

Why Politics Matter: How to Influence Decisions and Get Commitment

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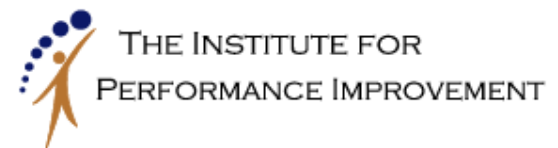
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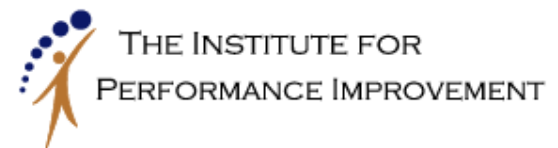
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Who I Am

- dba Hale Associates for more than 25 years
- Also the CEO of the Institute for Performance Improvement, L3C
 - Registered in Illinois as a Low Profit firm
 - Focused on Evidence-Based Credentials
 - Services include:
 - Design and development of evidence-based credentials
 - Certifications: CSIS, CSIP, CACP, ID Badges
 - Audits of instructional & credentialing programs
 - Capacity building in performance consulting



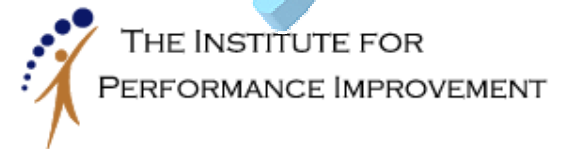
Who I Am

Industries

- Education
- Energy
- Entertainment
- Facilities
- Finance
- Healthcare
- Hospitality
- Human Resources
- Insurance
- Manufacturing
- Technology
- Trades
- Transportation



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Objectives

- For you to learn:
 - What is evidence of political skill.
 - Six techniques to increase your political skills.
 - A tool to assess your level of influence.

Definition: Consultants

- Provide expertise
- Requiring them to:
 - Provide advice
 - Facilitate decisions
 - Gain commitment
 - Confront behaviors
 - Coach
 - Guide clients in making decisions



Definition: Politics

- There is constructive politics
 - Having practical wisdom
 - Being prudent, shrewd, & diplomatic
 - Being expedient as a plan of action
 - Process of gaining support
- There is destructive politics
 - Factional scheming for power & status
 - Being crafty or unscrupulous



Definition: Politics is Influence

- Politics is the study of influence and the influential
- Influence is measured on the bases of the number of shares one or a group has in the preferred values or attributes
- The more values or attributes shared, the greater the influence
- No single index (share) is a wholly accurate gauge of influence



Evidence of Political Skill

- You know you have political skill if:
 1. You can gain access to people, places, things, opportunities
 2. You can get others' attention
 3. Others genuinely consider your ideas

Rule 1

- Build your personal power
 - Identify the key characteristics valued by the group you want to influence and associate yourself with them
 - Gain deep knowledge of your organization's industry (products, competitors, players, market pressures, etc.)
 - Gain deep knowledge of the group's (your constituents') world view

Sources of Influence

External consultants rely on external status:

- Degrees, Credentials
- Publications, Awards
- Experience
- Marketplace intelligence
- Professional relations
- Recognition within the industry

Internal consultants must earn internal status by demonstrating:

- Appreciation of client's values
- Knowledge of the client's language, processes, products, markets
- Smart use of relationships

Personal Power Tool*

1. Company friendships
2. Desirable personal traits
3. Opportunity
4. Perceived expertise
5. Information
6. Personal Confidence
7. Status
8. Seniority
9. Interpersonal Skills

Rule 2: New Power Source

- Engagement: The new competitive advantage*
- Become Customer Centric v Product Centric –
 - Treat different customers differently
 - Earn customers' trust 1st

Rule 3 - Build Respect & Trust*

Respect is high or special regard for:

- Expertise
- Insight
- Experience
- Character

Trust is synonymous with:

- Dependability
- Predictability
- Consistency
- Reliability

(*Based on the work of the Vanguard Consulting Group)

Rule 3 - Build Respect & Trust*

Depends on:

- Openness
- Accessibility
- Maintenance of Confidences
- Delivering on Promises
- Remaining Objective

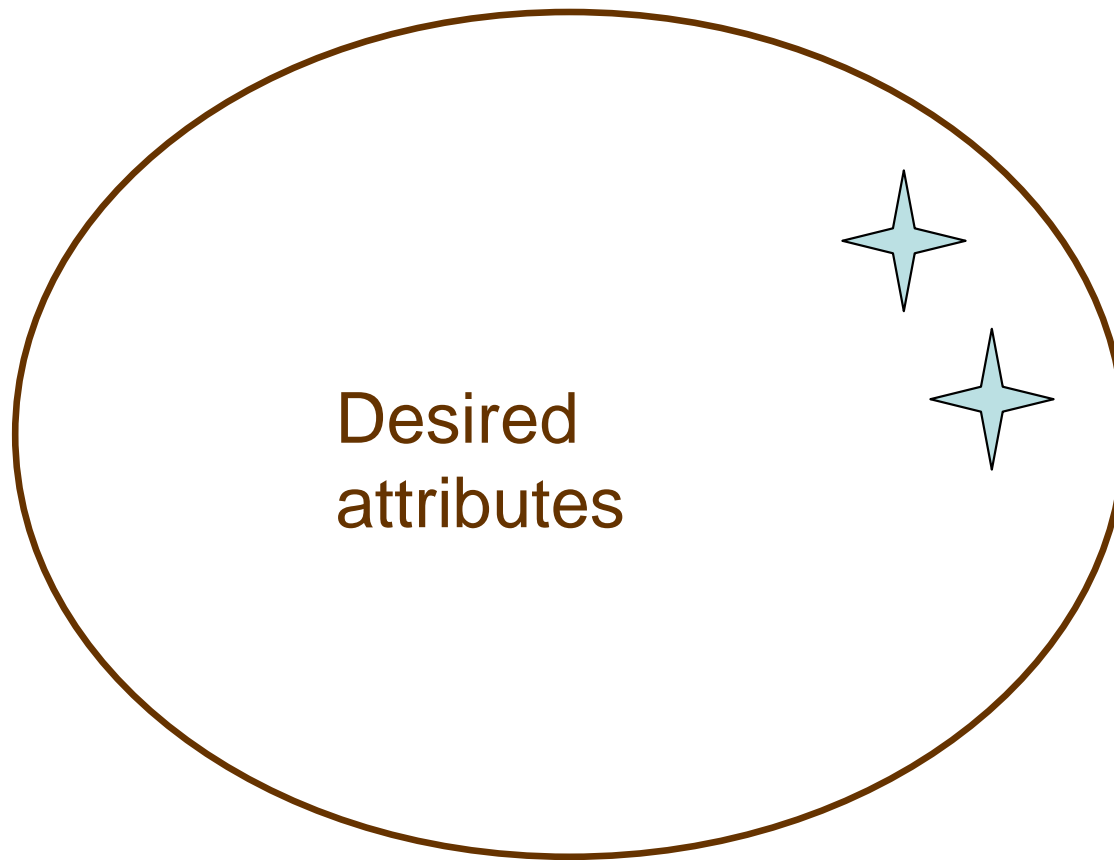
Erodes with:

- Subversion
- Contradictory Messages
- Dishonesty
- Lack of Support
- Pursuing Agendas

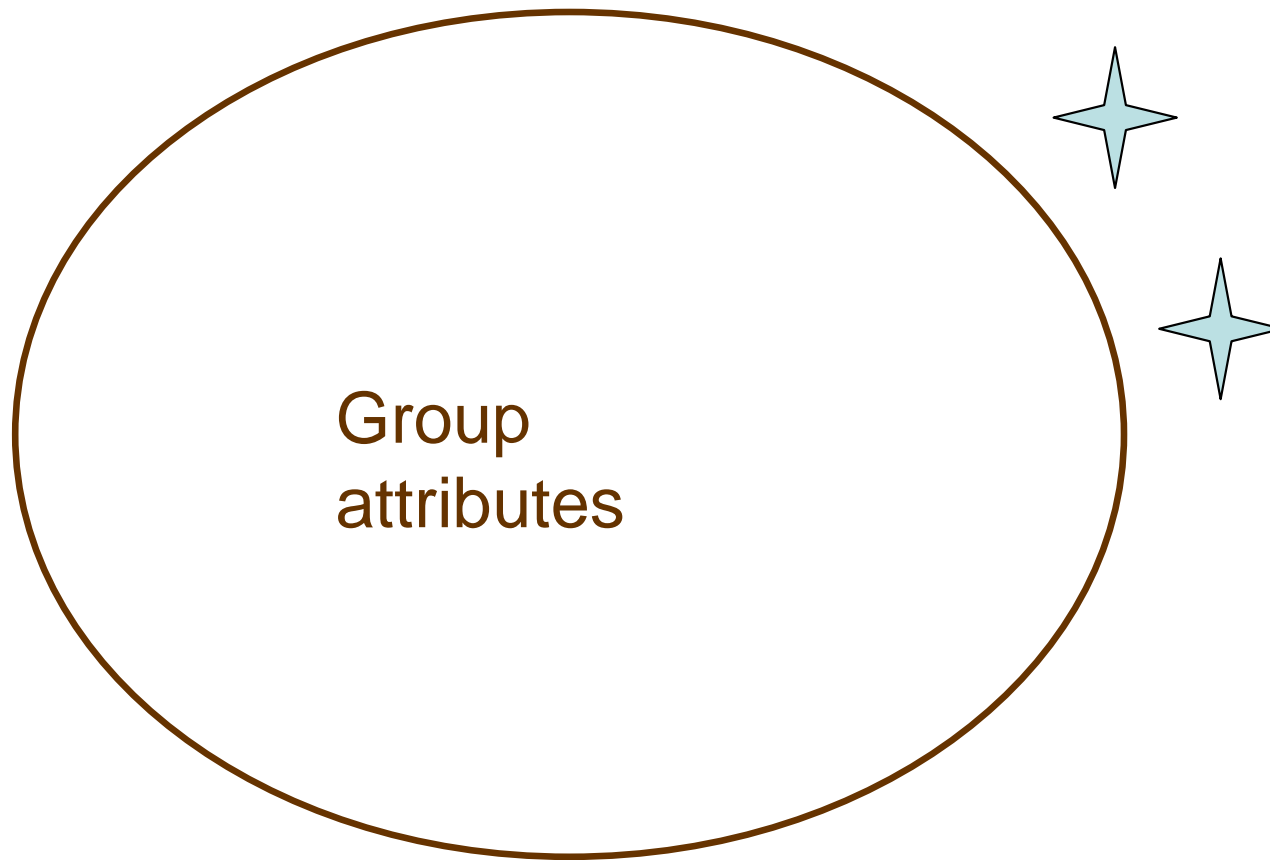
Rule 4:

- Stay out in front, but not too far
 - Aspire to have the attributes of a leader
 - Shared history, education, experience, values
 - On the edge, moderate risk taker

Leaders & Influencers



Outcasts



Rule 5: Don't Get Derailed

The Influential in business:

- Have a great track record
- Are outgoing, well-liked
- Are technically great
- Are loyal, makes personal sacrifices
- Are ambitious
- Moved up in previous reorganizations
- Are great at directing others

Derailment – Fatal Flaws*

1. Specific performance problems
2. Insensitivity to others
3. Cold, aloof, arrogant
4. Betrayed trust
5. Over managed – didn't delegate
6. Overly ambitious – focused on next job
7. Failed to staff effectively
8. Unable to think strategically
9. Unable to adapt to new boss
10. Overly dependent on an advocate or mentor

* McCall, M., Lombardo, M., Off Track.....

What Separates*

Sustainers of influence v short term power:

- Greater diversity in work experience
- Composed under stress
- Handled mistakes with poise & grace
- Focused on problems & solved them
- Got along with all kinds of people – outspoken but not offensive.

Rule 5 – Work on Sustainability

- Apply what we know about sustainability:
 - Always push for the critical mass – the number that can overcome resistance
 - Go for quick successes
 - Insist on line oversight
 - Frequently communicate gains, adoption, wins
 - Recognize or share the glory with others

Finally

- When change is afoot – old relationships will prevail over data/facts and logic

Summary: Build Your Influence

1. Be good at what you do
 - Contribute your specific expertise
 - Move people to action
 - Help people identify & remove barriers
2. Perfect your enabling skills
 - Communications
 - Consulting
 - Relationship management

3. Develop and make smart use of your organizational intelligence
 - People
 - Processes
 - Products
 - Practices
 - Competition

Discussion

At your table, discuss and report out:

1. What insights have you gained from this presentation?
2. What can you act on?
3. What might you collectively as a profession do to improve our influence?



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Judith is the author of Performance Consultant's Fieldbook 2nd Edition, Performance-Based Certification 2nd Edition, Performance Based Evaluation, Performance-Based Management, and Outsourcing Training and Development (Jossey-Bass). She and her partner, Deb Page authored the School Improvement Specialist Field Book.

She is the architect of the CPT certification offered by ISPI. She has been a consultant to management for more than 25 years. She specializes in certification and the implementation of major performance improvement initiatives.

