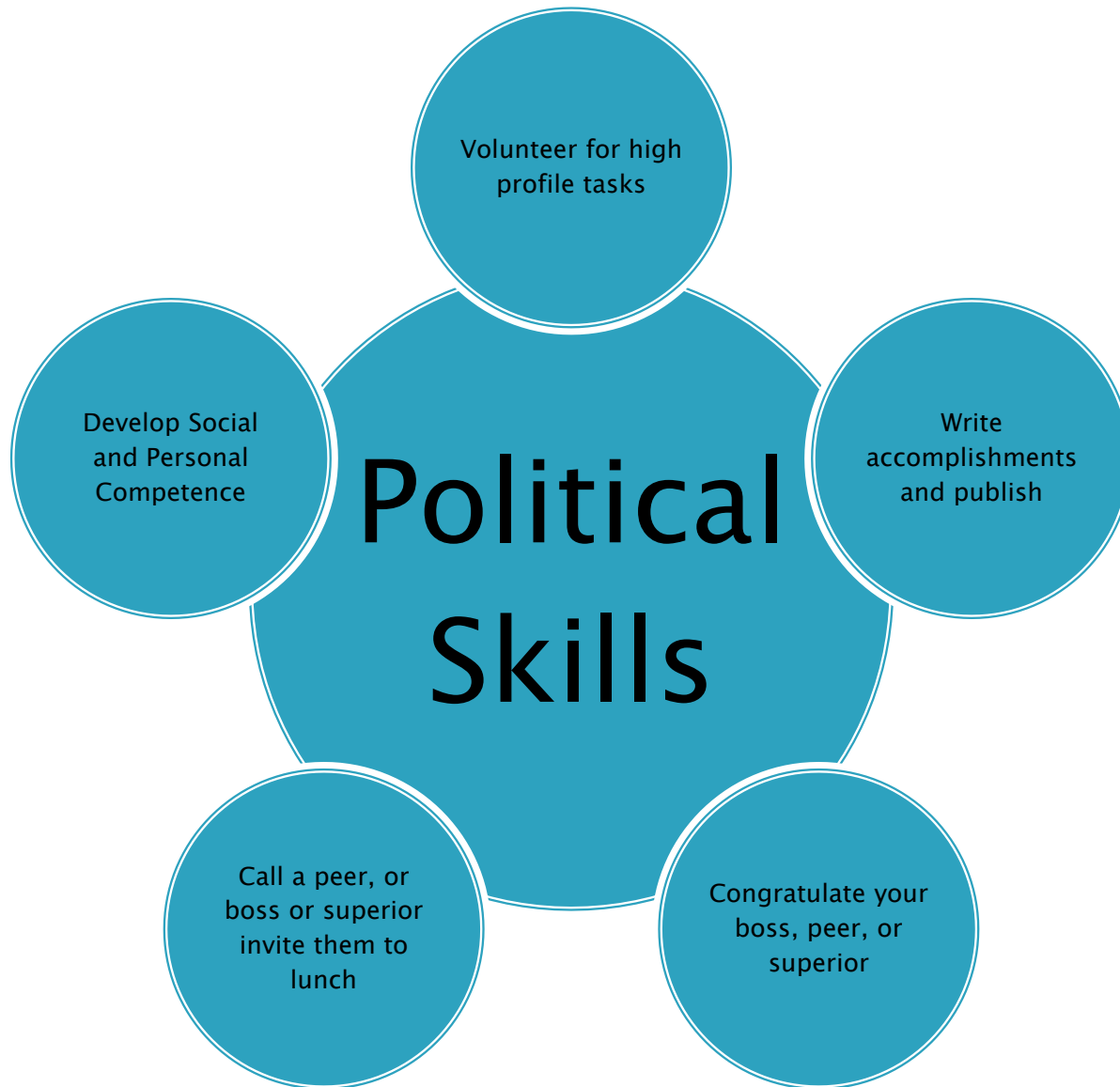
Genuine

Sincere

Ability to understand  
others at work and to use  
that knowledge to  
influence others to act in  
ways that enhance one's  
personal and  
organizational agenda

Definition  
of Political  
Skills







▶ **How can you develop your political skill?**

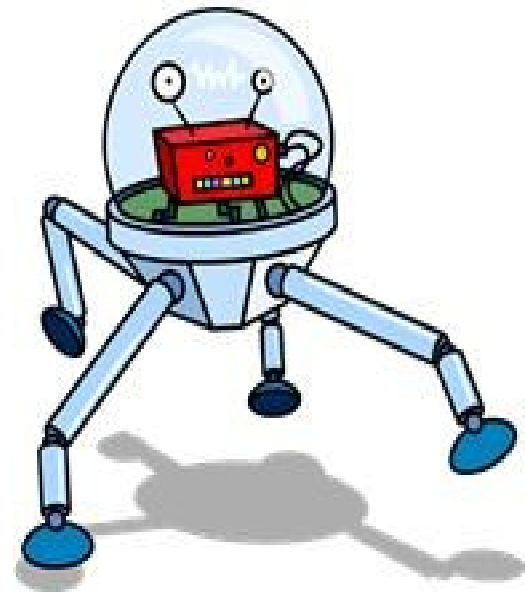
# Who are the players?



# Who are the Political Players?

## The Androids (Naïve)

- ▶ Quiet
- ▶ Limited ideas or input
- ▶ Small group of friends
- ▶ Unambitious
- ▶ Plodder
- ▶ Reliable
- ▶ Often outside interests
  - *Politics unpleasant*
  - *Avoid at all cost*
  - *Tell it like it is*



# Who are the Political Players?

## The Streetwise (Sensible)

- Competent
  - High credibility & respect
  - ▶ • Generally well-liked
  - Wide networks of contacts
  - Supportive
  - Sociable
  - Co-operative
- *Politics are necessary*
  - *Use connections*
  - *Negotiate & bargain*



# Who are the Political Players?

## The Hustler (Sharks)

- ▶ Self-interested
- ▶ Withhold information
- ▶ Manipulative
- ▶ Controlling
- ▶ Coercive
- ▶ Egotistical
- ▶ Unenthusiastic towards the success of others
  - *Politics is opportunity*
  - *Manipulate, use fraud*
  - *Bully, cultivate friends to use later*



# TIPS:

NEGOTIATE

BE CAREFUL

BE ETHICAL



# TIPS:

GAME PLAN

FORM ALLIES

THICK SKIN

# The Importance of Forming Strong Relationships

- 
- Listen without interrupting
  - Acknowledge a colleague's point of view, even when you disagree

- Offer a favor when you have expertise to share
- Ask questions

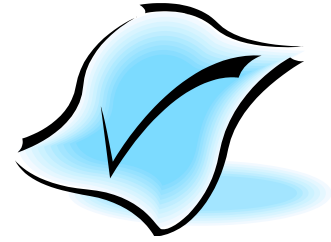
- Don't overdo it
- Beware of flying solo

# How do we dispel the negativity associated with organizational/office politics?

Best to be the *Streetwise Player* versus the Android or the Hustler!

WHY?





- ▶ *“If you have political skill, you appear not to have it. Truly skillful execution of the behaviors associated with politics is usually perceived as genuine, authentic, straightforward and effective. Leaders who are not politically skilled come off as manipulative and self serving.”*

Gerald Ferris

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS





# Resources

- ▶ Center for Creative Leadership; [www.ccl.org](http://www.ccl.org)
- ▶ Ferris, G, Davidson, S. L., & Perrewe, P.L. (2005) Political Skill At Work.
- ▶ Ferris, G.R., Treadway, D. C., Kolodinsky, R. W., Hochwarter, W. A., Kacmar, C. J., Douglas, C., & Frink, D. D. (2005) Development and validation of the political skill inventory. *Journal of Management*, 31, 126–152.
- ▶ Robbins, S. & Judge T. (2009). *Organizational Behavior*. 13<sup>th</sup> ed. Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, NJ