**12**

**POWER, INFLUENCE, AND POLITICS**

**How Can I Apply These to Increase My Effectiveness?**

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**MAJOR TOPICS I’LL LEARN AND QUESTIONS I SHOULD BE ABLE TO ANSWER**

[**12.1POWER AND ITS BASIC FORMS**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12sec1)

**MAJOR QUESTION:** *What are the basic forms of power and how can they help me achieve my desired outcomes?*

[**12.2POWER SHARING AND EMPOWERMENT**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12sec2)

**MAJOR QUESTION:** *How can sharing power increase my power?*

[**12.3EFFECTIVELY INFLUENCING OTHERS**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12sec3)

**MAJOR QUESTION:** *How do my influence tactics affect my personal effectiveness?*

[**12.4POLITICAL TACTICS AND HOW TO USE THEM**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12sec4)

**MAJOR QUESTION:** *What are the many forms of politics, and how can understanding them make me more effective at school, at work, and socially?*

[**12.5IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12sec5)

**MAJOR QUESTION:** *Do I seek only to impress, or to make a good impression?*

**INTEGRATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING AND APPLYING OB**

**Power, influence, and politics are some of the most common means by which you affect the behavior of others and they affect yours. Learning these tools will increase your effectiveness in managing individual, group, and organizational level outcomes.**

Page 403

**winning at work**

**MAKE MEETINGS WORK FOR YOU**

“If you had to identify, in one word, the reason why the human race has not achieved, and never will achieve, its full potential, that word would be ‘meetings.’”[1](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en1ch12) This cynical and funny quote resonates with employees everywhere. You’ve probably never heard, nor ever will hear, somebody pleading for more meetings. One estimate is that the average worker spends four hours a week in meetings and feels that at least half that time is wasted.[2](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en2ch12) Even worse, a sample of CEOs revealed that they spend on average 18 hours per week in meetings.[3](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en3ch12) Yet despite the pain, we know that people need to meet, and when managed effectively, groups and teams of people can accomplish great things. We therefore give you some practical tools to get the most out of your meetings, colleagues, and your time. And in the process everybody will appreciate you even more.

**LET’S START WITH COMMON COMPLAINTS**

Three of the most common complaints are that meetings:

1.Are unnecessary.

2.Don’t accomplish much.

3.Are too long. Smartphones only make this worse, as people are commonly distracted (busy texting) until they are asked to speak.

**WHAT TO DO**

1.*Make and distribute an agenda*. Do more than simply state purpose, day, time, and location. Also tell participants specifically what they need to do to prepare.

2.*Set and communicate a goal for the meeting*. Tell participants in advance, and when you convene, what the end will look like. Explain what you want to accomplish by the time you conclude the meeting, such as a decision or plan of action.

3.*Assign responsibilities*. Assign roles and responsibilities for the meeting itself, and then verbally assign expectations for who is to do what as follow-up or next steps.

4.*Set a time limit*. Some experts suggest that meetings be limited to no more than 45 minutes. There are at least two benefits to this practice: (1) people typically schedule calendar items on the hour, and a 45-minute limit gives them time to get to and prepare for their next appointment; and (2) tasks expand to fill the time you give them (45 minutes will help keep you disciplined and on task).[4](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en4ch12)

5.*Experiment*. For instance, if you typically do two meetings a week, or four per month, then try cutting that number in half. Doing more, or even the same, in fewer meetings is a benefit for everybody. Try it.

6.*Be concise*. Tell everybody that you expect concise comments that are on topic, and reinforce this by modeling the same behavior.

7.*Marry complaints with solutions*. Establish the expectation that if somebody raises an issue or complaint that they must also provide a potential solution.

8.*Stick to a schedule*. Start on time and end on time.

**FOR YOUWHAT’S AHEAD IN THIS CHAPTER**

**The purpose of this chapter is to give you a survival kit for the rough-and-tumble side of organizational life. We do so by exploring the interrelated topics of power, empowerment, influence and persuasion, organizational politics, and impression management. These topics are in the group and team section of the book because they are about influencing others—individuals *and* groups. They also are important group-level processes in the Integrative Framework for Applying and Understanding OB. We will help you understand that how you influence others impacts their response and your effectiveness. The appropriate, skilled, and ethical use of the knowledge in this chapter will not only help set you apart from your peers, but also close the gap between you and those with more experience and bigger titles.**

Page 404

**12.1POWER AND ITS BASIC FORMS**

**MAJOR QUESTION**

**What are the basic forms of power and how can they help me achieve my desired outcomes?**

**THE BIGGER PICTURE**

**You try to influence people all day, every day of your life, sometimes with great effort and other times without even being aware. And others are doing the same to you. To influence people, you draw on various types of power. Depending on the situation, you might simply tell the person to do what you want (such as if you’re his or her manager), or you might inspire the person with your charismatic personality and persuasive prowess (such as if you’re his or her coworker). How you choose to influence others, what types of power you use, can have important implications for how they respond. We will help you understand what the different types of power are and how they generate different responses in others. Such knowledge can make you more effective at managing outcomes across the levels of the Integrative Framework for Understanding and Applying OB.**

[***Power***](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/glossary1.html#iglo294) **is defined as the ability to marshal human, informational, and other resources to get something done.** Defined this way, power is all about influencing others. The more influence you have, the more powerful you are, and vice versa. The term *power* commonly evokes mixed and often passionate reactions. To skeptics, Lord Acton’s time-honored declaration that “power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely” is truer than ever. However, like it or not, power is a fact of life in modern organizations. According to one management writer,

Power must be used because managers must influence those they depend on. Power also is crucial in the development of managers’ self-confidence and willingness to support subordinates. From this perspective, power should be accepted as a natural part of any organization. Managers should recognize and develop their own power to coordinate and support the work of subordinates; it is powerlessness, not power, that undermines organizational effectiveness.[5](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en5ch12)

To make our discussion of power more practical, we distinguish between five common forms or bases of power.

**Five Bases of Power**

A popular and useful distinction is made between five bases of power: legitimate, reward, coercive, expert, and referent. (See [Figure 12.1](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12fig1).) Each involves a different approach to influencing others and has advantages and drawbacks. Let’s learn more.

**Legitimate Power**This base of power is what most people think of as authority and is anchored to one’s formal position. Thus, **managers who obtain compliance primarily because of their formal authority to make decisions have** [***legitimate power*.**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/glossary1.html#iglo209) Legitimate power may be expressed either positively or negatively.

Page 405

**FIGURE 12.1**THE FIVE BASES OF POWER

•*Positive legitimate* power focuses constructively on job performance.

**EXAMPLE**The HP board utilized this form of power when it ousted CEO Mark Hurd for inappropriately using company funds and sexually harassing a contractor with whom he had an affair.[6](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en6ch12)

•*Negative legitimate power*, in contrast, tends to be threatening and demeaning to those being influenced, if not simply an exercise in building the power holder’s ego.

**EXAMPLE**Many US politicians have used their legislative position power to name various “monuments” after themselves, from the Charles Rangel Center for Public Service (New York) to the Ted Stevens Airport (Alaska). The late Robert Byrd from West Virginia had more than 30 monuments named after him.[7](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en7ch12)

Yet other instances of legitimate power or authority mix positive and negative aspects. Can you think of an example?

**Reward Power**Individuals or organizations have [***reward power***](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/glossary1.html#iglo324) **if they can obtain compliance by promising or granting rewards.** Pay-for-performance plans and positive reinforcement practices attempt to exploit reward power.

**EXAMPLE**When Exide Batteries provided quality products and services that were attractive to Walmart, it was rewarded with more than $100 million of annual business. But when Walmart withdrew its business and went to a competitor, Exide was forced into bankruptcy.[8](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en8ch12)

**Coercive Power**The ability to **make threats of punishment and deliver actual punishment gives an individual**[***coercive power*.**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/glossary.html#iglo39)

**EXAMPLE**The Federal Trade Commission filed and won a lawsuit against Roll International, the owner of popular beverages Fiji Water and Pom Wonderful. The FTC charged that the company made false health claims about the pomegranates in its Pom Wonderful juice. The company must now stop making such claims about its products.[9](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en9ch12)

**Expert PowerValued knowledge or information gives an individual** [***expert power***](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/glossary.html#iglo122) over those who need such knowledge or information. The power of supervisors is enhanced because they know about work assignments and schedules before their employees do.

Page 406

**EXAMPLE**Consulting firm Promontory Financial Group is composed mainly of former government regulators of the US financial industry, such as Mary Shapiro, former head of the Securities and Exchange Commission. The firm helps banks challenge rules and influence reforms, such as the Volker Rule that, among other things, puts curbs on risky trading by banks. One bank executive said that “they sometimes hired Promontory to appease regulators, who think highly of the firm’s expertise.” Given that the executives at Promontory are themselves former regulators, it is no surprise they have the knowledge to influence today’s regulators. However, they boost their expert power significantly by also drawing heavily on their relationships or referent power from their previous positions in government.[10](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en10ch12) This issue is much bigger than the Promontory Group, as a recent report by the Sunlight Foundation indicated that the number of “lobbyists with former government experience has nearly quadrupled since 1998. . . . Those revolving door lobbyists, mostly from Captial Hill, accounted for nearly all of the huge growth in lobbying revenue during that period, which increased to $1.32 billion [in 2012] from $703 million in 1998.”[11](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en11ch12)

**Referent Power**[***Referent power***](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/glossary1.html#iglo317) **comes into play when one’s personal characteristics and social relationships become the reason for compliance.** Charisma is commonly associated with referent power, but one does not need to be the life of the party to possess referent power. In Asian cultures, for instance, characteristics such as age, gender, or family name are sources of social status and referent power. One often-overlooked and underestimated source of referent power is your network of relationships.

**EXAMPLE**Say a coworker calls and asks if you can help her with a project. You tell her that you don’t have the knowledge or skill yourself, but that Susan, a member of another department who you happen to know, can provide the help your coworker requires. You make the introduction. Because you introduced your coworker to somebody who helped her, you have referent power by virtue of your relationships.

Some residential solar companies are using the referent power of customers’ relationships (e.g., their families and friends), to market and sell their products via home parties, like Tupperware and MaryKay have done successfully for years.

Referent power drives the success of a number of marketing schemes, as with companies like Tupperware and MaryKay, which use independent contractors to throw home parties to display and sell goods to friends and families. More recently, the solar power industry is using referent power (including companies like SunWize, SmartPower, and SolarCity) to expand its business. Like Tupperware, they assume that “the best sales people are often enthusiastic customers willing to share their experiences with friends and neighbors—and perhaps earn a referral fee on any sales that result.”[12](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en12ch12) The solar companies have found that this approach is both an easier and more effective means for finding new customers. This shows that people are more trusting of and therefore more easily influenced by people they know.

One’s reputation is another example of referent power. Many companies hire new CEOs, in part, to reap the benefits of the executive’s reputation. Ford Motor Company, for example, hired Alan Mulally as CEO because of his stellar reputation and success at Boeing.

Now that you’ve learned about the five bases of power, complete [Self-Assessment 12.1](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12self1) to identify which bases of power you commonly use. Answering the associated questions will help you understand how the various forms of power can both help and hurt you when trying to influence others.

Page 407

**SELF-ASSESSMENT 12.1 How Much Power Do I Have?**

Go to [connect.mheducation.com](http://connect.mheducation.com/) and take [Self-Assessment 12.1](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12self1) to learn which bases of power you use.

1.Which of the five bases of power do you use the most?

2.Describe how this form of power helps you at school, at work, and socially.

3.Which of the five bases do you have the least of? What are the implications for you at school, at work, and socially?

4.What two specific things can you do to increase your expert power? Two things to increase your referent power?

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**Position v. Personal Power**

The first three (legitimate, reward, and coercive) are often referred to as [***position power***](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/glossary1.html#iglo288) **because the source of influence is associated with a particular job or position within an organization.** Managers, for instance, have legitimate, reward, and coercive power because they control your pay, your work assignments, and your evaluations. In contrast, expert and referent are forms of [***personal power*,**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/glossary1.html#iglo279) **as they are sources of influence that you possess independent of your position or job.** (See [Figure 12.2](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12fig2).) These two general sources of power frequently collide when you are promoted and then must manage the people who just yesterday were your peers. Such transitions are especially important and difficult for you to manage. The following Example box offers good advice.

**FIGURE 12.2**BASES OF POWER: POSITION AND PERSONAL

**EXAMPLE**From Teammate to Manager: Taking Charge

If you’ve been promoted to lead your group, you suddenly have more legitimate power. But to be an effective leader, you need to exercise that power carefully in a way that doesn’t alienate but motivates your former coworkers. This applies at all levels of organizations, including the executive suite. For instance, Satya Nadella confronted such challenges when he became CEO at Microsoft. Mr. Nadella’s position power increased when he assumed the CEO role, which makes him every employee’s boss, including other executives who were until then his peers.[13](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en13ch12) This was not easy, as some of these executives left Microsoft, while others were promoted. Mr. Nadella, and most anybody who is promoted to a management position, would benefit from the following advice on how to influence their former peers who are now subordinates:

Page 408

1.*Don’t show off*. It might be tempting to strengthen your leadership role with an aggressive, dominating style, overseeing every detail. But that approach stirs resentment.

2.*Do accept responsibility*. Trying to stay buddies with group members will undermine your ability to get the job done and will erode respect for you and your ability to handle the position. Collaborate when it’s the best way to accomplish goals, not to save a friendship.

3.*Do your homework*. Work with your new supervisor to define goals for yourself and your team. Strengthen your network of mentors to improve your management skills. Meet with your staff to go over your vision and expectations. Setting a direction for the team enhances your credibility (expert power).

4.*Pay attention to team members’ concerns*. Show them how meeting the group’s goals will put them on track toward meeting their own needs.

**YOUR THOUGHTS?**

1.What do you think would be the greatest challenge to being promoted and having to manage your peers?

2.Consider, for example, if you suddenly were responsible for grading classmates. Explain how you would apply the four recommendations given above.

**Power, but for What Purpose?**

Asserting or using power is a necessary and sometimes even subconscious part of our lives. However, what we often overlook or don’t consider directly are the potential outcomes of our efforts to influence others. People tend to have three primary reactions to our attempts to manage and otherwise influence them—resistance, compliance, and commitment.

•**Resistance.** Of course, you know what resistance is. But have you ever thought of the many forms and degrees? People can simply be indifferent, be passive-aggressive, or actively resist to the extent of purposefully undermining you or even sabotaging your efforts. The degree and form of resistance thus matter.

•**Compliance.** Those who comply do only what is expected, nothing more. They do what is required and exert no extra effort and provide no extra input.

•**Commitment.** Those who are committed “drink the Kool-Aid.” They believe in the cause and often go above and beyond to assure its success.[14](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en14ch12)

As you can see, these outcomes are different and the differences matter! One thing that certainly can affect others’ responses is how ethically or responsibly you utilize any form of power.

**Using Power Responsibly, Ethically, and Effectively**Leaders who do not use their power responsibly risk losing it. This has been shown time and again in political uprisings and the ouster of government leaders, as well as the persistent waves of scandals in business and resulting downfalls of executives. For managers who want to avoid such problems and wield power responsibly, a step in the right direction is understanding the difference between commitment and mere compliance. Responsible managers strive for using power for the good of others, rather than simply using it for personal gain. Former NATO commander General Wesley Clark put it this way:

Sometimes threatening works, but it usually brings with it adverse consequences—like resentment and a desire to get even in some way. People don’t like to be reminded that they are inferior in power or status. And so, in business, it is important to motivate through the power of shared goals, shared objectives, and shared standards.[15](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en15ch12)

Page 409

**FIGURE 12.3**BASES OF POWER: COMMITMENT V. COMPLIANCE

As General Clark describes, sometimes you only need somebody to comply (simply do as you need, ask, or say), but other times you need his or her genuine commitment. You therefore should choose the types of power you use accordingly.

**How Does this Relate to the Five Bases of Power?**Research, practice, and perhaps your own experiences show that:

•Reward, coercive, and *negative* legitimate power tend to produce *compliance* (and sometimes, resistance).

•*Positive* legitimate power, expert power, and referent power tend to foster *commitment*.

See [Figure 12.3](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12fig3). Once again, commitment is superior to compliance because it is driven by internal or intrinsic motivation ([Chapter 5](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap05.html)). Committed employees tend to be self-starters who do not require close supervision. These are important success factors in today’s flatter, team-oriented organizations. In contrast, employees who merely comply require frequent “jolts” of power from the boss to keep them going. The following Problem-Solving Application illustrates the point.

**solving application**

**A Heavy Hand at J&J**

One day a batch of more than 1 million bottles of St. Joseph aspirin failed a quality test because a sample didn’t dissolve properly, according to two employees involved in the testing process. Following company procedures, the employees blocked the batch from being shipped. As reported in *Fortune*, their manager then called the two into his office. “He said, ‘You like working here?’” one of the workers recalls. “‘This should pass. There’s no reason this should fail.’”

Page 410

Ultimately the two quality workers were ordered to retest the drugs and then average the new scores to arrive at a passing grade so that the pills could ship. Says one of them: “You get to the point where, like me, you end up doing what you’re told.” The manager they accused denies knowledge of the incident. Tellingly, though, he acknowledges that there were ethical issues in the department and in turn blames another supervisor.[16](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en16ch12)

**YOUR CALL**

[**Stop 1:**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12st1)What is/are the problem(s) in the J&J scenario?

[**Stop 2:**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12st2)Which OB concepts help explain the problem(s) identified in Stop 1?

[**Stop 3:**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12st3)What do you recommend?

**Bases of Power and Outcomes in the Integrative Framework**Research gives us some insights into how different bases of power affect important outcomes in the Integrative Framework, such as job performance, job satisfaction, and turnover.

•Expert and referent power had a generally positive effect.

•Reward and legitimate power had a slightly positive effect.

•Coercive power had a slightly negative effect.[17](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en17ch12)

These relationships are summarized in [Figure 12.4](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12fig4).

Now that you have a clearer sense of what power is and how it operates, let’s learn about how sharing power can actually increase your own power.

**FIGURE 12.4**BASES OF POWER AND EFFECTIVENESS OF OUTCOMES

Page 411

**12.2POWER SHARING AND EMPOWERMENT**

**MAJOR QUESTION**

**How can sharing power increase my power?**

**THE BIGGER PICTURE**

**How much do you like being told what to do? Chances are you didn’t like it as a kid and like it even less as an adult at work. Thankfully, many managers and organizations are looking to employees to solve problems and make decisions, instead of always telling them what to do and how to do it. This increased participation and sharing of authority is referred to as empowerment. Empowerment is a process that influences many important outcomes in the Integrative Framework for Understanding and Applying OB. We therefore explain different forms of empowerment (structural and psychological), various degrees of empowerment, and how to foster it in individuals, teams, and organizations.**

A trend continues in today’s workplace wherein employees are given greater influence, instead of the more traditional top-down, command-and-control, centralized management practices. This trend is often referred to as [***empowerment*,**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/glossary.html#iglo106) **which is defined as efforts to “enhance employee performance, well-being, and positive attitudes.”**[18](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en18ch12) Like our discussion of positive organizational behavior in [Chapter 7](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap07.html), empowerment has been shown to favorably influence many outcomes in the Integrative Framework, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, performance, turnover, and employee stress.[19](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en19ch12) The research and practice related to empowerment have focused on two general forms—*structural* and *psychological*.

**Structural Empowerment**

[***Structural empowerment***](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/glossary1.html#iglo356)**is based on transferring authority and responsibilities from management to employees.** Some of the common ways to do this are via the job design and job characteristics forms of motivation that you learned about in [Chapter 5](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap05.html). Therefore, managers and their employers can boost employee empowerment by changing policies, procedures, job responsibilities, and team designs. Any of these that increase the effectiveness of employee decision making ([Chapter 11](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap11.html)) are likely also to increase their performance, well-being, and job-related attitudes. To better understand and apply this knowledge about empowerment, it is necessary to think about the issue correctly.

**Thinking the Right Way about Empowerment**Effective empowerment does *not* include giving decision-making authority to just any employee in any and every situation. That would be both foolish and irresponsible—not empowerment! Instead, decision-making authority and other broader responsibilities should only be shared with those who are competent to do what is necessary. It therefore is necessary to avoid two pitfalls to more effectively understand and apply empowerment:

1.Empowerment is ***not a zero-sum game*** where one person’s gain is another’s loss. *Sharing power, via empowerment, is a means for increasing your own power*. As Frances Hesselbein, the woman credited with modernizing the Girl Scouts of the USA, put it: “The more power you give away, the more you have.”[20](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en20ch12) Authoritarian managers who view employee empowerment as a threat to their own power are missing the point because of their win–lose thinking.

Page 412

2.Empowerment is ***a matter of degree*,** not an either–or proposition. [Figure 12.5](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12fig5) illustrates how power can be shifted to the hands of nonmanagers step by step. The overriding goal is to increase productivity and competitiveness in organizations. Each step in this evolution increases the power of organizational contributors who traditionally were told what, when, and how to do things.

**FIGURE 12.5**THE EVOLUTION OF POWER FROM DOMINATION TO DELEGATION

**Sharing Power to Increase Your Power and Performance**A common element of empowerment involves pushing decision-making authority down to lower levels. For example, Homewood Suites offers a 100 percent money-back guarantee if a guest isn’t satisfied. Any employee—from housekeeper to manager—can make good on that guarantee; they don’t have to seek approval. And the guest doesn’t have to go through a chain of command to have a complaint resolved. “The return we get on every dollar refunded is 20 to 1,” executive Frank Saitta says, based on repeat business and referrals from those refunded guests. The return on engaged employees “is much higher.”[21](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en21ch12)

Now that you have an understanding of structural empowerment, let’s move on and learn about psychological empowerment.

**Psychological Empowerment**

[***Psychological empowerment***](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/glossary1.html#iglo308) **occurs when employees feel a sense of:**

**Meaning**—Belief that your work values and goals align with those of your manager, team, or employer.

**Competence**—Personal evaluation of your ability to do your job.

**Self-determination**—Sense that you have control over your work and its outcomes.

**Impact at work**—Feeling that your efforts make a difference and affect the organization.[22](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en22ch12)

Page 413

Simply giving employees more responsibilities or tasks does not mean they will feel empowered. Would you feel empowered if your manager allowed you to clean toilets because you’ve done such an excellent job of cleaning sinks?!

While structural empowerment draws on job design and characteristics, psychological empowerment is related to self-efficacy ([Chapter 3](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap03.html)) and intrinsic motivation ([Chapter 5](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap05.html)). “It is less concerned with the actual transition of authority and responsibility but instead focuses on employees’ perceptions or cognitive states regarding empowerment.”[23](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en23ch12) Put simply, if you feel that your work has meaning, that you are competent, and that you have some control (self-determination), then you are very likely to feel highly efficacious and perform at a high level. It therefore is necessary to do more than simply delegate more responsibilities if you wish to psychologically empower others. Let’s illustrate with an example.

**EXAMPLE**Assume you’re a janitor and you clean sinks, and you do it very well. Would you feel empowered if your manager said, “Because you clean the sinks so well, now I’d like you to clean the toilets too.” Empowered? No. Where is the sense of meaning or impact? This is simply delegating more work to you (similar to job enlargement discussed in [Chapter 5](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap05.html)).

Put plainly, don’t feel too confident that you’re empowering others if they don’t feel empowered!

**Psychological Empowerment at the Team and Organizational Levels**Recent research and practice have shown that the same four elements that foster psychological empowerment for individuals apply to teams and organizations.[24](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en24ch12) Team empowerment grew from the knowledge that teams affect individuals’ emotions, attitudes, and performance (recall [Chapter 8](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap08.html)). This led both managers and experts to explore whether teams (and entire organizations) could be empowered. The conclusion: yes! Moreover, the benefits to individuals also apply to teams and organizations—higher team performance and satisfaction [25](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en25ch12) and more positive emotions within the team.[26](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en26ch12)

**EXAMPLE**Toyota has successfully empowered teams for decades. Teams in Toyota manufacturing facilities, for example, are expected to identify and solve problems as they occur and not simply pass them along to management to fix. Employees are also encouraged to make efficiency and quality improvement suggestions to management. These are typically reviewed by management, but the problems are often assigned to employee teams charged with identifying and implementing solutions. Toyota’s practices have been so effective that they have been adopted by not only other auto companies, but manufacturers in many other industries the world over.

Since we’ve explored different forms of empowerment and its various degrees and levels, let’s conclude this section with a discussion of how to increase or develop empowerment in individuals, teams, and organizations.

**How to Empower Individuals, Teams, and Organizations**

Empowering others is not simple, but what makes it easier is that the same levers can be used to influence empowerment across levels of an organization. [Figure 12.6](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12fig6) illustrates some of the key inputs to empower others and the resulting outcomes. Notice how many of these also are elements in the Integrative Framework.

**Empowerment Inputs**Structural empowerment is an input to psychological empowerment. This makes sense, as job characteristics, policies, and practices can either facilitate or impede the feelings of empowerment for individuals and teams. This has in fact been shown in recent research with nurses in hospitals. Policies and practices were changed (structural empowerment) that helped nurse leaders to feel greater meaningfulness in their jobs and provide more participative decision making and less bureaucracy. This in turn increased their feelings of psychological empowerment and their actual empowering behaviors.[27](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en27ch12)

Page 414

Similarly, the extent to which employees have positive self-evaluations, such as core self-evaluations ([Chapter 3](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap03.html)) and positive psychological capital ([Chapter 7](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap07.html)), likely enhances their sense of empowerment. What you learned about motivation in [Chapter 5](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap05.html) is also helpful to understanding and fostering empowerment across levels of the Integrative Framework. Specifically, job characteristics that generate intrinsic motivational states (sense of meaningfulness and responsibility) clearly can help, as can leadership, which you’ll learn about in the next chapter. Finally, if teams have access to the resources such as the people and their ideas in other teams, then they too are more likely to be empowered.

**FIGURE 12.6**INPUTS AND OUTCOMES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT ACROSS ORGANIZATIONAL LEVELS

SOURCE: Adapted from M. T. Maynard, L. L. Gilson, and J. E. Mathieu, “Empowerment—Fad or Fab? A Multilevel Review of the Past Two Decades of Research,” *Journal of Management 20*, 2012, 1–51.

**Empowerment Outputs**As with many of the topics covered in this book, empowerment is important because it positively influences performance for individuals, teams, and organizations. Past and current research consistently show this. But the benefits extend beyond performance and also include citizenship behaviors, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions ([Chapter 2](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap02.html)). Empowerment also reduces stress for individuals and teams.[28](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en28ch12)

While empowerment can be a challenge to implement, we are confident that with the knowledge and tools you are learning in this chapter you’ll be able to find jobs that are empowering to you, and that you in turn will more effectively empower others. To help your empowerment efforts, we turn our attention in the next section to particular tools for influencing others.

Page 415

**12.3EFFECTIVELY INFLUENCING OTHERS**

**MAJOR QUESTION**

**How do my influence tactics affect my personal effectiveness?**

**THE BIGGER PICTURE**

**How do you get others to do as you wish? Do you attempt to dazzle them with your knowledge and logical arguments? Or do you prefer a less direct approach, such as promising to return the favor? Whatever approach you use, the crux of the issue is social influence. A large measure of interpersonal interaction involves attempts to influence others, including parents, bosses, coworkers, professors, friends, spouses, and children. Let’s start sharpening your influence skills by exploring influence tactics and their effective and ethical application.**

In a perfect world, individual and collective interests would be closely aligned and everyone would move forward as one. But the world isn’t perfect. We instead often find a rather messy situation in which self-interests often override the collective mission of the department or organization. Personal and hidden agendas are pursued, political coalitions are formed, false impressions are made, and people end up working against rather than with each other. Managers, and you, need to be able to guide diverse individuals with their own interests to pursue common objectives. At stake in this tug-of-war between individual and collective interests is effectiveness, at the personal, group, and organizational levels. And your tools for managing such challenges are *influence tactics*.

**Common Influence Tactics**

[***Influence tactics***](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/glossary.html#iglo168) **are conscious efforts to affect and change a specific behavior in others.** Researchers identified nine of the most common ways that people try to get their bosses, coworkers, and subordinates to do what they want. The following tactics are listed in rank order, beginning with most frequently used.

1.*Rational persuasion*. Trying to convince someone with reason, logic, or facts.

2.*Inspirational appeals*. Trying to build enthusiasm by appealing to others’ emotions, ideals, or values.

3.*Consultation*. Getting others to participate in planning, making decisions, and changes.

4.*Ingratiation*. Getting someone in a good mood prior to making a request; being friendly and helpful and using praise, flattery, or humor. A particular form of ingratiation is “brown nosing.”

5.*Personal appeals*. Referring to friendship and loyalty when making a request.

6.*Exchange*. Making explicit or implied promises and trading favors.

7.*Coalition tactics*. Getting others to support your efforts to persuade someone.

8.*Pressure*. Demanding compliance or using intimidation or threats.

9.*Legitimating tactics*. Basing a request on one’s authority or right, organizational rules or policies, or explicit/implied support from superiors.

Page 416

Hedge fund manager Bill Ackman, of Pershing Square Capital LP, used coalition, rational appeals, pressure, and legitimating tactics to leverage a partial stake in JC Penney to gain control of the company, which under his watch eventually failed and resulted in his departure—and an estimated loss of $700 million for Pershing.[29](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en29ch12)

These are considered *generic* influence tactics because they characterize social influence in all directions. And research has shown this ranking to be fairly consistent regardless of whether the direction of influence is downward, upward, or lateral.[30](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en30ch12)

**Hard v. Soft Tactics**Some refer to the first five influence tactics—rational persuasion, inspirational appeals, consultation, ingratiation, and personal appeals—as [***“soft” tactics***](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/glossary1.html#iglo347) **because they are friendlier than, and not as coercive as, the last four tactics**—exchange, coalition, pressure, and legitimating tactics, which are [***“hard” tactics***](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/glossary.html#iglo149) **because they involve more overt pressure.**

**Which Do I Use Most? Least?**It’s likely when you read the list of tactics that each meant something to you. But let’s put this to the test, so to speak, and have you learn which of these tactics you most commonly use. Knowing which tactics you tend to use most and least can help you better choose the appropriate tactic for any given situation. The contingency approach that we’ve utilized throughout this book also applies to influence tactics. Just as with bases of power, it is important to use the tactic that is most appropriate for the situation and your desired outcome. Applying this knowledge can increase your effectiveness. The next step to realizing these benefits is to complete [Self-Assessment 12.2](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12self2).

**SELF-ASSESSMENT 12.2 Which Influence Tactics Do I Use?**

Go to [connect.mheducation.com](http://connect.mheducation.com/) and take [Self-Assessment 12.2](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12self2) to learn which of the nine influence tactics you use and in what order of frequency.

1.Is your rational persuasion score the highest? Regardless, give some specific examples of how you use this tactic.

2.Which tactic is your least preferred (lowest score)? Provide examples of situations of when and how you may use this tactic.

**Match Tactics to Influence Outcomes**

Research and practice provide us some useful lessons about the relative effectiveness of influence tactics along with other instructive insights. Some insights are intuitive and may match your personal experiences, while others may not.

•**Strong at the core.** *Core influence tactics*—rational persuasion, consultation, collaboration, and inspirational appeals—are most effective at building commitment. Do not rely on pressure and coalition tactics. Interestingly, in one study, managers were not very effective at downward influence. They relied most heavily on inspiration (an effective tactic), ingratiation (a moderately effective tactic), and pressure (an ineffective tactic).

•**Important, enjoyable, friendly.** Commitment is more likely when the influence attempt involves something important and enjoyable and is based on a friendly relationship.

•**Believable and trustworthy.** Credible people tend to be the most persuasive.

Page 417

•**Consultative trumps legitimating.** Some employees are more apt to accept change when managers rely on a consultative strategy and are more likely to resist change when managers use a legitimating tactic.

•**Schmoozing benefits are short-lived.** Ingratiation improved short-term but reduced long-term sales goal achievement in a study of salespeople. Schmoozing can help today’s sales but not tomorrow’s.

•**Subtlety wins long term.** Subtle flattery and agreeing with the other person’s opinion (both are forms of ingratiation) were shown to increase the likelihood of executives being recommended to sit on boards of directors.

•**We can learn to influence.** Research with corporate managers of a supermarket chain showed that influence tactics can be taught and learned. Managers who received 360-degree feedback on two occasions regarding their influence tactics showed an increased use of core influence tactics.

So what’s the bottom line? The influence tactics listed above can be learned and improved to move resisters to compliance, and those who are compliant to commitment.

**TAKE-AWAY APPLICATION—TAAP** **Using Influence Tactics to Achieve My Goals**

1.Think of a goal at school, work, or socially. Be sure this goal also requires somebody else’s help for you to achieve.

2.Determine if you need this person’s compliance or commitment.

3.Then, using whichever tactic in [Self-Assessment 12.2](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12self2) is your highest, describe specifically how you can use this tactic to achieve your chosen goal. Does this tactic match the desired outcome (compliance or commitment)?

4.Identify a second tactic that can help you achieve this goal, then describe specifically how you can apply it. Be sure the tactic you choose matches your desired outcome (compliance or commitment).

**How Can I Increase My Own Influence?**

The appropriate choice and application of the power and influence tactics described already provide a good place to start. But there are many other tools that can help you enhance your ability to influence others.[31](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en31ch12)

**Know what you want and believe you can get it.** State your (influence) goals in a positive way. For example, say, “I would like to be part of the decision-making process,” instead of, “I don’t think anybody will take me seriously.” Put another way, tell people what you want instead of what you don’t want.

**Credibility.** People are more likely to listen to those with credibility. Highlight yours by emphasizing your expertise, reputation, and/or track record.

**Trustworthiness.** It is difficult to influence others if they don’t trust you. To build and maintain trust, be authentic, deliver on what you promise, consider the interests of others, and don’t do anything to diminish your trustworthiness.

**Empathy.** It often is best to assume somebody else’s position before your own. People are more easily influenced when they feel others understand their situation.

**Strong communication capability.** All other personal characteristics aside, the ability to effectively communicate your ideas and listen to others bolsters your influence.

Page 418

**Be inspirational.** Enthusiasm is contagious. If you’re excited, others are more likely to be excited and to follow.

**Open-mindedness.** Truly influential people are not afraid of being influenced themselves.

Your ability to persuade others can be enhanced further still by understanding and applying the six principles of persuasion. Let’s explore these now.

**Six Principles of Persuasion**

Experiments by Robert Cialdini and others have identified six principles for influencing people.[32](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en32ch12) These principles are based on the idea that people have fundamental responses, and if your efforts align with these responses, your influence increases. Learn the following and see what you think.

Robert Cialdini is one of the world’s foremost authorities on influence. His principles are based in research and proven in practice. You too can benefit from the application of these principles in every arena of your life—school, work, and socially.

1.*Liking*. People tend to like those who like them. Learning about another person’s likes and dislikes through informal conversations builds friendship bonds. So do sincere and timely praise, empathy, and recognition.

2.*Reciprocity*. The belief that both good and bad deeds should be repaid in kind is virtually universal. Managers who act unethically and treat employees with contempt can expect the same in return. Worse still, those same employees are likely to treat each other and their customers unethically and with contempt. Managers need to be positive and constructive role models and fair-minded to benefit from the principle of reciprocity.

3.*Social proof*. People tend to follow the lead of those most like themselves. Role models and peer pressure are powerful cultural forces in social settings. Managers are advised to build support for workplace changes by first gaining the enthusiastic support of informal leaders who will influence their peers.

4.*Consistency*. People tend to do what they are personally committed to do. A manager who can elicit a verbal commitment from an employee has taken an important step toward influence and persuasion.

5.*Authority*. People tend to defer to and respect credible experts. Too many managers and professionals take their expertise for granted, as in the case of a hospital where the physical therapy staff was frustrated by the lack of follow-through by patients. No matter how much they emphasized the importance of continuing therapy, many patients stopped once they returned home. An investigation of the causes revealed that patients were unaware of the professional/ clinical qualifications of their therapists. Once they were informed, and their many diplomas and certifications were hung on the walls in the clinic, patient compliance was remarkable. Compliance increased 34 percent![33](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en33ch12)

Page 419

6.*Scarcity*. People want items, information, and opportunities that have limited availability. Special opportunities and privileged information are influence-builders for managers.

Importantly, Cialdini recommends using these six principles in combination, rather than separately, for maximum impact. Because of potential ethical implications, one’s goals need to be worthy and actions need to be sincere and genuine when using these six principles.

**Apply Your Knowledge**

We conclude this section by giving you an opportunity to apply your knowledge in a scenario that is both common and important to many students. It is valuable to realize that effective influence starts with a plan. Follow these steps to create your own influence plan.

**Step 1:** Set a goal and get a clear idea of what it is you want to achieve.

**Step 2:** Identify the person or persons who can help you achieve that goal.

**Step 3:** Determine what type of influence outcome—compliance or commitment—you want or need from the person(s) identified in step 2.

**Step 4:** Decide which bases of power and tactics are most appropriate for the influence outcome you desire. (Be realistic as to which of these bases and tactics are available to you.)

**Step 5:** Explicitly describe how you apply the bases of power and tactics you chose.

Now, apply this approach to the following scenario. Assume that you want to get a job at Interstate Batteries in their Talent Group. This is your goal. To do this, it is helpful to learn more about the organization and who the decision makers are. Thankfully, Interstate hired Jennifer, who went to your school, two years ago. (You learned this through the career services center.) You attained her info and plan to contact her, with the hopes that she will share her experiences and put you in touch with the hiring manager in the Talent Group. You do not need Jennifer’s enthusiastic commitment to your employment efforts, as she doesn’t even know you. But what you would like is her “compliance” with your desire for more information and an introduction to the Talent Group manager. She likely is willing to do this, if for no other reason than she is an alumna of your school, and you were very charming in your e-mail and phone communications. Now, you need to decide which of the bases of power and influence tactics you have available with Jennifer, and which of these are most appropriate for gaining her compliance.

**TAKE-AWAY APPLICATION—TAAP**

1.Using the scenario above, which bases of power are most appropriate to gain Jennifer’s compliance?

2.Describe, specifically, how you would apply the base or bases of power identified in question 1.

3.Which of the nine influence tactics are most appropriate to influence Jennifer?

4.Describe how you would use each one to achieve your desired outcome.

We hope the practical tools you’ve gained in this section whetted your appetite for learning more about how you can influence others, affect many processes and outcomes in the Integrative Framework, and thus increase your personal effectiveness. Let’s continue to build your knowledge and skills and focus on political tactics next.

Page 420

**12.4POLITICAL TACTICS AND HOW TO USE THEM**

**MAJOR QUESTION**

**What are the many forms of politics, and how can understanding them make me more effective at school, at work, and socially?**

**THE BIGGER PICTURE**

**When you hear the word “politics,” what comes to mind? The president, deadlocked congress, or your conniving, self-serving, untrustworthy boss or coworker? Whatever the case, it is unlikely that a smile comes to your face or that your heart is warmed. But it is important to realize that politics are not all bad. To make this point, and increase your effectiveness at school, at work, and socially, we explore this important and interesting topic by defining the term *organizational politics*, exploring some fundamental causes of politics, discussing nine common political tactics, identifying three levels of political action, and finally providing recommendations on how to manage politics in your favor. All this will help you better understand and manage this ever-present aspect of organizational life and key group-level process in the Integrative Framework.**

As just described, organizational politics are typically viewed as negative or counterproductive behaviors (e.g., manipulation, controlling information, undermining). This is a narrow and inaccurate view of organizational politics because they also entail positive behaviors, such as persuading others to accept one’s point of view and aligning people to efficiently execute strategic objectives.[34](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en34ch12) It therefore is important for you to understand organizational politics to realize the upside and avoid or manage the downside.

**Organizational Politics—The Good and the Bad**

[***Organizational politics***](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/glossary1.html#iglo268) **are intentional acts of influence to enhance or protect the self-interest of individuals or groups that are not endorsed by or aligned with those of the organization.** The critical aspect is the emphasis on *self-interest*, as this distinguishes politics from other forms of influence. Managers are endlessly challenged to achieve a workable balance between employees’ self-interests and organizational interests. When a proper balance or alignment exists, the pursuit of self-interest may also serve the organization’s interests. In contrast, when political activities are out of balance and/or conflict with the organization’s interests, they are considered negative and not endorsed by the organization. This means that they are not an integral part of an employee’s job role and not approved.

**Causes of Political Behavior**Political behavior has causes at all three levels of the Integrative Framework. Specifically, research shows that organizational justice ([Chapter 5](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap05.html)) is the strongest organizational influence on politics. Trust in coworkers ([Chapter 8](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap08.html)) and negative affect (negative emotions—[Chapter 3](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap03.html)) are the strongest work environment and individual difference predictors, respectively.[35](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en35ch12) Underlying most of these causes is a more fundamental or root cause—uncertainty.

Page 421

Arthur Levitt, former SEC chairman, supports putting term limits on auditor–client relationships, requiring them to rotate every few years. The motive is to reduce conflicts of interest that undoubtedly occur and to increase objectivity and independence. Congress passed a bill that blocked such regulations and thus allows companies and their auditors to do business as usual, On average such relationships last nearly 25 years for S&P 500 companies.[36](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en36ch12)

**Uncertainty Triggers Political Actions**A lack of justice, such as unfair performance appraisal procedures and outcomes (procedural and distributive justice, [Chapter 5](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap05.html)), generates uncertainty in your performance ratings and pay. A lack of trust in a boss or coworker almost certainly boosts the uncertainty as to whether he or she will undermine you and steal credit. While each of these scenarios creates uncertainty for you, research shows that political maneuvering is triggered by five common sources of uncertainty within organizations:

1.Unclear objectives

2.Vague performance measures

3.Ill-defined decision processes

4.Strong individual or group competition[37](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en37ch12)

5.Any type of change

**Performance, Change, and Politics**Closely related to the second item of the above list—vague performance measures—is the problem of *unclear performance–reward linkages* (recall our discussion of expectancy motivation theory in [Chapter 5](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap05.html)). This is a significant problem. Over 10,000 employees were asked to respond to the statement: “Employees who do a better job get paid more.” While 48 percent of the responding managers agreed, only 31 percent of the nonmanagers agreed.[38](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en38ch12) Besides being a sad commentary on performance management and motivation, these results matter because employees tend to resort to “politicking” when they are unsure about what it takes to get ahead.

Related to the fifth factor—any type of change—an organization development specialist noted: “Whatever we attempt to change, the political subsystem becomes active. Vested interests are almost always at stake and the distribution of power is challenged.”[39](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en39ch12) Tools for combating resistance to change are discussed in [Chapter 16](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap16.html). Before we move on and learn more about organizational politics, it is useful for you to get a sense of how political you are. This is another one of those attributes, similar to trust, about which people often think more highly of themselves than others do. Complete [Self-Assessment 12.3](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12self3) and learn about your own level of politics. There is an added benefit, as this particular Assessment also taps into ethics and manipulation. It could be telling to have some friends complete this same short Assessment in terms of how they see you!

Page 422

**SELF-ASSESSMENT 12.3 How Political Am I?**

Go to [connect.mheducation.com](http://connect.mheducation.com/) and take [Self-Assessment 12.3](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12self3) to learn about your own political tendencies.

1.Does your score accurately capture your tendencies toward organizational politics? Why or why not?

2.Do you think a true organizational politician would complete the Assessment honestly? Explain.

3.Given knowledge of your political tendencies, describe how they could both help or hurt you at school, at work, and in your career.

**Frequently Used Political Tactics**

Anyone who has worked in an organization has firsthand knowledge of blatant politicking. Although there are many different ways to describe and categorize political tactics, [Table 12.1](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12tab1) shows some of the most commonly used political tactics and a description of each.

**TABLE 12.1**MOST COMMONLY USED POLITICAL TACTICS

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TACTIC** | **DESCRIPTION** |
| 1. Building a network of useful contacts | Cultivating a support network both inside and outside the organization |
| 2. Using “key players” to support initiatives | Getting prior support for a decision or issue. Building others’ commitment via participation |
| 3. Making friends with power brokers | Teaming up with powerful people who can get results |
| 4. Bending the rules to fit the situation | Interpreting or (not) enforcing rules to serve your own interests |
| 5. Self-promotion | Blowing your own horn, but not doing the same for others’ accomplishments |
| 6. Creating a favorable image (also known as *impression management.)* | Dressing for success. Adhering to organizational norms and drawing attention to one’s successes and influence. Taking credit for others’ accomplishments |
| 7. Praising others (ingratiation) | Making influential people feel good (“brown nosing”) |
| 8. Attacking or blaming others | Used to avoid or minimize association with failure. Reactive when scapegoating is involved. Proactive when goal is to reduce competition for limited resources |
| 9. Using information as a political tool | Involves the purposeful withholding or distortion of information. Obscuring an unfavorable situation by overwhelming superiors with information |

SOURCE: Adapted from R. W. Allen, D. L. Madison, L. W. Porter, P. A. Renwick, and B. T. Mayes, “Organizational Politics: Tactics and Characteristics of Its Actors,” *California Management Review*, Fall 1979, 77–83.

Page 423

It is likely that you view some of the tactics in the table very favorably, such as building a network of useful contacts. And of course doing this is a means of serving your own interests. In fact, many management experts and career counselors agree that it is wise for businesspeople to build, maintain, and use networks both internal and external to one’s employer. This is a positive use of politics and consistent with what you learned about social capital in [Chapter 1](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap01.html). However, let’s explore another common and not-so-positive political tactic—blaming others.

**Failure, Blame, and Politics**

You may have noticed in our discussion up to this point that politicking often occurs when things don’t work out, that is, in situations of underperformance. How one responds to underperformance (failure) is very important. Research involving several hundred thousand managers from a large variety of industries in the United States showed that 70 percent of the population tends to assign blame for failures in one of the following three ways:

1.Blame others

2.Blame oneself

3.Deny blame[40](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en40ch12)

These tendencies are stable, just like personality and many of the other individual differences discussed in [Chapter 3](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap03.html). And like other individual differences, one’s “blaming style” likely fits some situations well and is problematic in others. It is helpful to assess your own tendencies, as well as those of your coworkers and people you must influence at work. It also is helpful to realize that politicking can and does occur at three different levels, which we discuss next.

**Three Levels of Political Action**

Although much political maneuvering occurs at the individual level, it also can involve group or collective action. [Figure 12.7](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12fig7) illustrates three different levels of political action: the individual level, the coalition level, and the network level.[41](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en41ch12) Each level has its distinguishing characteristics. At the individual level, self-interests are pursued by the individual. The political aspects of coalitions and networks are not so obvious, however, and thus require a bit of explanation.

**Coalition-Level PoliticsA**[***coalition***](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/glossary.html#iglo38)**is an informal group bound together by the *active* pursuit of a *single* issue.** Coalitions may or may not coincide with formal group membership. When the target issue is resolved (a sexually harassing supervisor is fired, for example), the coalition disbands. Experts note that political coalitions have “fuzzy boundaries,” meaning they are fluid in membership, flexible in structure, and temporary in duration.[42](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en42ch12) Coalitions are a potent political force in organizations. For instance, a coalition representing farmers and airlines persuaded the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to exempt these industries from new legislation that requires companies that trade futures contracts, in commodities such as grain and jet fuel, to put up greater amounts of collateral.[43](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en43ch12)

**FIGURE 12.7**LEVELS OF POLITICAL ACTION IN ORGANIZATIONS

Page 424

The “ice bucket challenge” was a sensation in the late summer of 2014. Besides boosting financial donations to research for ALS disease nearly fourfold, it also was an excellent example of political tactics and levels of political action. For instance, many celebrities were challenged to participate, which brought attention to the cause and demonstrated the power of influential others (political tactic #2 in [Table 12.1](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12tab1)). And because so many people joined together to support a common cause (ALS), it also illustrated coalition-level political action.

**Network-Level Politics**A third level of political action involves networks. Unlike coalitions, which pivot on specific issues, networks are loose associations of individuals seeking social support for their general self-interests. Politically, *networks are people-oriented, while coalitions are issue-oriented*. Networks have broader and longer-term agendas than do coalitions. For instance, many former Goldman Sachs executives (e.g., Hank Paulson, Stephen Friedman, Josh Bolten, and Robert Rubin) went on to high-level government jobs. Many people have alleged that this large and powerful network has protected the interests of Wall Street firms generally and those of Goldman Sachs in particular.[44](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en44ch12)

**Keeping Organizational Politics in Check**

We close this section by highlighting the point that people’s *perceptions* of politics matter, not just actual acts of politics. For instance, studies including more than 25,000 employees showed that perceptions of organizational politics were negatively associated with job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and positively related to job stress and intentions to quit.[45](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en45ch12) These findings are consistent with other work that showed undesirable effects on helping behaviors.[46](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en46ch12)

Page 425

Do these results suggest that managers should attempt to stop people from being political? Good luck. Organizational politics cannot be eliminated. A manager would be naïve to believe this is possible. But political maneuvering can and should be managed to keep it constructive and within reasonable bounds. One expert put it this way: “People can focus their attention on only so many things. The more it lands on politics, the less energy—emotional and intellectual—is available to attend to the problems that fall under the heading of real work.”[47](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en47ch12)

**Not Too Much and Not Too Little**An individual’s degree of politicalness is a matter of personal values, ethics, and temperament. People who are either strictly nonpolitical or highly political generally pay a price for their behavior. The former may experience slow promotions and feel left out, while the latter may run the risk of being called self-serving and lose their credibility. People at both ends of the political spectrum may be considered poor team players. A moderate amount of prudent political behavior generally is considered a survival tool in complex organizations. Experts remind us that “political behavior has earned a bad name only because of its association with politicians. On its own, the use of power and other resources to obtain your objectives is not inherently unethical. It all depends on what the preferred objectives are.”[48](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en48ch12) What are your thoughts?

**How to Build Support for My Ideas**Taken together, our discussion of politics probably leaves you wondering, “What should I do?” How do I avoid the bad and take advantage of the good? Thankfully, both research and practice provide some useful and specific advice on how to build support for your ideas. Here are eight recommendations:

1.Create a simple slogan that captures your idea.

2.Get your idea on the agenda. Describe how it addresses an important need or objective and look for ways to make it a priority.

3.Score small wins early and broadcast them widely. Results build momentum and make it easier for other people to commit.

4.Form alliances with people who have the power to decide, fund, and implement.

5.Persist and continue to build support. It is a process, not an event.

6.Respond and adjust. Be flexible and accepting of other people’s input; the more names on it, the more likely you are to succeed.

7.Lock it in. Anchor the idea into the organization through budgets, job descriptions, incentives, and other operating procedures.

8.Secure and allocate credit. You don’t want your idea to be hijacked, nor do you want to blow your own horn. You need others to sing your praises to assure you get the credit you deserve.[49](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en49ch12)

**TAKE-AWAY APPLICATION–TAAP**

1.Make politics work for you and select an idea—something you would like to change, a new program, a new policy or practice—for an organization to which you belong.

2.Work through and apply as many of the eight recommendations in the list above as are relevant. (Don’t be too quick to skip any particular recommendation; give each some real thought.)

3.Execute your plan. Regardless of the level of success, compare what you actually did with what you planned to do (how many of the eight recommendations did you actually use?).

4.If you’re happy with the outcome, then hopefully this showed you the positive power of politics. If you were less than pleased with the results, revise your plan and be sure to follow it.

Page 426

**12.5IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT**

**MAJOR QUESTION**

**Do I seek only to impress, or to make a good impression?**

**THE BIGGER PICTURE**

**We all want to look good in the eyes of others, and to do this we often engage in impression management. Like the other topics discussed in this chapter, impression management involves techniques we engage in to influence others in all arenas of life. To help you manage your own impressions, we define the term *impression management* and discuss what it means to make good and bad impressions, as well as how to remedy bad impressions and make effective apologies. You will see how practical knowledge in this area helps boost your effectiveness across levels of outcomes in the Integrative Framework.**

We pursue the basic human desire to impress others not only because it makes us feel good about ourselves, but also because others often can provide things we desire, such as a job, a good grade, or a date! Many of our attempts to influence others in such ways are “impression management.” We conclude this chapter with a discussion of this particular form of influence.

**What Is Impression Management?**

[***Impression management***](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/glossary.html#iglo164) **is defined as any attempt to control or manipulate the images related to a person, organization, or idea.**[50](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en50ch12) This encompasses things such as speech, behavior, and appearance. Most impression management attempts are directed at making a good impression on important others, although there are exceptions, as we will see. It is important to remember that anyone can be the intended target of impression management—parents, teachers, peers, employees, and customers are all fair game. For instance, by positioning themselves as socially responsible (CSR), companies can create positive impressions with many stakeholders, such as potential customers, and in turn boost sales.[51](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en51ch12) Let’s dive into good and bad impressions in more detail.

**Good Impressions**

Research conducted in the context of job interviews shows that impressions are formed very quickly and often subtly. Interviewers gather information on job candidates based on their handshake, smile, and manner of dress. All of this information is communicated before any questions are asked! More importantly, it was shown that these same factors were related to ultimate job offers.[52](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en52ch12)

**How to Make a Killer First Impression**You’ve undoubtedly heard the saying: “You have only one chance to make a first impression.” Some argue that people judge you within one second of meeting you. Researchers tested this belief and found that after viewing only a microsecond of a video of a political candidate, subjects predicted with 70 percent accuracy who would win an election! To help you overcome the pressure, and assure that people’s snap judgments of you are favorable, we make the following five recommendations:

Page 427

Craig’s List founder Craig Newmark and CEO Jim Buckmaster seemingly pay little attention to impression management. Their office is in a small storefront; Buckmaster takes public transportation to work while Newmark drives himself in a modest car. Buckmaster says that neither of them is interested in being wildly wealthy and dealing with the associated challenges. Stopping short and avoiding the hassles is just fine for them. Also interesting is the fact that Newmark, despite being the wealthy founder, currently works in a customer service role with no managerial responsibilities at CraigsList.[53](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en53ch12)

1.**Set an intention.** Once again goal setting from [Chapters 5](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap05.html) and [6](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap06.html) comes into play. When you’re preparing for an event (a meeting, social event, conference), think of whom you’d like to meet and what you’d like to achieve from that introduction. Then, plan your energy, intro, and comments accordingly.

2.**Consider your ornaments.** We’re not talking about Christmas trees or party favors, but instead your jewelry, makeup, and clothes. This advice is for both men and women. Men, don’t overlook your watch, for instance. Many people will draw conclusions from the type of watch you wear and how it aligns with your clothes (e.g., sporty, gaudy, trendy). Women, of course, should not forget that their makeup and jewelry are judged similarly. Be sure they match your personality and your intended message.

3.**Remember that your body speaks.** We’ve all heard that body language makes a difference, but people very rarely actually do anything about it. Pay attention to the nonverbals you learned about in [Chapter 9](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap09.html). And if you’re serious about managing your body language, then find a way to video yourself in a social setting. Use this to help you manage your tendencies in the future.

4.**Bust bad moods and bad days.** If you can’t shake a bad mood or prevent your bad day from spilling over into your event, then stay home. This requires you to manage your emotions and mood. The knowledge and tools you acquired in [Chapter 7](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap07.html) on Positive OB can help here. If you’re in a bad mood before an important event, then find a way to snap out of it—play some of your favorite music, work out, go shopping—or reschedule. People will pick up on your mood, and you don’t want your body language to convey: “Hello, my name is Bad Mood Bob.”

Page 428

5.**Be interested to be interesting.** The best way to appear interesting is *to appear interested*. People tend to like people who like them; at least this is a good place to start. Rather than blather on about yourself, an excellent way to show interest is to ask questions about the other person. Depending on the situation, you may be able to do some research about the person or persons you’ll meet, and then make it part of your intention or goal to ask them about interesting things you learned about them.[54](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en54ch12)

**TAKE-AWAY APPLICATION–TAAP**

1.Which of the five rules for making a first impression do you most often overlook? Which one do you think you could gain the most from?

2.Think of somebody you’d like to positively impress, and assume you’ll be able to meet this person next week at a networking event.

3.Describe your intention or goal for the introduction.

4.Describe how you can appear interested. What questions might you ask?

5.Now, assume that the day of the networking event arrives and you’re in a bad mood. Explain two things you could do to break out of this mood and prepare yourself for the event.

**Reciprocity and Impression Management**Recall our discussion of reciprocity earlier in this chapter (“Six Principles of Persuasion”)—the benefits of giving in order to receive. An interesting stream of research shows that when a CEO makes positive comments about another, and the other’s company, Wall Street analysts give more favorable reports for both the CEO and the company when they miss earnings.[55](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en55ch12) Put another way, if I say something positive about you to the media, then they are likely to be more forgiving if or when your performance is low. This is obviously a powerful form of influence—one that really pays!

**Ethics and Impression Management**Impression management often strays into questionable, if not unethical, territory. And, like the last example, CEOs often engage in impression management with Wall Street analysts. This is to be expected, and in and of itself is not a problem. However, a study of more than 600 CEOs of companies with more than $100 million in revenues showed that unfavorable analyst comments prompted CEOs to verbally communicate that their companies do indeed have policies and practices that are in shareholders’ best interests. Related research showed that CEOs also routinely communicated that their own compensation plan was aligned with shareholder interests, although, in both instances, it was found that CEOs regularly misrepresented these issues.[56](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en56ch12) For example, their companies often made job and R&D cuts that undermined the long-term health of the company (counter to shareholder interests), and their personal compensation often was increased even when the share price of their company plummeted.

How about this story of impression management from a large bank:

After 7 pm, people would open the door to their office, drape a spare jacket on the back of their chair, lay a set of glasses down on some reading material on their desk—and then go home for the night. The point of this elaborate gesture was to create the illusion that they were just out grabbing dinner and would be returning to burn the midnight oil.[57](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en57ch12)

While these examples highlight some ethically questionable impression management practices, entire industries have transformed themselves using impression management. The venture capital (VC) industry, for instance, historically shunned any publicity. The norm in the industry was for the owners to stay out of the limelight, keep low profiles, and keep their mouths shut. Now, however, VC firms are aggressively engaged in impression management and hire PR firms, blog, and tweet. The following Example box provides some interesting details and insights.

Page 429

**EXAMPLE**Impression Management Venture Capital Style[58](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en58ch12)

Self-promotion by venture capitalists was frowned upon until about 2009. Until that point those that did “take the stage” were criticized and called “parade jumpers.” But since 2009 VC firms old (e.g., Bessemer Venture Partners) and new (e.g., Founders Fund) actively engage in impression management with investors, the media, and other VC firms. Today some of the founders and lead rainmakers in VC firms are celebrities with publicity, status, and influence to match their often immense wealth. Below are some of the reasons why VC firms across the industry now pursue impression management with enthusiasm and perhaps the most successful one today.

Marc Andreessen and Ben Horowitz entered the venture capital industry with a bang, or more like a flash. They embraced (self-)promotion and other impression management techniques and achieved greater growth than any other VC. Their tactics and performance also garnered them incredible status and influence. They are now seen as the most desirable source of financing for entrepreneurs in San Francisco and New York.

•*Poor returns*. Venture capital firms averaged 4.6 percent returns in the last 10 years. This means that investors are putting their money in other places; therefore, VCs have to compete more aggressively.

•*Knock on doors*. This increased competition has motivated VCs to reach out to and differentiate themselves with investors and entrepreneurs, which contrasts with the recent past where investors and entrepreneurs needed some sort of inside connection to get a meeting with VCs.

•*Andreessen & Horowitz*. This VC firm, started by the founder of Netscape (one of the first Web companies) and one of its executives, entered the market in 2009 with a completely different approach—they courted entrepreneurs, used social media (blogs and Twitter), and marketed themselves aggressively. Their “public” approach was motivated by the belief that “each year 15 deals account for 97 percent of all venture capital profits. To be successful, they would have to pursue those 15 companies. And they would do it by aggressively marketing their expertise to the reporters and bloggers who follow start-ups.” To execute this strategy they didn’t just hire a PR firm, but they made the PR firm’s founder (Margit Wennmacher) a partner in Andreesen & Horowitz.

•*Success*. Andreessen & Horowitz quickly became the fastest-growing VC firm in the industry.

**YOUR THOUGHTS?**

1.What are your thoughts about aggressively managing the impressions of investors and customers, like Andreessen & Horowitz and other VC firms have done?

2.Think of the job you have now, or one you’ve had in the past. With whom and how could they use impression management to improve or grow their business?

3.What ethical standards would you apply to impression management?

**Favorable Upward Impression Management Tactics**On a positive note, both research and practice have revealed three categories of favorable upward impression management techniques:[59](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en59ch12)

1.*Job-focused*—presenting information about one’s job performance in a favorable light.

2.*Supervisor-focused*—praising and doing favors for one’s supervisor.

3.*Self-focused*—presenting oneself as a polite and nice person.

Page 430

Before going further, let’s have you learn about your own tendencies for favorable impression management. More specifically, [Self-Assessment 12.4](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12self4) will help you understand the types of impression management—job-, supervisor-, and self-focused—you tend to use in work settings.

**SELF-ASSESSMENT 12.4 Your Impression Management—How and Who**

Go to [connect.mheducation.com](http://connect.mheducation.com/) and take [Self-Assessment 12.4](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12self4) to learn both how you manage your impressions and with whom.

1.Are you better suited for “Hollywood,” or are you better described as safe or a free agent?

2.What are the benefits of your impression management tendencies?

3.What are the drawbacks?

4.Look at all of the items in the Assessment, select the two that could be most useful to you, and describe specifically how you could use them.

Let’s be clear: a moderate amount of upward impression management is a necessity for the average employee today. For example, ingratiation can slightly improve your performance appraisal results and make your boss like you significantly more.[60](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en60ch12) Engage in too little impression management and busy managers are liable to overlook some of your valuable contributions when they make job assignment, pay, and promotion decisions. Too much, and you run the risk of being branded a “schmoozer,” a “phony,” and other unflattering things by your coworkers.[61](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en61ch12)Consider, for instance, that noticeable flattery and ingratiation can backfire by embarrassing the target person and damaging your credibility.[62](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en62ch12)

**Bad Impressions—The Common if Not Subtle Kind**

Remarkably, some people actually try to make a bad impression. But because these people are relatively rare, we instead focus on common, if not subtle, ways people make bad impressions at work. In addition to the many obvious faux pas—don’t cheat, don’t lie, don’t steal—many employees often make bad impressions without knowing it. Some common ways this happens and how to overcome them are:

•*Doing only the minimum*. Many employees aren’t aware that not making the often simple extra effort to fulfill a coworker’s request can be costly. Going the extra mile to check the status of a report, for instance, can go a long way toward conveying a positive impression.

•*Having a negative mindset*. Most people consider themselves positive, but sometimes others have a different view. When presented with a new initiative, do you immediately think of and point out the potential pitfalls or complain? If so, then it is possible that others see you as negative. And managers prefer people who are supportive, not necessarily “yes men and women,” but those who are constructive versus eternal naysayers.

•*Overcommitting*. Initiative is often good, but biting off more than you can chew means you might choke! The inability to deliver on-time or quality work is a sure way to make a bad impression. Prioritize and deliver, which requires saying no sometimes.

•*Taking no initiative*. The opposite of overcommitting—failing to take action when something needs to get done—can also make you look bad. If coworkers (including your boss) frequently come to you with the same questions or challenges, then step up and try to proactively solve the issue.

Page 431

•*Waiting until the last minute to deliver bad news*. Of course you shouldn’t report to or consult with your boss on every little hiccup in your work. But worse still is to inform her or him just before a deadline that you are having difficulties. This puts your boss in a bad spot too. Be smart; put yourself in the other person’s shoes and consider if and when you would want to know the information you have.[63](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en63ch12)

**Spinning Bad into Good, or Good into Better**

One final point is that much of impression management involves “spinning” a bad situation into something better. Public relations (PR), for instance, is impression management at the organizational level and often involves “managing the message,” such as reducing the damage of bad press associated with a scandal. The massive BP oil spill is a prime example. The company downplayed the estimates of how much oil was leaking—first 1,000 barrels per day, then 5,000, and then nearly 50,000! It was later learned that the company knowingly underestimated the extent of the leak. Doing so dramatically undermined the credibility of a company that billed itself as: “BP—Beyond Petroleum—a paragon of environmental sustainability.”[64](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en64ch12)

The company also attempted to deflect blame for the spill onto contractors and downplayed the environmental impact. This made the company appear insensitive and led people to believe they were simply trying to avoid legal liabilities. Months after the spill began, the company unleashed a barrage of television spots featuring BP employees from the Gulf, highlighting its commitment to the cleanup. According to one PR expert:

As CEO of BP during the massive Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010, Tony Hayward was criticized for being evasive and blaming others. By not handling the incident effectively, he damaged the reputation of the company and lost his job. How would you have handled the situation if you were CEO of BP?

It was one of the worst PR approaches that I’ve seen in my 56 years in the business. . . . They tried to be opaque. They had every excuse in the book. Right away they should have accepted responsibility and recognized what a disaster they faced. They basically thought they could spin their way out of catastrophe. It doesn’t work that way.[65](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en65ch12)

A communications professor summed it up this way: “BP could apologize every day . . . [but] until the oil stopped, there was nothing that could be done to make it better, but there was plenty that could be said to make it worse.”[66](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en66ch12)

**How to Prepare for and Deal with Bad Events**So how can organizations best handle crises? A PR executive who represents the New York Yankees and News Corp. suggests that all organizations should create a crisis plan that includes:

1.How information is to be gathered.

2.How to formulate a response.

3.Who will deliver the message, and via which media channels.

4.Don’t minimize a given problem. No matter how small it is in the company’s eyes, it is a big deal to somebody else.

5.Be understanding and empathetic.

Page 432

After these, get on with doing business—whatever the organization does well (e.g., finding and creating petroleum products, as in the case of BP).[67](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en67ch12) Of course, let’s not forget that apologies often are necessary and have a place in impression management.

**Apologies**One way to remedy or at least reduce the impact of bad impressions, negative uses of power, or poor performance is with an apology. Apologies are a form of trust repair (discussed in [Chapter 8](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap08.html)) where one acknowledges an offense and frequently offers to make amends. It is a widely held norm in the United States and other cultures (e.g., Japan) to apologize when one’s actions (or lack of action) cause harm to another, whether intentional or not. And much like our discussion of equity in [Chapter 5](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap05.html), harm can be perceived or actual, but in either case it is real to the offended. Apologies are important and are considered effective to the extent they restore trust and positively affect your ability to influence the offended party in the future.[68](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en68ch12)

We know from life that not all people apologize, and when they do, the effects differ. But in business perhaps the better questions are when to apologize and how. [Table 12.2](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12tab2) describes the primary reasons leaders should apologize along with their associated motives.

[Table 12.2](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12tab2) can be helpful for nonleaders too, and you may consider apologizing in any of the following situations:

•Doing so will serve an important purpose (see [Table 12.2](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12tab2)).

•The offense is of serious consequence.

•It’s appropriate to assume responsibility for the offense.

•No one else can get the job done.

•The cost of saying something is likely to be lower than the cost of staying silent.

Whether the apology is from a leader or not, all effective apologies have the following four characteristics:

1.Acknowledgment of wrongdoing

2.Acceptance of responsibility

3.Expression of regret

4.Promise that the offense will not be repeated[69](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en69ch12)

It also is helpful to consider that a failure to apologize, or to do so in a timely manner, can turn a bad situation worse.[70](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en70ch12)

**TABLE 12.2**PURPOSES FOR LEADER APOLOGIES AND THEIR DESIRED OUTCOMES

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PURPOSE** | **MOTIVE OR DESIRED OUTCOME** |
| **Individual**—Leader offended other. | Encourage followers to forgive and forget. |
| **Institution**—Follower offended another organizational member. | Restore functioning within the group or organization when one member offends another member(s). |
| **Intergroup**—Follower offended external party. | Repair relations with an external group that perceived harm by a member of the leader’s group. |
| **Moral**—Genuine regret for wrongdoing. | Request for forgiveness and redemption for regrettable (in)action. |

SOURCE: Based on B. Kellerman, “When Should a Leader Apologize—and When Not?”, *Harvard Business Review*, April 1, 2006.

You are now far better equipped to influence people in many arenas of life. We close this chapter with a reminder: you don’t need to have a big, fancy title or corner office to have power. You typically have more power than you think. We encourage you to be more purposeful and accurate in your application of power, empowerment, influence, politics, and impression management. Doing so will dramatically increase your effectiveness across levels of the Integrative Framework. Besides, you’ll get your way more often!

Page 433

**what did i learn?**

You learned that you can increase your effectiveness by applying power, influence, and politics. You learned the bases of power, common influence tactics, the causes of politics, and which forms are most effective in different situations. You also learned that sharing power and empowering others are important means for building your own influence and improving your performance. Reinforce what you learned with the Key Points below. Then consolidate your learning using the Integrative Framework. Finally, Challenge your mastery of this chapter by answering the Major Questions in your own words.

**Key Points for Understanding**[**Chapter 12**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html)

You learned the following key points.

[**12.1POWER AND ITS BASIC FORMS**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12sec1)

•Power is defined as the ability to marshal human, informational, and other resources to get something done.

•The five main bases of power are legitimate, reward, coercive, expert, and referent.

•The first three bases are considered forms of position power and the last two, forms of personal power.

[**12.2POWER SHARING AND EMPOWERMENT**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12sec2)

•Empowerment is defined as efforts to enhance employee performance, well-being, and positive attitudes.

•Structural empowerment is based on transferring authority and responsibilities from management to employees.

•Power sharing can be described on a continuum from domination to consultation, participation, and finally delegation.

•Psychological empowerment occurs when employees feel a sense of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact at work.

[**12.3EFFECTIVELY INFLUENCING OTHERS**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12sec3)

•Influence tactics are conscious efforts to affect and change a specific behavior in others. The tactics you use often determine how people respond to your influence attempts.

•We studied nine common influence tactics: rational persuasion, inspirational appeals, consultation, ingratiation, personal appeals, exchange, coalition tactics, pressure, and legitimating tactics.

•You can expand your effectiveness further still by using six principles of persuasion: liking, reciprocity, social proof, consistency, authority, and scarcity.

[**12.4POLITICAL TACTICS AND HOW TO USE THEM**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12sec4)

•Organizational politics are intentional acts of influence to enhance or protect the self-interest of individuals or groups that are not endorsed by or aligned with those of the organization.

•Competition along with uncertainty regarding objectives, performance measures, decision processes, and change are major drivers or causes of political actions.

•Political action occurs at three levels—individual, coalition, and network.

[**12.5IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12sec5)

•Impression management is defined as any attempt to control or manipulate the images related to a person, organization, or idea.

•Because impressions have been shown to relate to subsequent job offers, it is important to make good first impressions by being interested, focusing on body language, setting goals or intentions, and displaying a positive mood and emotions.

•Common ways to make bad impressions are doing only the minimum, having a negative mindset, overcommitting, taking no initiative, and waiting until the last minute to deliver bad news.

•Organizations need a recovery plan in case of disaster; an apology for a transgression can be effective.

**The Integrative Framework for**[**Chapter 12**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html)

As shown in [Figure 12.8](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12fig8), you learned practical tools to help you influence others—power, empowerment, influence, politics, and impression management. Collectively, these tools represent important group-level processes. And how you use these tools often determines whether people resist, comply with, or actually commit to your wishes. You learned how using these tools relates to individual-level outcomes, such as performance, attitudes, well-being, (counter)productive citizenship behaviors, turnover, and career outcomes. Power and influence are also associated with satisfaction, cohesion, and conflict at the group/team level, and with survival, financial performance, customer satisfaction, and reputation at the organizational level. Beyond this, you explored the notion of empowerment and how sharing power with others can increase your own power and influence.

**Page 434**

**FIGURE 12.8**THE INTEGRATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING AND APPLYING OB

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**Challenge: Major Questions for**[**Chapter 12**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html)

At the start of the chapter, we told you that after reading the chapter you should be able to answer the following questions. Unless you can, have you really processed and internalized the lessons in the chapter? Refer to the Key Points, [Figure 12.8](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap12.html?create=true#ch12fig8), the chapter itself, and your notes to revisit and answer the following major questions:

1.What are the basic forms of power and how can they help me achieve my desired outcomes?

2.How can sharing power increase my power?

3.How do my influence tactics affect my personal effectiveness?

4.What are the many forms of politics, and how can understanding them make me more effective at school, at work, and socially?

5.Do I seek only to impress, or to make a good impression?

Page 435

**PROBLEM-SOLVING APPLICATION CASE (PSAC)**

**Writing the Book (Review) on Conflict of Interest**

If you’re not getting glowing online reviews for your product, maybe you could buy them. One entrepreneur tried that business model in the realm of self-publishing, and for a while, it worked out fine.

**Pay for Play in Online Book Reviews**

An article in the *New York Times* featured someone who had been selling online book reviews to the authors who wanted them. Besides confirming the worst suspicions of many, the story raises issues of ethics and trust in online reviews.

[*GettingBookReviews.com*](http://gettingbookreviews.com/). Todd Rutherford was doing press releases for hire for self-published authors. Authors wanted the press releases to increase the likelihood that their books would get more attention, whether in published or consumer reviews. In 2010 Rutherford realized he could help his clients more directly by simply writing the reviews himself under assumed names. And so he advertised that very service.

He launched [GettingBookReviews.com](http://gettingbookreviews.com/) (the site is no longer active), blatantly setting out his terms. A single five-star review would be written and posted for only $99. And soon he offered bulk discounts—20 reviews for only $499, 50 reviews for $999.

In some ways it’s a wonder he lasted as long as he did. His house of cards tumbled with increased notoriety driven by one unhappy customer—but not before he had published some 4,500 online reviews. By the time the 2012 article in the *New York Times* came out, Rutherford had folded his tent and moved on. Last heard, he was selling RVs in Oklahoma.[71](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en71ch12)

**Puffery Is Legal**

Advertising in general, and the book business in particular, has always relied on puffery, of inflating the positive aspects of their products. A good example is the book jacket blurbs a publisher will often solicit from authors it publishes to support books from other authors on its roster.

Moreover, it is not uncommon for the friends or associates of an author to help, often by posting positive reviews. These actions are not illegal. The reviews are clearly sourced, and the individuals who write them are entitled to their opinions. (While it may be more ethical for the reviewers to note their relationship to the author, it is not a legal requirement.)

**Opinion Spamming Is Not**

Bing Liu is a professor of computer science at the University of Illinois at Chicago who studies data mining and more specifically the abuse of online reviews. He defines opinion spamming as the illegal effort behind everything from fake reviews to bogus blogs and websites.

“Positive opinions can result in significant financial gains and/or [renown] for businesses, organizations and individuals,” Liu writes on his faculty website. “This, unfortunately, gives strong incentives for opinion spamming.”[72](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en72ch12)

As to online book reviews, it is illegal for a reviewer to receive compensation for a positive review and then post it on most sites, including [Amazon.com](http://amazon.com/).

Comparatively new slang terms for authors who post reviews pretending to be someone else are “sock puppets” or “sock monkeys.” That these terms exist suggests such behavior is common.

The successful and award-winning British author R. J. Ellory wouldn’t seem to need such help, but in 2012 he was called out by fellow author Jeremy Duns for multiple reviews (posted under fictional names, of course) on [Amazon.com](http://amazon.com/). ABC News broke the story, after the website Gawker published Duns’ complaints on his Twitter feed. The scandal was then written up in *The Huffington Post*.

“Ellory writes 5-star reviews of his own work on Amazon. Long, purple tributes to his own magnificent genius,” Duns tweeted. “RJ Ellory also writes shoddy, sh----y sniping reviews of other authors’ work on Amazon, under an assumed identity.”[73](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en73ch12)

**The Importance of Trust**

Can trust be restored in online reviews? Maybe, but not soon. Liu estimates that about a third of all online reviews are false. He notes that the need to be able to identify bogus reviews will only increase. One of his research areas is the creation of algorithms to help identify false reviews. He’s skeptical that without computer help one could tell the difference. In the current environment, consumers should train themselves to be skeptical, and where possible balance online reviews with trusted third-party resources. This is easier in the electronic product area than in the world of e-books but not impossible.

One can also envisage a future where it is clear that the results of opinion spamming create their own deterrent. “Once someone finds out you paid a book reviewer, your reputation is toast,” writes Angelo Hoy, owner/operator of the *Writers Weekly* website.[74](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en74ch12) Her site offers its own e-book for authors on e-marketing their books by legal means.

Page 436

**Apply the 3-Stop Problem-Solving Approach to OB**

**Stop 1:**What is the problem?

•Use the Integrative Framework to help identify the outcomes that are important in this case.

•Which of these outcomes are not being achieved in the case?

•Based on considering the above two questions, what is the most important problem in this case?

**Stop 2:**Use the Integrative Framework shown at the start of this chapter to help identify the OB concepts or theories that help you to understand the problem in this case.

•What person factors are most relevant?

•What environmental characteristics are most important to consider?

•Do you need to consider any processes? Which ones?

•What concepts or theories discussed in this chapter are most relevant for solving the key problem in this case?

**Stop 3:**What are your recommendations for solving the problem?

•Review the material in the chapter that most pertains to your proposed solution and look for practical recommendations.

•Use any past OB knowledge or experience to generate recommendations.

•Outline your plan for solving the problem in this case.

**LEGAL/ETHICAL CHALLENGE**

**Secret Banking Elite Rules Trading in Derivatives**

Until recently, nine people had a standing meeting in Manhattan one Wednesday each month. This was a highly secretive group of powerful people across Wall Street, known by critics as the “derivatives dealers club.” The membership and discussions were strictly confidential. The focus: Protect the interests of the largest firms on Wall Street that serve as dealers in the highly lucrative derivatives market. Derivatives (swaps and options) are financial products used like insurance to hedge financial risk. Because derivatives do not trade on formal exchanges, like stocks on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), and are largely unregulated by agencies such as the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), their creation and trading are largely self-managed by the firms themselves. This secretive group helped oversee and control this multitrillion-dollar market.

The dealers’ club attempted to block the efforts of other banks to enter the market and compete with select few member firms. It also blocked many efforts by regulators and others to get full and free disclosure of dealer prices and fees. The situation is similar to a real estate agent selling a house and the buyer only knowing what he or she paid, the seller only knowing what he or she received, and the agent pocketing the rest in fees. These fees would not be known to either the buyer or the seller.

This lack of disclosure has implications far beyond the biggest banks. Pension funds, states, cities, airlines, food companies, and some small businesses use derivatives to offset and manage risk. These parties argue that without transparency they cannot determine if they receive a fair price. What is known, however, is that Wall Street’s largest firms collect billions of dollars in undisclosed fees each year from trading these derivatives—fees that certainly would be smaller if there was more transparency and competition. These concerns have spurred investigation of anticompetitive practices by the Department of Justice and threats by some legislators. The firms, however, have powerful allies—the many politicians in Washington to whom they’ve made substantial campaign contributions.

Derivatives dealers’ defense is that derivative prices are complex. Unlike shares of Netflix stock, which are all equivalent—one share has the same price as all the rest—terms of oil derivatives can vary greatly. The complexity therefore requires customization, and greater transparency is impractical if not impossible.

**What Is Your Position on Derivatives Trading?**

1.Regulators should assert influence over the derivatives market, like they do with stocks, and require derivatives to be traded on an open exchange where buyers and sellers disclose prices and fees.

2.Nothing should be done to change how derivatives are bought and sold. If buyers and sellers don’t like the lack of dealer transparency, then they can choose not to trade derivatives.

3.The derivatives market should be modified only slightly to allow other players (e.g., banks) to provide derivatives. If they then choose to disclose prices and fees, that is their choice, just as it is the choice of others to buy derivatives.

4.Invent other alternatives and explain.

Page 437

**GROUP EXERCISE**

**You Make Me Feel So Good!**

**Objectives**

1.To introduce a different type of impression management and sharpen your awareness of impression management.

2.To promote self-awareness and diversity awareness by comparing your perceptions and ethics with those of others.

**Introduction**

This is a group discussion exercise designed to enhance your understanding of impression management. Personal interpretations are involved, so there are no strictly right or wrong answers.

Researchers recently have explored *beneficial* impression management, the practice of helping friends and significant others look good. This new line of inquiry combines the established OB topics of social support (discussed relative to stress in [Chapter 16](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/chap16.html)) and impression management (discussed in this chapter). In this exercise, we explore the practical and ethical implications of “strategically managing information to make your friends look good.” We also consider impression management in general.

**Instructions**

This is a two-stage exercise: a private note-taking part, followed by a group discussion.

*Stage 1 (5 to 7 minutes):* Read the two scenarios below and then rate each one according to the following three scales:

**Scenarios**[**75**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/1259631788/epub/OPS/xhtml/notes1.html#en75ch12)

1.A high school ballplayer buoys the spirits of a teammate who struck out at a key moment by emphasizing the latter’s game-winning hit last week and noting that even the greatest big-league hitters fall about 7 times out of 10. He may privately suspect his teammate has only mediocre baseball talent, but by putting the best side to his comments and not sharing his doubts, he makes the teammate feel better, builds his confidence so he can face tomorrow’s game in a more optimistic frame of mind, and boosts the teammate’s image in front of the other players who can hear his reassuring words.

2.At a party, a college student describes her roommate to a potential date she knows her friend finds extremely attractive. She stresses her friend’s intelligence, attractiveness, and common interests but falls to mention that her friend can also be quite arrogant.

*Stage 2 (10 to 15 minutes):* Join two or three others in a discussion group and compare scores for both scenarios. Are there big differences of opinion, or is there a general consensus? Next, briefly discuss these questions: How do *you* create a good first impression in *specific* situations? What goes through your mind when you see someone trying to make a good impression for him- or herself or for someone else? *Note:* Your instructor may ask you to pick a spokesperson to briefly report the results of your discussion to the class. If so, be sure to keep notes during the discussion.

**Questions for Discussion**

1.Is the whole practice of impression management a dishonest waste of time, or does it have a proper place in society? Why?

2.In what situations can impression management attempts backfire?

3.How do you know when someone has taken impression management too far?

4.How would you respond to a person who made this statement? “I never engage in impression management.”