

# Winning at Office Politics: Strategies for the Technical Communicator

Lance Gelein



# Topics

- ◆ Politics are real and unavoidable
- ◆ How political are you
- ◆ About political types
- ◆ How to size up the political climate
- ◆ Winning strategies
- ◆ Rising above it all
- ◆ 7 Habits of Politically Savvy People



# Politics are Real and Unavoidable

- ◆ Not all politics are bad
- ◆ Realize that this is reality
- ◆ Expect politics in all situations
- ◆ Politics are part of human interaction



# What Creates Office Politics

- ◆ Scarcity of resources
- ◆ A too competitive work environment
- ◆ Subjective performance standards
- ◆ Unclear job definitions
- ◆ Emotional insecurity



# How Political Are You

- ◆ Answer the question with your first impression
- ◆ Think most of the time when answering

*You can also use these questions to help identify people in your office.*



# About Political Types

- ◆ Corporate Shark
- ◆ Climber
- ◆ Survivor
- ◆ Straight Arrow
- ◆ Lamb for Slaughter



# Corporate Shark

- ◆ Score of 90 plus
- ◆ Tends to use others to enhance career
- ◆ Power-hungry, ruthless, and devious
- ◆ Survives well in Piranha Land



# Climber

- ◆ Score of 75 to 89
- ◆ Shrewd politician
- ◆ A moderate score (75-85) suggests you might have a good chance of success
- ◆ Politics are everything - let's campaign



# Survivor

- ◆ Score of 50-75
- ◆ Practices some office politics and is aware of the political climate
- ◆ Ok, what do I have to do to survive



# Straight Arrow

- ◆ Score of 35-49
- ◆ Not perceived as office politician
- ◆ May neglect cultivating key people for career advancement
- ◆ Honesty is the best policy



# Lamb for Slaughter

- ◆ Score of less than 35
- ◆ Doesn't believe in office politics
- ◆ Commonly boasts of never practicing office politics
- ◆ Easily eaten by sharks
- ◆ Survives in Nirvana Land



# Sizing up the Climate

- ◆ Who's related to who
- ◆ About my boss
  - ◆ Irritations
  - ◆ Enemies
  - ◆ Personal facts
  - ◆ Politics practiced
- ◆ Identify the true power and players
- ◆ Look below - motivations
- ◆ What are favored behaviors and status symbols



# What's Your Corporate Climate

- ◆ Answer the question with your first impression
- ◆ Think most of the time when answering



# Piranha or Nirvana

- ◆ Score of 90 plus is Piranha Land.. Wear bullet proof vest
- ◆ Scores of more than 50 indicate some problems
- ◆ Score of 10 or less is Nirvana... Never leave



# Winning Strategies

- ◆ Help your boss succeed
- ◆ Be loyal, avoid disloyalty
- ◆ Praise your boss to upper management
- ◆ Imitate your boss' slogans
- ◆ Present options
- ◆ Be visible
- ◆ Teach your boss a skill
- ◆ Be different - not part of whining masses



# Rising Above it All

- ◆ Shine at meetings
- ◆ Compliment influential people
- ◆ Talk big, outside the box
- ◆ Appear cool under pressure
- ◆ Display good corporate manners
- ◆ Learn new skills and sell them
- ◆ Be a team player



# 7 Habits of Politically Savvy People

1. Politics are part of human interaction - you can set the tone by:

- ◆ Not participating in gossip
- ◆ Telling the truth
- ◆ Checking out praises and criticism



# 7 Habits of Politically Savvy People

2. Help design/define clear job roles and compatible teams.
3. Expose dirty tricks used by the sharks.
4. Don't allow anyone to "get" something on you that can be used later.



# 7 Habits of Politically Savvy People

5. Make emotional deposits with the people you work with.
6. Be known as a producer and not a politician.
7. Lift others up with you and forgive failures.



# Review

- ◆ Politics are unavoidable
- ◆ How political are you
- ◆ What's your corporate climate
- ◆ How to rise above it all
- ◆ 7 Habits of Politically Savvy People



# Questions

