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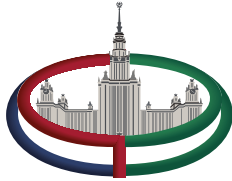
# Managing Corporate Communications

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факультет  
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*Managing Corporate Communications* — многофункциональное учебное пособие по работе с англоязычными бизнес медиа — предназначается для студентов магистерской программы International Business Management.

Материал сгруппирован по модулям: *Corporate Culture, Communication with Co-workers, Communication with Bosses, Workplace Romantic Relationships and Friendships, Miscellaneous*, в каждом из которых рассматривается ряд актуальных проблем межличностной коммуникации внутри организации.

*Managing Corporate Communications* не только помогает сформировать свою точку зрения, создает условия для дискуссии, но и обогащает активную лексику пользователя.

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# Module 1

## Corporate culture

Corporate culture matters. How management chooses to treat its people impacts everything for better or for worse

Simon Sinek

### Starting-up

#### Questionnaire      What corporate culture suits you?

**A Complete the questionnaire below to find out your ideal working environment. Choose one answer (A-D) for each statement.**

**I like working in places that have**

- A a clear set of rules and methods to follow
- B flexible ways of working
- C no rules whatsoever
- D few rules, but these are made by the boss

**I think that key decision-making in the workplace is best taken**

- A by my line manager
- B in a group where everyone has an equal say
- C by myself
- D by a strong leader

**I prefer organisations that communicate**

- A through official means of communication
- B through a direct exchange of views
- C the minimum possible
- D through personal relationships

**I dislike working in organisations that**

- A have no clear idea of what they want from you
- B place limits on your freedom to do the job
- C ask too much from you
- D treat you as a number and don't recognise your individuality

**The word best describe me is**

- A loyal and trustworthy
- B creative
- C independent
- D a winner

**I think bosses should**

- A do their job
- B provide me with the resources to do my job
- C be invisible
- D be respected and followed

**Mostly A**

- prefer a role culture
- value stability and long-term job security
- like to know their objectives in advance
- feel at home in the public sector or a large organisation
- like a stable business environment (life insurance, high street banking)

**Mainly B**

- prefer a task culture
- enjoy working creatively in teams on projects
- exchange views openly, honestly and informally
- a high salary is not important
- feel passionate about their job
- ideal in product development, a management consultancy firm, advertising agency

**Generally C**

- prefer a person culture
- individuals above all else
- the worst nightmare — having to sing the company song every morning
- organisations are neither friends, nor enemies, simply a fact of life
- dislike interference with their work
- well suited to working in some academic departments of universities
- ideal as a freelance contract worker, software designer or programmer

**Mostly D**

- prefer a power culture
- competitive people
- like winning



- happy to take risks
- feel prepared to work very hard to achieve what they want
- like dynamic organisations with strong leaders and big decisions
- enjoy working environments with the minimum of rules and regulations
- dislike bureaucracy
- ideal in fast-changing business environments (investment banking, start-up companies)

Abridged from © Business Advantage<sup>1</sup>

**B Comment on the results you have. Do you agree with them?**

**Over to you**

**Talk about the corporate culture of your company. Choose the points that appeal to you and arrange them in order of priority.**

- The company's beliefs and values
- Type of work environment: *traditional, flexible, punitive/degrading, fearful, constructive, competitive, collaborative*
- Management style
- Transparency of leaders and managers
- Process of giving feedback
- Consequences of mistakes
- Recognition and appreciation for contributions
- Chances of promotion
- Specific company traditions. The ways of celebrating success
- Team-building activities
- Training programs
- Work-life balance
- Flexible work arrangements
- Dress code

---

<sup>1</sup> Business Advantage Upper-intermediate Student's book Michael Handford Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 46

## Reading

- How important is workplace culture to you?
- Describe the perfect workplace culture.
- Have you ever left a job because you didn't like the environment or culture?

## How to find out if a company's culture is right for you

Whether you're just starting out or are looking to make a career change, company culture might be the most important thing to consider during your search. In business speak, culture refers to an organization's shared beliefs and values. Culture is often established by leaders and then communicated and reinforced through various methods. It impacts everything from your interactions with colleagues and customers to your advancement, career satisfaction, and mental health. As a job applicant, you want to find a culture that aligns with your values, or the ethics that guide you, fulfil you, and make you feel a sense of purpose. How can you actively and deliberately figure out whether an environment is right for you?

Search the Internet for evidence. Ideally, companies will have a mission, vision, and culture statement accessible online. Job seekers should start by paying extra attention to the nuances of language in these messages.

Analyse the words used in job descriptions. Pay special attention to how postings are written. Postings that emphasise hustling to meet frequent deadlines and tout perks like happy hours — but give no nod to workplace flexibility — may indicate that work-life balance isn't top of mind.

Use a gender bias decoder. There is a variety of online tools for reading text and analysing its tone for gender bias. Job descriptions that skew more masculine with words like competitive, dominant or leader may result in a lower response from female candidates.

Check out job review boards. Reading anonymous reviews from current and former employees will give you more insight. Comments that point to unrealistic workloads or expectations, a lack of growth opportunities, group think (especially in more homogeneous industries), or toxic internal cultures are red flags.

Do some digging on social media. See what an employer is currently sharing on their channels. Then scroll back to dates around times of controversy or

uncertainty to see how they reacted to social movements, civil unrest, instances of racism, or matters of public health. Their responses in these moments can **reveal** a great deal about their core values and beliefs.

Uncover what lies beneath. Prepare questions ahead of time. If you ask the right specific questions, you can learn much more than you think. It is possible that you will still get vague responses. But even that is useful information. Ambiguity indicates that the company hasn't broached the important topics you've raised. Though it's not a positive sign, it's better to know before you accept an offer. You might discover that their culture doesn't match the package they are trying to sell to you.

Make an effort to connect. Remote employees should intentionally seek out information by creating opportunities to connect with others once they're hired. Some organisations will have robust remote onboarding procedures in place, while others may need a few nudges to provide a more inclusive onboarding experience for new employees.

Finally, remember that it is always okay to ask for more information or support. Building inclusion and equity is important whether someone is in a physical office or working remotely. Small, spontaneous, and frequent social interactions can help create connections in an office. The company you ultimately choose should enable you to flourish rather than wear you (or your well-being) out.

Abridged from © Harvard Business Review<sup>1</sup>

**A Scan through the article and contextualise the following vocabulary: reveal**

E.g.: Their responses in these moments can **reveal** a great deal about their core values and beliefs.

job applicant  
meet deadlines  
red flags  
gender bias  
anonymous reviews  
give someone more insight  
point to something  
unrealistic workloads or expectations

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://hbr.org/2020/11/how-to-find-out-if-a-companys-culture-is-right-for-you>

times of controversy or uncertainty  
**reveal** / uncover something  
ahead of time  
pointed questions  
create/ avoid ambiguity  
decode a company's culture  
vague responses

**B Make up your own sentences with the above given expressions. ahead of time**

E.g.: Officials were notified ahead of time. The president was briefed ahead of time

## Talking point

**Discuss these questions.**

1. The questions you would ask during an interview to learn more about a company's culture.
2. Explain which culture best fits your personality:
  - a small, relaxed 10-person business without many rules or resources
  - a giant structured corporation with many rules and virtually unlimited resources like Coca-Cola.
3. Think of any other ways that you could research a company's culture that aren't mentioned in this article.

## Video

**Building a more human-centric organisational culture<sup>1</sup>**

**A Discuss the following issues:**

- aspects of corporate culture that affect performance;
- things managers can do to change the corporate culture of the company.

**B Make a review of the video using a mind map.**

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://youtu.be/fXHnU3eI6sY?si=CdbUoRZdDn6Ebo6z>

## Reading

### How to create a positive workplace culture

A positive workplace culture improves teamwork, **raises morale**, increases productivity and efficiency, and enhances workforce retention. Job satisfaction, collaboration, and work performance are all enhanced. Research by Deloitte has shown that 94% of executives and 88% of employees believe a distinct corporate culture is important to a business' success. How can organizations create a positive workplace culture?

#### **Establish a clear ethos and values for the organisation**

It is important to have a set of clear organisational core values that are communicated effectively and discussed with the employees so that they feel part of it. It is crucial that demonstrable actions are taken regularly so that the employees feel an individual and personal responsibility towards these values. This will **ensure** that they can evaluate their own attitudes towards these positive core values, and take pride in them.

#### **Foster collaboration and communication**

Leadership and management styles that encourage teamwork, open and honest communication are vital. Open and honest communication also means that regular audits are taken to evaluate how people interact with each other, feedback is welcomed and taken on board, and opportunities for social interaction are enabled. These can include coffee mornings, team getaways and family weekends. This gives team members the opportunity to nurture and **foster connections** outside work. Continued learning opportunities that enable team members to assess their inherent unconscious and implicit biases that can impact their interactions with other employees are crucial. Also, strict no tolerance open-door policies and complaint procedures for workplace bullying are crucial for creating a positive collaborative environment.

#### **Create an inclusive work environment**

A positive workplace is one where all employees are valued, supported and nurtured, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation or colour. All employees should have equal opportunities to progress and equal access to all the perks and rewards on offer. An inclusive workplace is one that values individual differences in the workforce and makes them feel welcome and accepted.

**Create clear goals and rewards for employees**

The survey by Deloitte showed that 83% of executives and 84% of employees ranked having engaged and motivated employees as the top factor that substantially contributes to a company's success. Motivated and engaged employees can be created if they are treated equally and have clear goals. Having a transparent policy for promotion offers the staff an opportunity to measure their performance. Measurable performance indicators mean that there would be healthy competition, but this kind of honest policy statement would help avoid negative feelings and resentment amongst the team members towards each other. When achievements are recognised and celebrated, it leads to employees feeling valued, which in turn creates a positive feeling in the workplace.

A positive culture in the workplace is essential for fostering a sense of pride and ownership among employees. When people take pride, they invest their future in the organisation and work hard to create opportunities that will benefit the organisation. By identifying and rewarding those who are actively striving towards creating a positive work culture, and supporting others around them, companies can encourage others to do the same. Positive attitudes and behaviour in the workplace are the direct results of effective leadership and a positive management style.

Abridged from © Forbes<sup>1</sup>

**Scan through the article and contextualise the following vocabulary: foster connections outside work**

E.g.: This gives an opportunity for team members to nurture and **foster connections outside work**

**raise morale**

enhance (workforce retention, job satisfaction, collaboration, work performance)

**foster connections outside work**

irrespective of gender / be treated equally

continued learning opportunities

implicit biases

take crucial actions

impact interactions

complaint procedure for workplace bullying

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/pragyaagarwaleurope/2018/08/29/how-to-create-a-positive-work-place-culture/>

create confusion and miscommunication  
 have a transparent policy for something  
 progression and promotion  
 measurable performance indicators  
 recognise achievements  
 benefit the organisation

**Make up your own sentences with the above given expressions.  
 raise morale (raise the morale of sb)**

E.g.: *Businesses across the country did their best to raise morale.*

## Talking point

**Discuss these questions.**

1. Benefits of creating a positive company culture in the workplace.
2. Things most directly affected by a positive corporate culture.
3. Actions you can personally take to positively impact culture.

## Vocabulary

**Complete the sentences below using the words and expressions from the box in the correct form.**

*be sure      make sure      ensure      assure      reassure      insure*

1. All our household goods are \_\_\_\_\_ against accidental damage.
2. England must win this game to be \_\_\_\_\_ of qualifying for the World Cup.
3. The president hastened to \_\_\_\_\_ his people that he was in perfect health.
4. The Prime Minister \_\_\_\_\_ the electorate (that) taxes would not be increased after the election.
5. The company's sole concern is to \_\_\_\_\_ the safety of its employees.
6. I \_\_\_\_\_ no one was following me.

**Make up your own sentences with the words and expressions in the box.**

## Vocabulary

**Complete the text below using the words in the box.**

*empower      attract      break      feedback      trust      mental  
advice      engaged      suit      retain      environment*

The pandemic fundamentally changed how people view work and their \_\_\_\_\_ and physical health, so it's critical for organisations to build a positive corporate culture to \_\_\_\_\_ top candidates. Fostering healthy work practices \_\_\_\_\_ will also help companies \_\_\_\_\_ employees, which ultimately saves money. Corporate culture starts at the top. When people throughout the organisation see senior leadership living the values, they will follow \_\_\_\_\_. Managers and other workplace leaders can have the most impact on employees and can make or \_\_\_\_\_ the employee experience. Most people genuinely want to do well at their job. They want to feel confident about the work they are doing. Managers can help by offering \_\_\_\_\_ and advice and providing professional development opportunities. People who feel good about their work are likely to stay \_\_\_\_\_ and to be more productive. Providing an autonomous environment where between employees and their managers and improves employee satisfaction. By \_\_\_\_\_ employees to work through solutions on their own, their minds are stimulated, they feel trusted, they are engaged, and they feel safe to ask for \_\_\_\_\_.

**Make up your own sentences with the words in the box.**

## Reading

**Comment on the aphorism "Culture eats strategy for breakfast".**

### Reading corporate culture from the outside

*Culture eats strategy for breakfast*, runs the aphorism. In a survey conducted by Flexjobs, an employment site, culture was the most common reason people gave for quitting. And it matters more than high wages. A study published by the University of Pennsylvania found that workers rated things like respectfulness,



work-life balance and morale as more important to job satisfaction than pay. The problem is that culture can be very hard to understand from the outside. It resides in daily interactions between colleagues and in the hidden threads that bind decisions on everything. Nowadays firms are doing more to signal what they stand for. Jobseekers have new ways to peer inside firms. So do investors, who share their interest in evaluating corporate culture.

Now that more workers are remote, firms increasingly write down their values. *Qualtrics*, a software firm, may not believe in grammar, but it does believe in Transparent, All in, Customer obsessed, One team and Scrappy. *Justworks*, an HR technology firm, subscribes to Camaraderie, Openness, Grit, Integrity and Simplicity. Lists like these may not reflect what actually happens inside the company. Plenty of firms are characterised by Cluelessness, Rancour, Amateurism, Skiving and Stupidity, but you won't find that on the website. But companies that codify their values are at least thinking about them. And their choices can offer meaningful clues.

Updates can also be instructive. In a book "ReCulturing" Melissa Daimler lays out some of the changes that Dara Khosrowshahi made when he became CEO of *Uber* in 2017. The change from "meritocracy and toe-stepping" to "We value ideas over hierarchy" told people something useful about the aspirations of the new leadership team.

Culture is increasingly readable in other ways, too. Since the pandemic, firms' policies on remote working have given outsiders greater clarity on how employers view issues like work-life balance. Companies are likelier to offer opinions on political and social issues. Others go the other way: *Coinbase*, a crypto firm, has made it clear that it won't tolerate employee activism on subjects unrelated to its core mission. That is information, too. Windows on cultural norms are being opened by regulators, who are pushing for greater disclosure about firms' workforces. Candidates seem to value this kind of information: a working paper published by Stanford Graduate School of Business found that clickthrough rates for job postings rose for firms with higher diversity scores.

The behaviour of CEOs used to be directly visible only to a limited number of people. Now bosses are everywhere, tweeting, posting and making stilted videos. In a recent survey by *Brunswick Group*, a PR firm, 82% of respondents said they would research the boss's social-media accounts if they were considering joining a new firm. Even earnings calls offer insights. Academics at HBS have found that managers who invite colleagues to respond to analysts' questions on these calls are more likely to work in firms that have more cohesive leadership teams. Employee-review sites like *Glassdoor* are another source of insight. These sites can be distorted by embittered ex-workers. But they are also likely to contain "slivers of truth". And all these slivers add up. There

is no substitute for being at a firm day in, day out, if you want to understand what it is really like.

Abridged from © The Economist<sup>1</sup>

## Talking point

**Discuss the issues below.**

1. The best ways of researching a company's culture.
- 2.
3. The respondents rated respectfulness, work-life balance and morale as more important to job satisfaction than pay. What would you add to this list?
4. According to the survey mentioned, what is considered the most common reason people give for quitting their jobs, and how does this factor compare to the importance of high wages?
5. How do modern firms signal what they stand for?
6. What role does the behavior of CEOs and their social media presence play in shaping perceptions of corporate culture among job seekers, according to the various studies and surveys cited in the article?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.economist.com/business/2022/07/07/reading-corporate-culture-from-the-outside>

# Module 2

## Communication with co-workers

Your colleagues should be your friends, not your frenemies  
Edmond Mbiaka

My colleagues are like fine wine – they're best  
enjoyed with a healthy dose of sarcasm

Anonymous

## Starting-up

### Dilemma

One afternoon a manager Kassie sent an email to her teammate, Harrison, explaining why she hadn't included him in a meeting with a group of company executives earlier that day. She and Harrison got along well, and she wanted to make sure he wasn't offended.

Two days later the email still hadn't been returned. This small incident made Kassie question their relationship. Why the sudden rudeness — was Harrison actually upset? Were they really on “good” terms? How should she act the next time they crossed paths? Harrison, meanwhile, had “write Kassie back” on his to-do list but had just been too busy to get around to it. He had no idea that his slow response concerned Kassie.

**A Have you been in similar situations? How did you act?**

## Reading

- Comment on Eddy Cue's quote 'Competition on anything is good, because it makes everybody better'.
- Is competition a positive or negative relationship?
- Can cooperation and competition coexist or are they mutually exclusive?

## When your colleagues are also your rivals

The modern company exalts both competition and co-operation. Competition is the defining feature of markets; inside organisations employees compete for limited resources. Sometimes that contest is obvious, as when performance is openly ranked or there is a race for a specific job. Sometimes it is left unspoken. Either way, competition is always there. Yet the reason firms exist is to coordinate the activities of many actors in pursuit of common goals. Departments and teams are expected to work together. It is not easy for managers to strike the right balance between encouraging contests and collaboration.

Competition can spur more effort but it can also have unintended consequences. A review published by New York University concluded that competition is more likely to backfire when people feel threatened: for example, when the costs of losing are high or when people are competing against others known to be better at the task in question. But even when the stakes are low, explicit competition can backfire. Such behaviour arises because many people—and many of them men, since women tend to be less taken by the prospect of all-out competition—like winning for its own sake. This organic aspect to competition also shows up in rivalries between individuals. Workers tend naturally to benchmark themselves against their peers in the race for status and seniority; they don't need an excuse.

These specific rivalries can be especially motivating. A study by the University of Arizona analysed American-football games and found that teams were more likely to take risky on-field decisions against fierce rivals. Particular opponents encourage greater risk-taking than generic competition.

All these arguments call for a restrained approach to encouraging competition. Balance individual incentives with group ones. If you are going to rate performance, make sure the measures are clear, objective and fair. Think about when risk-taking is more desirable (sales, say) and less desirable (clinical trials). By their nature organisations crackle with competitiveness.

Adding a bit of fuel to the fire can be fine. Spraying petrol everywhere is unnecessary.

Abridged from © The Economist<sup>1</sup>

**Scan through the article and contextualise the following vocabulary: in pursuit of sth**

E.g.: Yet the reason firms exist is to coordinate the activities of many actors in pursuit of common goals.

rank performance  
be left unspoken  
**in pursuit of sth**  
higher-ups  
have unintended consequences  
backfire  
explicit competition  
all-out competition  
benchmark oneself against  
more /less desirable

**Make up your own sentences with the above given expressions.**

Example: **in pursuit of sth**

He will stop at nothing in pursuit of his ambitions.

## Talking point

**Discuss the following questions.**

1. Situations when people have to compete.
2. Describe toxic and healthy competition.
3. Potential consequences of imposing competitive environment in the workplace
4. Should organisations use performance ratings for employees?
5. Pros and cons of performance ratings. Can the ranking position affect the desire to work or study?
6. How could performance ratings be improved?

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.economist.com/business/2024/01/11/when-your-colleagues-are-also-your-rivals>

## Video

### Do you have an archnemesis?

#### Harvard Business Review<sup>1</sup>

- Make a review of the video using a mind map.
- What recommendations are given in the videos?
- Which recommendations would be most helpful?
- What surprised you?

## Culture at work

- In which countries teamwork and collaboration are prioritised over individualism?
- In which countries is it more common to value personal success and achievements?

## Reading

### Choose the quote you like most. Give your reasoning.

*“I’m not the smartest fellow in the world, but I can sure pick smart colleagues”*

*Franklin D. Roosevelt*

*“I not only use all the brains I have, but all I can borrow”*

*Woodrow Wilson*

*“It’s better to hang out with people better than you. Pick out associates whose behaviour is better than yours and you’ll drift in that direction”*

*Warren Buffett*

## Working with people who are smarter than you

Working closely with geniuses is nice **in theory** but often difficult **in practice**. You hear it constantly— employ those who are smarter than you. There’s no

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://youtube.com/shorts/a2ej-0rCWkI?si=Gt0TJBYCbUZd2QcX>

mystery to this wisdom. Clever, skilled employees require less management, constantly teach you new things, and compensate for your weaknesses. But while the rationale behind this oft-repeated tip is simple, executing it isn't. The problem is that people have egos and insecurities, and being surrounded by folks who are smarter than you can make you feel inferior. Even the most assured among us can see their confidence erode when they're surrounded by geniuses.

So is it possible to rewire yourself to reap the benefits of a team of super-achievers without suffering dwindling self-esteem, or does associating with brainiacs require major changes to your psyche? Here is their advice on how to adjust to working with smarter people:

**Have confidence.** If you got hired with all these brainiacs, there was something about you that said more than your academic credentials. Don't compare accomplishments, because they are often a reflection of luck and hard work rather than intelligence. If your co-workers are all highly accomplished, take it as a compliment: your company saw something in you that was just as impressive.

**Know Your Strengths.** If you've been hired, you must have something to offer to the team. Focus on the strengths you possess, rather than the skills or knowledge you lack. Identify your strengths, and then double down on them. Focus on being the best you can be, and contribute in a way that best utilises your talents.

**Learn from everyone around you.**

Most smart people are usually quite generous. People who like learning also enjoy sharing their knowledge. Interact with them as much as possible. When associated with people who you feel comfortable with, pick their brain. Every conversation you have with a genius will bring you closer to their level.

**Never hold back questions.** Remember the common mantra: The only stupid question is one that is not asked. It's much better to appear uninformed than to give the impression you know something you don't, which can come back to haunt you.

**Understand that your co-workers are human, too.** Don't let your insecurity influence your interactions with smarter people. Most of your co-workers are probably extremely nice and humble. It is likely that the more impressive they are, the less arrogant they are, because they have probably all met people smarter than they were.

**Challenge yourself.** When you set the bar as high as possible, you'll be surprised by how much you can accomplish. Use your environment and your peers to inspire you.

**Work harder.** It's difficult to get smarter, but you can always work harder than someone else. Determination and drive can carry you much further than natural intelligence.

**Put in the extra time to catch up.** Outside work, read as much as you can about your industry. Your goal should be to absorb all the information you can obtain from the outside, so you can contribute interesting perspectives without sounding stupid.

**Take your time.** Getting comfortable among a team of whiz kids isn't something that happens overnight, many responders warn. Getting to know, and learning from, truly smart collaborators can be a lengthy process, so don't expect to wake up a week later and feel totally comfortable.

**Be patient.** Understand that a lot of your co-workers' smarts probably come from years of experience. Give yourself some time, and you'll eventually gain your edge.

**Don't worry about being noticed at first.** It's okay to not contribute every opinion during meetings and projects. You should try to master the existing conversation before trying to make it your own. If you try to draw too much attention to yourself and you don't know what you're doing, you'll quickly lose respect.

**Take advantage of the opportunity.** Realise that the alternative to working with smarter people is working with people who are less intelligent or experienced as you, which would probably be less educational, less rewarding, and more frustrating. Working with great peers will help you up your game.

Abridged from © Inc.com<sup>1</sup>

**Scan through the article and contextualise the following vocabulary: in theory / in practice**

E.g.: Working closely with geniuses is nice **in theory** but often difficult **in practice**.

**in theory / in practice**

the rationale behind  
to reap the benefits of something  
a team of super-achievers  
dwindling self-esteem  
brainiacs / whiz kids  
major changes to one's psyche  
feel like the dunce  
suffer from self-doubt

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.inc.com/jessica-stillman/7-tips-for-working-with-people-who-are-smarter-than-you.html>



academic credentials  
 compare accomplishments  
**pick one's brain**  
 set the bar as high as possible  
 determination and drive  
 catch up with something / someone

**Make up your own sentences with the above given expressions.  
 pick one's brain**

E.g.: Do you have a moment? I need to pick (up) your brain about a little situation that has come up.

## Talking point

**Discuss the questions below.**

1. Do smart people have common characteristics? What are they?
2. Describe someone who is intelligent.
3. What makes an intelligent person a genius?
4. Is it possible to define smart people by their high scores on IQ tests?
5. Can a person be too smart?

## Over to you

**Who are the core “competents” in your organization? Why are they critical?**

## Vocabulary focus

## Collocations with set

**Replace the underlined phrases with an appropriate collocation using set and a word from the box. The first sentence is done for you.**

*agenda   record   deadline   standard   target   example   task*

1. We have to arrange a meeting during the next few weeks but we haven't yet decided exactly when it will be held. set the agenda

2. If supervisors don't tell their staff exactly when they expect work to be completed by, the productivity of their departments will suffer.
3. The HR director has fixed the objective for this year: reduce recruitment costs by at least 10%.
4. It will be impossible to introduce all of the government's new employment guidelines simultaneously, so what we need to do is to decide which ones we will introduce and in what order.
5. An Australian firm has recently banned the use of mobile phones outside break periods and it seems this could well mean that other companies will follow suit.
6. As a result of the new stress reduction initiative, we've put in our best ever performance with absenteeism at just 5%.
7. Candidates were put into teams that were given the job of designing a new training programme for manual workers.

**Think of any other collocations with set. Put them into context. set a limit**

E.g.: **Set a limit** on how long you let this drag on.

## Video

### Difficult people: What to do when all else fails

#### Harvard Business Review Guide<sup>1</sup>

- Make a review of the video using a mind map.
- What are the recommendations given in the video?
- Which recommendations can be most helpful?
- What was new for you?

## Reading

- What is 'communication aikido'?
- Think of the personalities difficult to work with.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://youtu.be/YEEKCLUfnbI?si=mgLB1XQYtxmnqEuB>

## Four toughest personalities at work — and how to manage them

Running a business would be easy if you didn't have to manage people. As a boss, you have the option to terminate anyone who is a drag on your company. But good talent is hard to find, so it's worth the effort to make a difficult person work more effectively. When faced with a problem personality, most of us either confront the person head-on, leading to escalating hostility, or else avoid dealing with him or her and leave the problem to worsen. Instead, you can use a sort of communication aikido to channel troublesome employee's own energies in ways that will benefit themselves, their co-workers, and your company. Here's how to manage the most challenging personalities:

### 1. Narcissists

Narcissists have an inflated sense of their own importance and crave constant attention and praise. They're self-absorbed and lack the capacity for empathy. This person won't care what other people feel. Telling someone how their behaviour is making others feel, or working to the detriment of the company won't work at all when you're dealing with a narcissist. Narcissists are also extremely sensitive to criticism and liable to react badly. If you want to keep them on and want them to be productive, you have to frame things in terms of how it might serve them. Narcissists often do well in positions of power, because they take that power very seriously and value it highly, and often work very hard in those roles. Narcissists are running the world.

### 2. Passive-Aggressive Types

They will promise to help you with a project but then they don't. Passive-aggressiveness is a form of anger, but not an outright form. You may be tempted to get to the bottom of what's making them angry. Don't go there. It's a character disorder. Another thing to watch out for is your own reaction to passive-aggressive people. They can make you feel you're not worthwhile because they don't show up for you in a consistent way. They can get to you without you knowing it. Unlike narcissists, they do have the capacity for empathy. They also want to advance in your workplace, and you can use both these traits to help motivate them. Mainly you have to set very clear expectations. Chances are they'll try to slip through any loophole they can find, so you have to be very precise. Place passive-aggressive employees in jobs where there are very specific guidelines and expectations laid out for them. In more open-ended roles they'll drive everyone crazy.

### 3. Gossips

Gossiping is destructive behaviour and you need to do something about it. Do not get sucked in yourself. Don't participate in gossiping, which can be hard

to resist, depending on the subject of the conversation. Even more important, don't give in to the natural human desire to know exactly what's being said about you, or to try to please everyone so they'll only have good things to say. Beyond that, it's a good idea to call the gossip on his or her behaviour, and explain that it's not helpful for your workplace. If you don't do it, it will go unchecked. The workplace is a breeding ground for gossip. If you address it honestly, you give employees permission to tell people that they don't want to participate in gossip. On the plus side, gossips often have good people skills, so if you give them a positive place where they can talk, you can channel their abilities for the good. Maybe sales is a good role.

#### **4. Anger Addicts**

Some people deal with workplace tensions by accusing their co-workers of misdeeds, yelling at others, and generally giving their angry feelings free rein. Whatever you do, don't let them get away with it. This situation needs an intervention. That's unacceptable behaviour. They have to be given very strong limits and boundaries. It will destroy a workplace if people are having tantrums. As the boss, you'll either have to take anger addicts aside, or get someone in Human Resources to do so. Either way, they need to hear that their expressions of anger are inappropriate. Offer them the opportunity to go for counselling. And face the fact that anger addicts may not have a future at your company since repeated rages can potentially drag your whole organisation down.

Abridged from © Inc.com<sup>1</sup>

**Scan through the article and contextualise the following vocabulary:**

run a business  
be worth the effort to do something  
a problem / challenging personality  
confront the person head-on  
escalating hostility  
capacity for empathy  
a huge drawback in the workplace  
work to the detriment of the company  
be sensitive to criticism  
don't go there  
set clear expectations

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.inc.com/minda-zetlin/how-to-lead-the-5-toughest-employees.html>

slip through any loophole one can find  
destructive behaviour / unacceptable behaviour  
go unchecked  
workplace tensions

**Make up your own sentences with the above given expressions.**

## Talking point

**Discuss the questions below.**

1. Comment on the author's statement "Running a business would be easy if only you didn't have to manage people".
2. The expert in the article says "Narcissists are running the world». Do you agree? Think of any narcissists in power.
3. Can a certain amount of narcissism be found in everyone who climbs all the way to the very top?
4. Describe a fictional but typical passive aggressive encounter.
5. Do you know anyone who gossips? Would telling us about them be considered gossip itself?
6. Comment on the expert's idea "The workplace is a breeding ground for gossip".

## Video

### **How to Work with a Passive-Aggressive Co-worker**

#### **Harvard Business Review Guide<sup>1</sup>**

- Make a review of the video using a mind map.
- What are the recommendations given in the videos?
- Which recommendations can be most helpful?
- What surprised you?

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<sup>1</sup> [https://youtu.be/-W4\\_I4nX2uI?si=CksYZgyTfU51BlzM](https://youtu.be/-W4_I4nX2uI?si=CksYZgyTfU51BlzM)

## Vocabulary focus

**Complete the text below using the words in the box.**

encourage	unintentionally	non-verbal	significant
undermine	inhibit	unconsciously	regardless
			interact

### Are you communicating effectively with co-workers?

One of your most important audiences is co-workers. You are communicating to every co-worker in your vicinity, sending both verbal and non-verbal signals. You may be communicating consciously or \_\_\_\_\_, intentionally or \_\_\_\_\_, actively or passively. \_\_\_\_\_ of your intentions, others are watching and hearing from you. They are your audience and have the same power as any other audience. They can engage you, tolerate you, or dismiss you. When your audience consists of co-workers, poor communication skills may be limiting your career without you knowing it. Co-workers are often those whom you spend \_\_\_\_\_ time communicating with and can be the same people you struggle to \_\_\_\_\_ with effectively. As a leader, professional, or influencer, co-workers may be your most important audience. They have the power to help or \_\_\_\_\_ you. They may represent one of your closest friends or become one of your worst professional enemies. They can \_\_\_\_\_ and support you or slander and \_\_\_\_\_ you. When you need to communicate something of significance or importance, your ability to effectively communicate with this audience relates to how you purposefully and intentionally interact with them.

**Make up your own sentences using the words in the box.**

# Module 3

## Communication with bosses

A great boss lays the foundation for employees to discover their own greatness

Aniekee Tochukwu Ezekiel

The pessimist complains about the wind. The optimist expects it to change. The leader adjusts the sails

John Maxwell

No man will make a great leader who wants to do it all himself, or get all the credit for doing it

Andrew Carnegie

## Starting-up



What is the idea behind each photo below?



Which situation do you find yourself in most often?

## Over to you

**Choose the quote you like most. Illustrate it with life experience.**

“A leader is best when people barely know he exists. When his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves.”

LaoTzu

“Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others.”

Jack Welch

“My jobs as a leader is to make sure everybody in the company has great opportunities, and that they feel they’re having a meaningful impact.”

Larry Page

“A strong leader avoids becoming overconfident to the point of impaired judgment.”

Daniel Lubetzky

“The leader is one who, out of the clutter, brings simplicity... out of discord, harmony... and out of difficulty, opportunity.”

Albert Einstein

“A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others.”

Douglas MacArthur



“Leadership is not about being in charge. It is about taking care of those in your charge.”

Simon Sinek

## Video

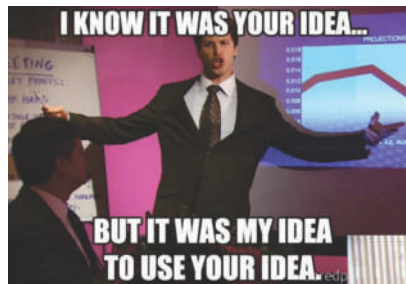
### How to Disagree with Someone More Powerful:

#### The Harvard Business Review Guide<sup>1</sup>

- Make a review of the video using a mind map.
- What are the recommendations given in the videos?
- Which recommendations can be most helpful?

## Reading

Have you ever been in the situation depicted on the photo below? How did you act?



### Nine signs you're a bad manager — even if it doesn't feel like it

The quality of supervision is often what makes or breaks a leader — and an organization. There are subtle signs, which indicate that you're not fulfilling your potential as a manager.

<sup>1</sup> <https://youtube.com/watch?v=FbtHJm8vFpE&si=8ocj3vYcG4njF7S9>

**1. You send mixed signals to your employees**

If you're best friends with your employees one minute, and the next you're coming down hard and heavy on their work, you may be sending them mixed signals and losing productivity as a result. Similarly, if you give your employees vague assignments and unclear due dates, and then hold them accountable for missed deadlines or errors, your expectations probably aren't clear and you could be heading for confusion — and possibly souring the relationship.

**2. You don't bother to give any feedback**

Some supervisors say, "If you don't hear from me, you're doing fine". The next minute (or so it seems), the employee is fired. Bouncing back and forth between extremes is unhelpful to the supervisor. There are ways to be direct and constructive as well as tactful when giving feedback. It should be prompt and specific. Likewise, asking for feedback from your employees can open the door to communication. Ask your employees how your style of supervision works for them. Do not defend. Do not argue. Just listen.

**3. You let things go**

If an employee asks for guidance, you blow it off by saying you'll get to it but really decide you're too busy to follow up.

**4. You ignore the organisation's policies**

You think HR policies are made-up rules that don't have anything to do with the real world. HR is there for a reason, and it's not up to you to bend the rules.

**5. You don't meet with your employees one-on-one except for their reviews**

Managers should be meeting one-on-one with their subordinates regularly to give them feedback and to be available for questions and guidance. Start small. Ten minutes per week to start can be useful, and by scheduling the meeting ahead of time, you're both held accountable. As important as keeping the meeting is making it two-way. Listen at least as much as you talk.

**6. You play favourites**

You let some subordinates get away with things you'd never allow for others, like showing up late or missing deadlines. To avoid your team feeling like you play favourites, take each of your employees out to individual lunch or coffee. Make sure to write down a few thoughts and reflections afterwards for future reference.

**7. You make it clear your employees work for you.**

You remind your employees of this every day by looking down on them or giving orders. But a good supervisor works in partnership with their co-workers, rather than acting as an authoritarian.

**8. You make it hard for employees to talk to you or brainstorm ideas.**

Meetings are essential and communication is the key to a productive work relationship. One way to make team meetings more welcoming and open to

discussion and contributions from all employees is to open with an icebreaker or a quick game. Spending two to three minutes at the start of your team meetings on something lighthearted is worth its weight in gold.

**9. You aren't on board with your company's mission.**

If someone mentions the organisation's missions or values, bad managers "tune out and hum 'Row, row your boat' to distract themselves". If you don't believe in your company's mission, how can you expect it of your team?

**Abridged from © Business Insider<sup>1</sup>**

**Scan through the article and contextualise the following vocabulary:**

subtle signs which indicate that  
fulfil your potential  
vague assignments  
unclear due dates  
hold someone accountable for  
miss deadlines  
sour the relationship  
bounce back and forth between extremes  
prompt and specific feedback  
made-up rules  
bend the rules  
play favourites

## Talking point

**Discuss in small groups.**

1. Criteria of quality supervision.
2. The most dangerous mixed signals.
3. The most helpful recommendation(s).
4. The most serious way(s) of failing a team.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.businessinsider.com/signs-you-are-a-bad-manager-2017-3>

## Reading

### Ego is the enemy of good leadership

The higher leaders rise in the ranks, the more they are at risk of getting an inflated ego. The bigger their ego grows, the more they are at risk of losing touch with their colleagues, the culture, and ultimately their clients. As we rise in the ranks, we acquire more power. And with that, people are more likely to want to please us by listening more attentively, agreeing more, and laughing at our jokes. All of these tickle the ego. When the ego is tickled, it grows. David Owen, a neurologist, and Jonathan Davidson, a professor of psychiatry and behavioural sciences, call this a “disorder of the possession of power, particularly power, which has been associated with overwhelming success, held for a period of years.”

An unchecked ego can warp our perspective or twist our values. Managing our ego’s craving for fortune, fame, and influence is the prime responsibility of any leader. When we’re caught in the grip of the ego’s craving for more power, we lose control. Ego makes us susceptible to manipulation; it narrows our field of vision; and it corrupts our behaviour, often causing us to act against our values. Our ego is like a target we carry with us. And like any target, the bigger it is, the more vulnerable it is to being hit. In this way, an inflated ego makes it easier for others to take advantage of us. It makes us predictable. When people know this, they can play to our ego. When we’re a victim of our own need to be seen as great, we end up being led into making decisions that may be detrimental to ourselves, our people, and our organization.

An inflated ego also corrupts our behaviour. When we believe we’re the sole architects of our success, we tend to be ruder, more selfish, and more likely to interrupt others. This is especially true in the face of setbacks and criticism. In this way, an inflated ego prevents us from learning from our mistakes and creates a defensive wall that makes it difficult to appreciate the rich lessons we glean from failure. Finally, an inflated ego narrows our vision. The ego always looks for information that confirms what it wants to believe. Breaking free of an inflated ego and avoiding the leadership bubble is an important and challenging job. It requires selflessness, reflection, and courage. Here are a few tips that will help you:

- Consider the perks and privileges you are being offered in your role. Some of them are to promote your status and power and ultimately ego. Consider which of your privileges you can let go of.

- Support, develop, and work with people who won't feed your ego. Hire smart people with the confidence to speak up.
- Humility and gratitude are cornerstones of selflessness. Make a habit of taking a moment at the end of each day to reflect on all the people that were part of making you successful on that day. This helps you develop a natural sense of humility, by seeing how you are not the only cause of your success. And end the reflection by actively sending a message of gratitude to those people.

The inflated ego that comes with success — the bigger salary, the nicer office, the easy laughs — often makes us feel as if we've found the eternal answer to being a leader. But the reality is, we haven't. Leadership is about people, and people change every day. If we believe we've found the universal key to leading people, we've just lost it. If we let our ego determine what we see, what we hear, and what we believe, we've let our past success damage our future success.

**Abridged from © Harvard Business Review<sup>1</sup>**

**Scan through the article and contextualise the following vocabulary:**

rise in the ranks  
an inflated ego  
loose touch with colleagues  
tickle the ego  
overwhelming success  
an unchecked ego  
warp our perspective  
susceptible to manipulation  
narrow one's vision  
break free of  
let go of  
speak up

**Make up your own sentences with the above given expressions.**

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<sup>1</sup> [https://hbr.org/2018/11/ego-is-the-enemy-of-good-leadership?ab=at\\_art\\_art\\_1x4\\_s04](https://hbr.org/2018/11/ego-is-the-enemy-of-good-leadership?ab=at_art_art_1x4_s04)

## Talking point

### Discuss these questions.

1. The dangers of an inflated ego.
2. Does success require a certain amount of ego?
3. The article mentions a few, but can you think of other problems the ego might cause?

## Reading

- How does (did) your boss criticise you?
- If you were a boss, how would you criticise your staff?

## How to criticise your staff without looking like a bad boss

You should handle criticism of your employees with care. If you do a bad job of giving criticism, your employees may view you as a controlling perfectionist who cannot be pleased. However, if you do it right, they may view it as useful information that they need to grow with the company. Giving constructive criticism is a natural part of being a boss. If you avoid it because you fear looking like a bad manager, your employees won't learn from their mistakes.

### Planning

If you criticise your employees impulsively, you risk damaging their self-confidence. Because you didn't take time to plan your response or reacted emotionally, you could end up hurting them with your words. If an employee did something to irritate or frustrate you, wait until you've settled down before addressing the matter. Regardless of how you feel personally about the employee, you must approach him with respect.

### Timing

Don't wait until days later to raise the issue. Once you're emotionally stable, address the matter promptly. Don't wait for problems to pile up because the employees could become overwhelmed by what they perceive as negative information. It's best to give criticism in small portions and to do it while the issue is still fresh in the employee's mind.

**Location**

To avoid embarrassing the employee, speak with him in private. Never criticise him in front of others, and avoid using email or the phone as a substitute for face-to-face contact.

**Questions**

View your criticism as feedback that the employee needs to improve. Engage in a mutual discussion and ask questions to gain deeper insight into the situation. Listen objectively to what he has to say. She might clue you in on something you don't know, which makes you view the situation differently.

**Explanation**

When explaining your side, use body language and words that show you want to help. Present the employee with the bigger picture and use a non-confrontational tone. Be specific with your feedback and avoid generalising.

**Closing**

Ask for suggestions. Ensure you both agree on the solution. Establish clear expectations so the employee knows he will undergo periodic, informal evaluations. Ask him to remind you to give feedback if you ever forget to. End the discussion on an uplifting note. You might say that you wish to see him grow into an even more valuable employee than he already is.

Abridged from © [smallbusiness.chron.com](https://smallbusiness.chron.com)<sup>1</sup>

**Scan through the article and contextualise the following vocabulary:**

handle criticism  
damage one's self-confidence  
take time to plan one's response  
irritate or frustrate someone  
address the matter  
approach someone with respect  
the specifics of the problem  
avoid embarrassing the employee  
engage in a mutual discussion  
gain deeper insight into the situation  
listen objectively to someone  
present the employee with the bigger picture  
use a non-confrontational tone  
be specific with feedback  
avoid generalising

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<sup>1</sup> <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/criticize-staff-looking-like-bad-boss-72295.html>

## Talking point

### Discuss these questions.

1. Is it possible to avoid criticising employees? Is giving criticism a natural part of being a boss?
2. How should bosses handle criticism of their employees?
3. What are the negative effects of criticizing employees impulsively?
4. Why is it better to criticise face-to-face and not to use phone or email?
5. The author mentions several recommendations. Which is the most important?

## Dilemma

### Influencing the boss

**Work in pairs. Read the scenarios below. Discuss and analyse the situations. Describe how you would handle the situation.**

1. Your team leader is constantly putting pressure on the team to come up with ideas for new products and ways to expand into new markets. After every brainstorming session, you report back to her with the team's suggestions.

However, she always finds fault, refuses to take any risks and says 'no' to any further development of the idea. She is probably over-cautious because of past problems with her boss due to a string of failures proposed by her previous team. She also likes to control everything and resents it when the team takes too much initiative. The team is demoralised, unmotivated and desperate to get their latest idea past her and to the implementation stage. You need to persuade her. Job cuts are imminent and you know that she and her team will be the first ones to go if you don't have success soon.

2. You have been working in the field as a sales rep for your company for five years. You have built up an impressive client list and have had excellent sales results. Your manager doesn't want to lose you. You have applied to the marketing department for the position of assistant marketing manager. You really want this job. You never had any intention of staying in sales but saw it as a stepping stone to a marketing position. You know that the marketing manager is going to ask the sales manager for his opinion. You also know that they don't have much respect for each other and that the marketing manager has made life difficult for the sales manager on more than one occasion in the past. It is unlikely that the sales manager will want to cooperate with him by



letting one of his top people move to his department. You need to convince him to recommend you for the job.

## Reading

- What does power mean to you personally?
- Do you think power is inherently good or bad?
- Do you believe that power corrupts individuals?
- What are some warning signs that someone may be abusing their power?

## The dark and bright sides of power

*Power is a fact of corporate life.* It also affects behaviour. Research suggests power makes people less likely to take the advice of others, even if those others are experts in their fields. It makes them more likely to gratify their physical needs. Powerful people are bewitched by themselves in conversations: they rate their own stories as more inspiring than the interlocutors’.

They struggle to see things from the perspective of others. In one famous experiment, some people were asked to draw a capital “E” on their own foreheads. Subjects primed to think of themselves as powerful were three times more likely to draw the “E” as though they were looking at it themselves, making it appear backwards to anyone else. Power even makes people think they are taller. In another experiment, those coaxed to think of themselves as powerful were more likely to overestimate their own height relative to a pole, and to pick a loftier avatar to represent them in a game, than less potent counterparts. Power also affects those lower down the pecking order. The study at the University of California looked at how status affects laughter. The researchers recorded members of a fraternity house in an American university, some new joiners and some old hands, teasing each other. Higher-status participants laughed more loudly and with less inhibition than lower-status ones—primates, not mates.

Power is out of sync with the times. High-performing teams depend on collaboration and candour, not cringing and compliance. Humility is increasingly prized as an attribute of senior executives. In hiring processes, some interviewers will look for the use of the word “I” rather than “we” as a small marker of how egocentric people really are. Entire industries are feted for the way they try to counteract the effects of power. The aviation industry

is celebrated for a training technique called “crew resource management” that is designed to encourage a less hierarchical set of interactions in the cockpit.

Flatter organisations are likelier to spend too much time exploring options than ones where someone is clearly in charge. It doesn’t particularly matter if the boss knows what they are talking about; the mere fact that authority is being wielded means a team converges more quickly on a decision.

Power is an instrument for achieving noble ends as well as selfish ones: it is no use having brilliant ideas without the means to put them into practice. One of the most popular classes at Stanford Graduate School of Business is called “Paths to Power”. It is taught by a man who preaches the value of rule-breaking, displays of anger, “strategic misrepresentation” (ie, lying) and many other countercultural qualities in order to get to the top.

Companies like the idea of humility and teamwork, but they are also feudal structures that depend on ambition, impatience and gallons of unwarranted self-confidence. The best managers are well aware of how their own power sends ripples across the organisation. They take care not to signal their opinions too early in meetings; they admit when they don’t know the answer to something. But they also know when to stop consulting and start commanding. Up to a certain point, saying “I don’t know” sends a signal of low-ego inclusivity; beyond it, it is just a signal of not knowing.

**Abridged from © The Economist<sup>1</sup>**

## Talking point

### Discuss these questions.

1. Do you agree with the author’s assertion “Power is a fact of corporate life”?
2. What are some positive aspects of having power?
3. How can individuals responsibly handle the power they possess?
4. What role does accountability play in preventing the abuse of power?
5. How can individuals or organisations address and prevent the abuse of power?
6. What are the potential consequences of power struggles within a team or organisation?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.economist.com/business/2023/07/27/the-dark-and-bright-sides-of-power>

7. What role does communication play in resolving power struggles?
8. What are some signs of an unhealthy power struggle in a professional setting?
9. Can power struggles ever have positive outcomes, such as fostering growth or innovation?

# Module 4

## Workplace romantic relationships and friendships

### Reading

- Are workplace relationships inevitable? Why /Why not?
- Is it a bad or good idea to date a co-worker?
- What is your organisation corporate policy on personal relationships between staff members?

### Romantic relationships in the workplace

The long hours spent together in the office can lead some colleagues to start a romantic relationship. While the office may seem like a logical place to meet a mate, romance between colleagues leaves room for problems, including relationship-based tension, harassment and accusations of unfair treatment. A corporate policy on personal relationships between staff members helps prevent problems in the workplace.

#### **Supervisor-Subordinate Relationship**

Romantic relationships are typically forbidden in the workplace due to the potential conflict and legal repercussions that may arise from the liaison. A relationship between an employee in a supervisor role and someone she directly manages presents the biggest potential conflict. In cases of a manager dating a subordinate, the manager may feel a conflict of interest between her personal and professional lives if the relationship affects her decisions regarding promotions, raises or assignment of duties. Additionally, other employees may feel they are treated unfairly compared to the colleague who is dating the boss. If the relationship ends, the subordinate may claim he was treated unfairly if he doesn't get a promotion. However, threats of sexual harassment may arise from any type of romantic relationship in the workplace. A relationship between a manager and someone she doesn't directly manage can also cause conflict but may be less problematic due to the indirect supervision.

### **Same-Level Relationships**

Relationships also occur between staff members who are on a similar level, meaning that neither holds a higher supervisory role. Because one person does not control the other's career advancement, there is less potential for conflict or feelings of unfair treatment with other employees. However, some companies choose to ban relationships between employees in the same department to reduce the likelihood of personal conflicts or relationship issues infiltrating the working environment.

### **Conduct**

The way the two involved employees handle themselves in the workplace is a factor in an office relationship. Involved individuals should be able to handle their relationships without interfering with their own or others' work responsibilities. Public displays of affection in the workplace can make others uncomfortable and create a less professional environment. Additionally, personal conflicts in the relationship that spill into the workplace affect productivity and can create a negative environment for other colleagues. Employees who use a romantic relationship to their advantage for workplace advancement also cause conflict. If workplace relationships are allowed, emphasise the need for the participants to practice professional conduct.

### **Policy**

If you don't already have one in place, author a company policy on relationships and dating. Include the types of relationships that are allowed or discouraged, as well as the consequences for the disregarding of such rules. In some situations, a relationship may be acceptable if one of the employees transfers to a different department so that the two no longer have an impact on one another's work status. The policy may also ask that employees who begin a romantic relationship alert their supervisors with the assurance that the information is kept confidential.

Abridged from © [smallbusiness.chron.com](https://smallbusiness.chron.com)<sup>1</sup>

### **Scan through the article and contextualise the following vocabulary:**

1. relationship-based tension
2. accusations of unfair treatment
3. a corporate policy on personal relationships
4. due to the potential conflict
5. legal repercussions
6. a conflict of interest

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<sup>1</sup> <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/romantic-relationships-workplace-11804.html>

7. decisions regarding raises or assignment of duties
8. threats of sexual harassment
9. without interfering with (work responsibilities)
10. public displays of affection in the workplace
11. create a less professional/ negative environment
12. use (a romantic relationship) **to** their advantage
13. practice professional conduct
14. disregarding of such rules
15. transfer to a different department
16. alert their supervisors

## Talking point

### Discuss these questions.

1. What are the pros and cons of workplace romances?
2. If workplace relationships in a organisation are allowed, should it emphasise the need for the participants to practice professional conduct?
3. What problems may arise in a supervisor-subordinate relationship?
4. If you were a business owner, what would your policy on workplace romances be and why?
5. Why do some companies choose to ban relationships between employees in the same department?
6. Should a subordinate inform a supervisor on dating a co-worker?

## Reading

How would you explain these statistics:

- just over a quarter of Generation X thought dating a colleague was okay, while Generation Z and younger Millennials are much more open to the idea of dating a colleague. One out of three thinks it's okay;
- a recent survey indicates that 75% of workers have had an office romance.

## Tips for working with your romantic partner

Dating at work isn't new; it has existed for decades. When done right, your office romance could end like the Obamas, who met at a Chicago law firm

where Michelle was assigned as Barack's mentor. They've been married for three decades now. But when it goes wrong, working with your significant other could damage your love life, your job, or both.

Yet many couples make it work. How to work with your partner without jeopardising work? The following strategies can help guide your decision-making and help you develop boundaries with yourself, your partner, and your company.

### **Be smart about employment policies**

If you're in a relationship, discuss when the right time is to be speaking to HR about it. Look into your company's policies, and discuss your own preferences. For example, you can specify with HR that you prefer to never be staffed on the same project or committee together. As your situation changes, you may need to officially notify the company or step out of roles that pose conflicts of interest.

### **Manage the optics**

Many colleagues will assume that anything one of you knows will automatically be shared with the other. Be explicit with colleagues — as often as necessary — that you are treating sensitive information confidentially, and that it is in your interest to do so, too. Hold each other accountable to upholding this — including reminding your partner if the juicy information they're gushing about over dinner seems like privileged information. This goes a long way in building trust, in and out of the workplace. Similarly, avoid bringing issues from home into your engagement at the workplace; this can feel awkward to others, and you want to make it as easy as possible for them to engage you without wondering about the effects on your relationship.

### **Be intentional about separating work and life**

Exposed to similar work environments, dramas, and colleagues, you'll probably have plenty to talk about when you leave the office for date night. Trust us, it can be VERY tempting to do this. But work talk can be a black hole, crowding out the time you need to build your romantic relationship and eating into your personal time.

Reserve your downtime to share other things that are important to you. Find other people in your life you lean on, when necessary, especially when needing to vent (again!) about that annoying project you're stuck on. Pay special attention to when you or your partner is ready to turn off and stop thinking about work for the night.

### **Remember that time at work does not equal time together**

It's important to not confuse your time as colleagues with the time you spend investing in one another as people. Creating space to grow as a couple (away from work friends and environments) provides a good reminder that yours is a situation of work/life serendipity, not just convenience. It will also go a long way in helping develop a bond strong enough to weather turbulence, including if the job doesn't go well for one or both of you.

Each partner's happiness is equally important, and it's important to acknowledge this regularly, especially when one person's personal or work journey changes speed or direction in ways that differ from the other person's. Step up to support one another when necessary, when the tables turn, and remember to play the long game. Countless studies have illustrated the foundational role that open communication plays in successful relationships, and we've found this especially true in our situation.

**Abridged from © Harvard Business Review<sup>1</sup>**

**Scan through the article and contextualise the following vocabulary:**

when done right / when it goes wrong  
set a few rules  
jeopardize work  
develop boundaries  
be smart about employment policies  
be transparent  
look into the company's policies  
specify with HR (that you prefer to)  
officially notify the company  
work for your priorities  
manage the optics  
be explicit with colleagues  
treat sensitive information confidentially  
the juicy information  
feel awkward to others

## **Talking point**

**Discuss these questions.**

1. What is one major concern about allowing romance in the workplace?
2. How might office romance affect work performance?
3. What are the risks of office romance?
4. Do office romances ever work out? If yes, how to make them work?
5. Should you notify your company if you have a romantic relationship with a co-worker?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://hbr.org/2023/03/tips-for-working-with-your-romantic-partner>



6. How should HR handle workplace romance?
7. Is it possible to separate work and life?
8. What recommendations from the article do you consider useful?

## Vocabulary focus

**Complete the text using the words in the box. Use the proper form if necessary.**

<i>date</i>	<i>make</i>	<i>fire</i>	<i>discourage</i>	<i>ignore</i>	<i>impose</i>	<i>adopt</i>
<i>turn</i>	<i>enforce</i>	<i>litigation</i>	<i>go</i>	<i>treat</i>	<i>maintain</i>	

### Are dating rules legal?

Businesses have 1 \_\_\_\_\_ a wide variety of approaches to 2 \_\_\_\_\_ fraternisation. 3 \_\_\_\_\_ the rules is another matter. Employees may simply 4 \_\_\_\_\_ the rules if they think they're unfair. Supervisors may 5 \_\_\_\_\_ a blind eye if they don't think a relationship is harmful. Companies that do 6 \_\_\_\_\_ some sort of penalty have to do it fairly. 7 \_\_\_\_\_ a female *staffer* but not her boyfriend or 8 \_\_\_\_\_ executives better than the rank-and-file can lead to problems, even to 9 \_\_\_\_\_.

10 \_\_\_\_\_ a non-fraternisation policy is usually legal but there are limits. 11 \_\_\_\_\_ the policy too broad is one way to 12 \_\_\_\_\_ wrong. Another is to ignore state or local law. In California, for example, businesses can fire a supervisor for sleeping with a subordinate but they can't fire an employee just for

13 \_\_\_\_\_ a co-worker.

**Make up your own sentences with the words in the box.**

## Reading

- Is friendship at work good or bad?
- How close should you be to your co-workers?
- Is it OK to socialise with co-workers?
- Do you separate work from friendship?
- Is it hard to make friends at work?

## Why it is a bad idea for managers to attempt to engineer office friendships

Scholars of happiness have found that close relationships are one of the critical ingredients of a contented life. What is true in general is also true of the workplace, according to research by Gallup. The pollster finds that having a “best friend at work” is closely associated with all manner of good things, from greater employee engagement to higher retention and better safety records. At some level, that is unremarkable. Spending time with people you like makes most things more appealing, including work. If a job is sufficiently humdrum, camaraderie among colleagues can be the main draw. The support of friends can also encourage people to try new things.

Antagonistic relationships with co-workers are always likely to make working life miserable. A study conducted by Grand Valley State University found that loneliness has an adverse effect on the performance of salespeople. Among other things, they start spending more on winning and dining with their customers.

So friends matter. The problems come when managers see the words “higher employee engagement” and leap to the conclusion that they should try to engineer work friendships.

Startups offer services to encourage work friendships. One monitors the depth of connections between people in different teams. It identifies shared interests (gluten-free baking, say, or workplace surveillance) between employees who don’t know each other and arranges meetings between them.

It is a mistake for managers to wade into the business of friend-making, and not just because it royally misses the point. The defining characteristic of friendship is that it is voluntary. Employees are adults; they don’t need their managers to arrange play-dates. And the workplace throws people together, often under testing conditions: friendships will naturally follow.

The bigger problem is that workplace friendships are more double-edged than their advocates allow. They can quickly become messy when the power dynamics change. The transition from friend to boss, or from friend to underling, is an inherently awkward one (“This is your final warning. Fancy a pint?”).

And friendships have the potential to look a lot like cronyism. A clever study by Harvard Business School and University of California found that employees’ social interactions with their managers could boost their career prospects relative to others.

The researchers looked at the promotions of smokers and non-smokers who worked for a large bank in South-East Asia, hypothesising that sharing smoking breaks with managers who also indulged might give workers a leg up. And so it did. Smokers who moved from a non-smoking boss to a puffer were promoted

more quickly than those who moved to another non-smoker. The authors found that social interactions did not just help smokers; socialising between male managers and male employees played a large role in perpetuating gender pay gaps. If firms are going to make friendship their business, they should worry about its downsides, too.

Companies should facilitate interactions between employees, particularly in a world of hybrid and remote working. Social gatherings and buddy systems are reasonable ways to encourage colleagues to meet each other and to foster a culture. But a high-quality work relationship does not require friendship. It requires respect for each other's competence, a level of trust and a desire to reach the same goal; it doesn't need birthday cards and a shared interest in quilting. Firms should do what they can to encourage these kinds of relationships. If individuals want to take it further, it's entirely up to them.

Abridged from © The Economist<sup>1</sup>

## Talking point

### Discuss in small groups.

1. What are the pros and cons of developing friendships at work?
2. What are the negative effects of workplace friendship?
3. What is a professional friendship?
4. Do work friends make us more productive?
5. Are work friends real friends?
6. Can friends work together?

## Case study

**Read the following case study. Then, working in groups of two or three, answer the questions below. Finally, compare your answers with those of the other groups.**

The time is almost midnight. Sheldon, Chief Executive of Reprox, a photocopying equipment firm, sits in an armchair, looking shocked. He has

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.economist.com/business/2023/09/21/why-it-is-a-bad-idea-for-managers-to-attempt-to-engineer-office-friendships>

just had a phone call from Donald, his Marketing Manager, and what Donald has told him is very worrying. Sheldon pours himself out a stiff whisky and considers the facts. Apparently, the previous night, Donald had gone to a local restaurant with his wife. There, he had seen the firm's top salesman, Melvin, having dinner with a woman. Donald had been amazed at Melvin's choice of a dining companion, for the woman was Lois Markham, an executive from Hitex, one of their main competitors.

The next day, Donald called Melvin to his office, intending to give the top salesman a quiet warning about mixing with the enemy. However, the conversation did not go as planned.

'If you must know, I've been living with Lois for about a year now. And I might very well marry her,' Melvin said, 'but I don't see that it's any business of this company's.

'Come on now, don't be so naive,' Don answered. 'Think of the security aspect. We're in a competitive business - it's dog eat dog.'

'I haven't done anything wrong. You've got no right to interfere in my private life. And if you start doing so, maybe I'll have to look for another job.'

Sheldon considered the problem. Should he turn a blind eye to what was going on? Or was some sort of action needed on his part?

### **Task:**

1. Summarise briefly the problem that Sheldon must solve.
2. What factors should he take into account before taking a decision?
3. How would you deal with the situation?
4. Can firms do anything to avoid this type of problem?

## **Case study**

### **Just good friends?**

A software company with a long hours' culture needs to ensure that staff relationships don't damage behaviour at work

### **Background**

Patrick McGuire, CEO of San Diego-based Techno21, is facing a problem caused by the highly competitive nature of the IT industry. Recently, employees

have been working much longer hours than previously and often over weekends. As a result, a number of staff have developed close, personal relationships with each other. Patrick has begun to think that the company may need to introduce a policy to give these employees guidelines concerning their behaviour at work. Techno21 is a young company with a very relaxed atmosphere, and staff are encouraged to socialise during their free time.

**Task:** Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of working in this kind of environment.

### **Relationships at work: three cases**

Patrick McGuire's assistant has prepared notes on three cases in which personal relationships have affected staff performance and morale.

Read about the cases in preparation for a meeting on managing relationships at work.

#### **1. Promotion application of Judith Fisher**

Peter Walters, the Chief Financial Officer, had a close relationship with one of his staff, Judith Fisher, but they broke up. A few months later, Walters had to choose someone to

be promoted to be his deputy. Judith Fisher was one of the three candidates. She didn't get the job. She claims now that it was because she'd had a personal relationship with Walters which had gone sour. According to her, this was Walters's way of taking revenge. Patrick McGuire and Veronica Simpson (HR Director) took no action. Judith is now threatening to take legal action against the company.

#### **2. The sales conference**

At the company's international sales conference, Brad Johnson, a sales manager, met Erica Stewart for the first time. He attended all the discussion groups she was in and always sat at her table at lunch. He texted her repeatedly, inviting her to have a drink or dinner with him. He was clearly very impressed with her. When they both got back to Head Office, Brad Johnson asked for Erica to be transferred to his sales team.

Erica went to see Veronica Simpson in order to reject Johnson's request.

However, Veronica strongly advised Erica not to turn down the transfer, saying: 'Brad thinks you have the personal qualities to be a brilliant salesperson. He needs bright young people to strengthen his team and he thinks you're the right person to join his team.' Erica is confused and cannot decide what to do.

#### **3. The loving couple**

About a year ago, two colleagues, Lisa Davis and Steffan Olsen, became romantically involved. They kept their relationship secret - or so they thought.

However, the other members of their team suspected something was going on. The team noticed that, at meetings, Lisa and Steffan always supported each other's opinions. Also, they would give each other loving looks or be more tactile than was normal among employees. Their behaviour upset the rest of the team. A representative of the group talked to the team leader and asked her to do something about it.

Patrick McGuire has come up with a proposal that he wants to discuss with Veronica Simpson. Read their dialogue and take notes.

(PM = PATRICK MCGUIRE, VS = VERONICA SIMPSON)

**PM** I've thought a lot about this problem, whether we should have a company policy about close relationships. I think we've got **four options**, Veronica.

**VS** OK. What's **the first**?

**PM** We could just ban all special relationships at work. Insist that the staff go elsewhere if a romance develops. I believe some companies have that policy.

**VS** Mm-hm. What about **the second** option?

**PM** We could do what a lot of companies here are doing, we could ask staff in special relationships to sign a love contract.

**VS** A love contract? How does that work?

**PM** Simple. It's a document that staff sign. They declare that they have a special relationship, and the document specifies what behaviour is acceptable. It could also indicate what action we might take, such as transferring one or both staff, altering their reporting lines or even what disciplinary action we could take.

**VS** Mm-hm. I see. And **the third** option?

**PM** Our policy could simply be that the staff must inform their team leader if they have a special relationship and they must agree to behave appropriately at work.

**VS** And what's **the last** option?

**PM** Do nothing. Have no policy at all. Just accept that it's human nature and we can't do anything about it.

PATRICK MCGUIRE wants to discuss these questions at the next HR meeting:

1. Did we make the right decision concerning Peter Walters and Judith Fisher? What further action, if any, should we take?
2. Did Veronica give Erica Stewart good advice? What should Erica do now?
3. How should the team leader deal with the issue of Lisa and Steffan? She has asked for guidance from HR.

4. Which of Patrick's four options is best for the company?
5. How can we avoid someone gaining an unfair advantage by having a close relationship with a colleague or boss? What action can we take if this happens?

**Task:**

You are members of Techno21's HR Department.

1. In small groups, discuss the questions and note down what action to take in each case.
2. Meet as one group. Try to agree on what decisions to take concerning the questions. One of you should take the role of Veronica and chair the meeting.

**Survey****Workplace Romance 2023**

**Using the data from the survey below, draw diagrams and present the results in a mini-presentation with slides.**

Over a quarter (27 percent) of U. S. workers are in a workplace romance or have been in one before, and love is the driving force

**ALEXANDRIA, Va.** — A new survey from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) found that out of U. S. workers who are currently in a workplace romance or have been in one before, 57 percent said their primary motivation for beginning their romance was love, while only 1 percent said it was job-related. Considering the amount of time we spend with our colleagues, romances and other relationships are bound to form in the workplace. What is perhaps surprising is that many of these romantic endeavours begin with genuine or "pure" intentions.

Since over 2 in 5 U. S. workers know of someone who is currently in a workplace romance or who has been in one before, these love-driven motivations may be reassuring. In fact, three-fourths of U. S. workers (75 percent) are comfortable with people at their workplace being involved in a romantic relationship, and 83 percent respect or would respect those who are in one. However, the majority of workers are not open to being involved in a workplace romance themselves (75 percent), and many still believe workplace romances are unprofessional (40 percent).

Workplace romance looks a little different for everyone and can range from flirting to going on dates and developing committed relationships. For

example, 40 percent of U. S. workers say they have flirted with someone from their workplace, while nearly a quarter (24 percent) have gone on a date with someone from their workplace and 17 percent say they've been in an official relationship with someone from their workplace.

**Other key findings include the following:**

- Nearly 80 percent of U. S. workers who are in a workplace romance or have been in one before have dated their peers (79 percent), while 10 percent have dated their subordinates and 18 percent have dated their superiors.
- Nearly one-quarter (24 percent) of U. S. workers have had a “work spouse,” and of these workers, 20 percent have felt romantic feelings towards this individual.
- A quarter (25 percent) of U. S. workers say they are currently open to being involved in a workplace romance.
- Younger Millennial and Generation Z workers are significantly more likely to say they'd be open to being in a workplace romance (33 percent) than Older Millennial workers (15 percent), Generation X workers (27 percent), and Baby Boomer and Traditionalist workers (23 percent).
- Among the 27 percent of U. S. workers who are currently in a workplace romance or have been in one before, they developed their workplace romances through in-person dates/meetings (79 percent), phone calls (55 percent), direct messaging (46 percent) and work-related events such as happy hours and work parties (27 percent).

The survey also found that 71 percent of U. S. workers say their employer does not require employees to disclose if they are involved in a workplace romance. And when it comes to disclosing workplace romances, U. S. workers are far more likely to disclose to their colleagues, rather than their employer. In fact, among U. S. workers who are currently involved in a workplace romance or have been before, 40 percent have disclosed their relationship to their colleagues, while only 18 percent have disclosed their relationship to their employer.

It is important to note that while most U. S. workers who have been in a workplace romance say that work-related issues didn't contribute much or at all to their breakup (87 percent), 13 percent said that work-related issues contributed somewhat or a great deal. What's more, nearly 1 in 5 U. S. workers who have been in a workplace romance (18 percent) say it negatively impacted their career.



## Vocabulary focus

### **Like and as**

*Like* and *as* are sometimes considered to be interchangeable. Although this can be true, they mostly have different meanings and are used in different contexts.

### **Complete the sentences with either *as* or *like*.**

1. The Pelamis wave generator lies on the surface of the sea \_\_\_\_\_ a giant articulated snake.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ in previous years, the Ministry of the Environment will be organising coastal cleanups during the month of July.
3. Hydropower development, \_\_\_\_\_ with most forms of energy production, has a direct impact on the environment.
4. Using an extremely rare and valuable resource in a mass market product is \_\_\_\_\_ using gold for the wiring in your home.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ some experts predicted, the new legislation on protecting indigenous species will not be introduced this year.

### **Make up your own sentences using *like* and *as*.**

# Module 5

## Miscellaneous

### Reading

- What is your own attitude to Mondays? i.e., positive or negative or “just another work day, nothing special, etc.”
- Judging by your experience, have you noticed any differences in working and communicating with your personnel on Mondays? What are some examples of this?
- Would you introduce a four-day workweek? Why or why not?

### Why Monday is the most misunderstood day

#### What's wrong with the start of the workweek?

You know you're in the job when Monday mornings are the best part of your week

Anonymous



Many do recognise the difficulty of summoning the energy to get out of bed on Monday mornings in order to face the week ahead. Many bosses argue that starting off the week in person in the office creates good energy. Plenty of employees beg to differ. A paper published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, found that people tend to be more ill-mannered on Mondays, and grow more courteous as the week unfolds.

A paper in the *Medical Journal of Australia* goes so far as to diagnose a new condition, Mondayitis. The authors define it as “a systemic illness with a non-specific constellation of symptoms including fatigue, lethargy, dysthymia, irritability, light-headedness, photophobia, dry mouth and headache in the absence of another focal or systemic illness”. These symptoms typically appear on the first working day after a period off work, which could be a weekend or a longer holiday. They can lead sufferers to call in sick, decide to work from home, or, if they do show up in the office, come across as detached and unavailable. So much for good energy.

Mondayitis appears to be contagious, infecting other days of the week. Some Americans now complain of “Sunday scaries”, when pre-Monday dread sets in as the weekend draws to a close. Both conditions can be aggravated by a weekend hangover, a looming deadline, or painful memories (double science in secondary school first thing in the morning?). They are likely to be particularly acute among the nearly half of American workers who, according to a poll conducted by HR-software company, hate their jobs.

Still, the sudden shift from non-work to work affects everyone, not just those who despise what they do for a living. The COVID-19 pandemic has led many people to re-evaluate their work-life balance. A barrister in London who spends weekends working on cases likes to ease into the formal workweek with an elegant breakfast at The Delaunay and lunch in Inner Temple Hall. A broader movement is promoting the idea of a four-day workweek, one permutation of which would make Monday part of the weekend (though this may lead to an epidemic of Tuesdayitis instead). Less ambitiously, and more realistically, a social-media campaign for “bare-minimum Mondays” argues for a gentle start to the week.

All this reflects a deep human instinct towards self-indulgence and procrastination; there is a reason why “Thank God it’s Monday” does not feature on many bumper stickers or T-shirts. Still, on that first day of the week, employees do not have to be mired in apathy, weariness and desire that things were otherwise. As Robert Frost counselled in his poem, “A Servant to Servants”, “the best way out is always through.”

The preceding 60 hours or so were probably spent with people who have nothing to do with your job. You may have prepared—or merely enjoyed—a more elaborate meal than an *al desko* sandwich. You may have gone for a walk

in the park or simply lounged in bed. Either way, you almost certainly cleared your head.

For one banker, Monday is the day to cross items off their to-do list. Your columnist feels crisp and invigorated on Monday mornings (which is when the editorial meetings take place at *The Economist*, planning and discussing the coming week's issue). The first shower, coffee and commute after the weekend do not have to feel like a hike with a rucksack full of stones. They can instead be imbued with a renewed sense of purpose and, as such, act as a tonic.

Abridged from © The Economist<sup>1</sup>

**Scan through the article and contextualise the following vocabulary:**

summon the energy to do something  
be ill-mannered  
grow courteous  
diagnose a new condition  
fatigue  
call in sick  
detached and unavailable  
acute conditions  
reevaluate one's work-life balance  
self-indulgence  
clear one's head  
feel invigorated

## Talking point

**Discuss the following questions.**

1. The article says that people tend to be more ill-mannered on Mondays, and grow more courteous as the week unfolds. Do you agree?
2. What would you offer to people who experience health problems on Mondays?
3. Do you agree that a problem with Mondays is serious and it's necessary to diagnose it as a new condition, Mondayitis? What could be done to reduce the problem? Is it curable?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.economist.com/business/2023/12/07/why-monday-is-the-most-misunderstood-day>

4. If you could make changes in your office or company, would you change (adjust) Monday's schedule and make it less gruelling? How?
5. What are the ways to summon energy? What are the possible ways to create good energy?

## Reading

Great minds discuss ideas. Average minds discuss events.  
Small minds discuss people.

Eleanor Roosevelt

- What is gossip? Is there gossip everywhere?
- According to some research, people spend 52 minutes a day talking about people on average. One American survey stated that the average employee spends 65 hours per year gossiping at work. What do you think about these numbers?
- Does gossip have any benefits?
- Evolutionary psychologists reckon that gossip helps instil social norms. Do you agree with that?

## The Danger of Workplace Gossip

Only insecure people need to speak badly about others as  
an underhanded way of praising themselves

Gossip in the workplace can have serious consequences, but the problem deserves a serious look from the bottom up.

Office workers often use the words “rumour” and “gossip” interchangeably, but they shouldn't. People who spread rumours and people who gossip usually deal in different types of information. Rumours about people or business are

unconfirmed stories that flow through the grapevine. Research shows that most rumours – between 75 and 90 percent of them – tend to be true or contain a morsel of truth. Possibly, this is because people tend to pass along rumours they believe to be true. Gossip has a more negative connotation.

It seems so harmless. The little chitchat at the water cooler about so and so. The debate over someone's relationship with someone else. The speculation about so and so. Gossip is no longer limited to whispered conversations around the water cooler or staff room, but can spread quickly through much larger groups, via e-mail, SMS and social media. But what is gossip, isn't it just idle chit chat or light conversation? While idle chit-chat and other light conversation can be valued neutrally, gossip is often negative, inflammatory and embarrassing to the person being spoken of. If a story is told with negativity and without goodwill, then it is gossip.

Gossip can have many adverse side effects on an organisation, on teams and most of all on individual reputations, both the person who gossips and those who are victims to gossip. It's no surprise that speaking about someone without goodwill is going to increase conflict and decrease morale, resulting in strained relationships. Gossip breaks down the trust level resulting in employees second-guessing each other and ultimately running to supervisors to clarify directions or instructions, or to settle differences that will arise.

Gossip brings the death of teamwork as the group breaks up into cliques and employees start refusing to work with others. Gossip results in the supervisor spending an enormous amount of time trying to figure out who said what to whom. Productivity is lost, as are good employees who do not want to work in a toxic environment.

### **Tips to Get Out of the Gossip Pipeline**

1. Be busy. Gossip mongers want attention. If you're busy and preoccupied with your work, you can't be available to listen to their latest story.
2. Don't participate. Walk away from the story. Don't give visual clues that you are interested in listening. If someone passes a juicy story to you, don't pass it any further. Take personal responsibility to act with integrity.
3. Turn it around by saying something positive. It isn't nearly as much fun to spread negative news if it's spoiled by a complimentary phrase about the person being attacked.
4. Avoid the gossiper. If you notice one person who consistently makes trouble, take the necessary actions to have as little interaction with that person as possible.
5. Keep your private life private. Be aware that if colleagues are gossiping about others, they will gossip about you, too.

6. Choose your friends wisely at work. You spend a good deal of time at work so it's natural for friendships to develop. Share information sparingly until you are sure that you have built up a level of trust. Be aware that close association with gossipers will give the perception that you are too.
7. Be direct. If you confront the person who is spreading the gossip and confidently tell him or her that such behaviour is uncomfortable for you and other co-workers, it's likely to stop.

Abridged from © Blogger.com<sup>1</sup>

**Scan through the article and contextualise the following vocabulary:**

have serious consequences  
the problem deserves a serious look  
spread rumours  
have a more negative connotation  
seem so harmless  
speculation about  
inflammatory and embarrassing  
have adverse side effects on  
result in strained relationships  
group breaks up into cliques  
work in a toxic environment  
be preoccupied with one's work  
act with integrity  
consistently make trouble  
share information sparingly

## Talking point

**Discuss the following questions.**

1. Is gossiping a serious problem at work? What are the consequences of gossiping?
2. Why do people gossip more in the workplace?
3. Is it possible to impose a ban on gossiping?

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<sup>1</sup> <http://careerstonegroup.blogspot.com/2014/10/office-gossip-why-its-bad-and-how-to-stop.html>

4. What solutions would you propose to reduce the amount of gossip and its negative effects?
5. Is there any difference between gossip and rumours?
6. Who do you think gossip more, men or women?

## Vocabulary focus

**Complete the text below using the words in the box. Use the proper form if necessary.**

interpersonal openness	gain accountable	find out encourage	complaint access	confront benefit	let
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Gossip comes in different forms that serve different purposes. When it's used as an indirect way of surfacing or engaging in \_\_\_\_\_ conflicts, it can incite workplace drama. So, what should you do if you \_\_\_\_\_ a colleague has been gossiping about you? First, \_\_\_\_\_ the messenger of the gossip know you'll be discussing it with the gossiping colleague. You may lose \_\_\_\_\_ to some information. But if your example positively influences others, you may \_\_\_\_\_ a healthier workplace. Second, when you \_\_\_\_\_ the person gossiping, focus first on the content of their gossip, rather than their method. If there's merit to the person's concerns, you get the \_\_\_\_\_ of the feedback, and you also demonstrate both \_\_\_\_\_ to feedback and a willingness to hold others \_\_\_\_\_ in a way that might \_\_\_\_\_ them to make a better choice the next time they have concerns. Finally, ask them for a commitment that, in the future, you will hear the \_\_\_\_\_ before others do — and promise them the same yourself.

## Over to you

### Work in pairs

1. Think of a rumour of your own.  
(Do not create any rumours about people in your class!)  
Base it around
  - famous people
  - work issues
  - national or international news.



2. Make sure you can answer the following
  - How did you find out about the rumour?
  - Who is involved?
  - What do you think might happen?

## Reading

- How do you deal with angry people at work?
- How to deescalate an angry employee?

### **Why you should lose your temper at work (Sometimes. And without throwing anything)**

In the workplace, as elsewhere, anger is more ambiguous than it seems.

Its destructive side is obvious. Furious people are not much fun to work with, and less fun to work for. A short-fused boss is likely to instil fear among employees and discourage people from speaking up. Anger can also engender poor performance. Anyone who has ever been riled by a rude email or uncivil colleagues knows how in such circumstances suddenly nothing else matters.

In one paper on the effects of rudeness on medical professionals the authors describe a training exercise in which teams of Israeli physicians and nurses treated a mannequin of a baby. The teams were joined by someone billed as a visiting expert from America, who offered studiously neutral comments to some groups and made unprompted and disparaging remarks about the quality of medical care in Israel to others. The teams that had suffered rudeness performed significantly worse.

Being angry all the time is bad news for individuals and organisations alike. But so is being tremendously satisfied by everything all the time. Jeffrey Pfeffer, a professor at Stanford University who teaches a course on how to acquire power, reckons that displaying anger is an important skill for those who want to rise up the corporate ladder. It is associated with decisiveness and competence (though angry women are more likely to evoke negative emotions among other people than angry men do).

Anger can have a galvanising effect in specific circumstances. A study in the University of California analysed half-time team talks by basketball coaches in America, and found that expressions of negative emotions such as anger and

disappointment were associated with better second-half outcomes — up to a point. When coaches reached the bulging-eyeballs stage, rage started to have the opposite effect.

There are similar nuances in negotiations. Some research suggests that as people got more upset, they were more likely to extract concessions. But being too angry was seen as inappropriate. And although displays of anger can work in one-off negotiations, they also invite retaliation in subsequent interactions.

Anger has different effects on different types of people. Agreeableness is one of the “Big Five” personality traits recognised by most psychologists. Agreeable sorts value co-operation and courtesy; disagreeable ones are more cynical and more comfortable with conflict. In an experiment in the University of Amsterdam, teams comprised of agreeable and disagreeable people were given feedback on their performance by an actor. The words were the same each time, but in some instances the actor looked and sounded happy, and in others he looked and sounded angry. An angry evaluation spurred the more disagreeable teams to do better than a happy (or poker-faced) one; the reverse was applied to the more agreeable teams.

By now the problem should be obvious. Anger involves a loss of control. But to be effective in the workplace, it needs to be carefully modulated. That means volcanic people need to find ways to rein themselves in before they spew invective everywhere. It also means that equable people need to learn to let fly occasionally.

**Abridged from © The Economist<sup>1</sup>**

**Scan through the article and contextualise the following vocabulary:**

a destructive side  
furious people  
a short-fused boss  
instil fear among employees  
discourage people from speaking up  
uncivil colleagues  
make unprompted and disparaging remarks about  
suffer rudeness  
associated with decisiveness and competence  
have a galvanising effect  
in specific circumstances

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.economist.com/business/2024/02/29/why-you-should-lose-your-temper-at-work>

reached the bulging-eyeballs stage  
have the opposite effect  
volcanic people  
rein themselves in

## Talking point

**Discuss the following questions.**

1. What is anger-awareness?
2. Have you ever had a short-fused boss?
3. How can anger in the workplace be ambiguous?
4. Do you agree that anger can have a galvanising effect in specific circumstances?

## Vocabulary focus

**Complete the text below using the words in the box.**

*sustained strength signal minor unfair suppressed spark  
experience deplete harnessed competitive justified adverse*

Most of us are raised to equate anger with out-of-control meltdowns. But this emotion is an important \_\_\_\_\_ that something is wrong. And, \_\_\_\_\_ effectively, it can give us the \_\_\_\_\_ we need to make things right.

We're all a little angrier these days. The \_\_\_\_\_ level of stress and fear you \_\_\_\_\_ every day when you're under pressure \_\_\_\_\_ your emotional resources, making you much more likely to get mad, even at \_\_\_\_\_ provocations. While we're often told that anger is harmful, irrational, and should be \_\_\_\_\_, there are ways to channel it productively. Research shows that getting mad can \_\_\_\_\_ creativity, motivate you to advocate for yourself, and help you perform better in \_\_\_\_\_ circumstances.

We often try to immediately stamp out our feelings to avoid appearing upset. But if you're hurt because of an \_\_\_\_\_ decision or made to feel unworthy because someone continuously excludes you (or worse), you're

allowed to feel unapologetically angry. Don't immediately take your emotions out on another person, but acknowledge what you're feeling. In fact, research shows that, when it's \_\_\_\_\_, anger is a much healthier response than fear because it has feelings of certainty and control, which are less likely to lead to the \_\_\_\_\_ effects of stress like high blood pressure or high stress hormone secretion.

## Vocabulary focus

Expressions with **and**

There are many expressions where two words are combined with *and*.

However, such expressions are used in different ways depending on whether they are adjectives, adverbs, nouns or verbs.

Look at this example:

up-and-coming (adj)

1. Look at the selection of other similar expressions. Choose the words from the list to complete them.

above   don'ts   downs   error   far   ins   give   loss   pick   pieces

5. \_\_\_\_\_ and take
6. dos and \_\_\_\_\_
7. bits and \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_ and away
9. ups and \_\_\_\_\_
10. over and \_\_\_\_\_
11. profit and \_\_\_\_\_
12. trial and \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_ and choose
14. \_\_\_\_\_ and outs

2. Complete the sentences with an appropriate expression.

1. When you start a business you don't always have a precise business model, which means that very often you have to learn by \_\_\_\_\_
2. The Rockliffe Foundation reviewed more than 100 applications for its entrepreneurial award, but the best \_\_\_\_\_ project was Bill Sutton's Micromechanical Robot.

3. Small businesses can learn from experienced entrepreneurs who know the \_\_\_\_\_ of obtaining finance.
  4. In the start-up phase of an enterprise, unexpectedly high costs can arise. For example, inventory must be calculated \_\_\_\_\_ the payments to suppliers.
  5. Any new venture is bound to go through difficult moments, so being able to handle the \_\_\_\_\_ of starting your own business is critical.
  6. The Start-Up Emporium is a network of entrepreneurs that allows its members to \_\_\_\_\_ suitable partners, advisors or investors.
3. What other expressions with *and* do you know?

## Reading

- How would you define ‘a jerk’?
- How would you define ‘a talented jerk’?



## A zero-tolerance approach to talented jerks in the workplace is risky

One personality type occupies more attention in the workplace than any other — talented jerks. These are the people who smash both targets and team cohesion, who get stuff done and get away with behaving badly as a result.

So common and corrosive are these characters that plenty of companies spell out a zero-tolerance approach to them. “No jerks allowed,” “On our dream team, there are no brilliant jerks,” “We operate a “no assholes” policy.”

It is totally reasonable for firms to signal an aversion to genuine jerks. It sends an explicit message to prospective and existing employees, and reflects a

real danger to company cultures. Toxic behaviour is contagious: incivility and unpleasantness can quickly become norms if they pass unchecked. That is bad for retention and for reputation. It's also just bad in itself.

Moreover, the extreme version of the management dilemma posed by the talented jerk rarely exists in practice. The risk that you may be getting rid of the next Steve Jobs is infinitesimal. Just contemplate all the jerks you work with. If you really think they are going to revolutionise consumer technology or create the world's most valuable company, you should probably just go ahead and make them the CEO. But the red-faced guy in sales who shouts at people when he loses an account is not that person.

That said, the enthusiasm for banning jerks ought to make people a little uneasy, for at least three reasons. The first is that the no-jerk rule involves a lot of subjectivity. Some types of behaviour are obviously and immediately beyond the pale. But the boundaries between seeking high standards and being unreasonable, or between being candid and being crushing, are not always clear-cut. Zero tolerance is dangerous. You may mean to create a supportive culture but end up in a corporate Salem, without the bonnets but with accusations of jerkcraft.

The second is that jerks come in different flavours. Total jerks should just be got rid of. But they are rare, whereas bit-of-a-jerks are everywhere and can be redeemed. The oblivious jerk is one potentially fixable category. Some people do not realise they are upsetting others and may just need to be told as much.

Other people are situational jerks: they behave badly in some circumstances and not in others. If those circumstances are very broad (whenever the person in question is awake, say), then that tells you the problem cannot be fixed. But if jerkiness occurs only at specific moments, like interacting with another jerk, then it may be that a solution exists. If the thing that a talented jerk does really well can be done in comparative isolation or without giving them power over other people, consider it. As the well-known philosophical teaser goes: if a jerk throws a tantrum in their home office and no one is around to see it, are they really a jerk?

A third issue is one of consistency. This is not just about what happens when the person declaring war on jerks is also a jerk. It is also about the many other problem types who crowd the corridors of workplaces. Where are the policies that ban constructive wreckers, the people offering up so many ostensibly helpful criticisms that nothing ever actually gets done? Why not zap the brilliant fools who have blinding insights of absolutely no practical value?

Above all, what about the pool of nice underperformers who putter along amiably and harmlessly, helping the culture much more than they do the bottom line? Talented jerks stand out, like shards of glass among bare feet: impossible

to ignore, problems that have to be solved. Mediocrities are the bigger problem in many firms but are like carbon monoxide, silently poisoning an organisation.

Abridged from © The Economist<sup>1</sup>

## Talking point

**Discuss the following questions with a partner.**

1. Can talented jerks be tolerated?
2. Why is zero tolerance dangerous?
3. What can talented jerks bring to the table?
4. Can talented jerks disrupt the working process? How?
5. Do you know any talented jerks in executive positions?
6. What does the author mean by 'different flavours jerks'?

## Reading

- Would you rather be recognised and praised as 'the creator of successful project X' or 'the person who spent two difficult years working on successful project X'?
- How important do you think sincerity plays when a compliment is paid?
- How would you feel if you received an insincere compliment?
- How do you understand the cartoon below?



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.economist.com/business/2023/03/30/a-zero-tolerance-approach-to-talented-jerks-in-the-workplace-is-risky>

## How to pay and receive compliments at work

Giving and receiving compliments plays a critical role in building and maintaining relationships at work. When done well, a compliment is one of the most powerful ways to let someone know that we value and appreciate them. Yet, these seemingly positive interactions can be surprisingly tricky to navigate for both the giver and receiver alike.

Although compliments should be a positive experience, the process of giving and receiving compliments often brings up a lot of anxiety for everyone involved. Givers express worries about being seen as a kiss-up, having their compliments misinterpreted, or triggering jealousy in others. On the receiving end, people feel they don't deserve it, question the giver's intentions, or worry that they won't be able to produce the same result in the future.

### How to accept a compliment

Your boss or co-worker catches you off guard with a compliment, and what should be a moment of pride instead sends your mind spinning as you awkwardly navigate how to respond.

Although our reactions to compliments may be complicated, how we respond is not. Most people don't realise compliments are often more about the giver than the receiver. When someone is complimenting you, they are actually sharing how what you did impacted them. It does not matter if you agree or disagree with what they are saying, just relate to it as a gift and accept it. The best way to respond to the kind words from a boss or co-worker is to simply say: "Thank you," and if the compliment made a difference, let the person know. Here are a few ways to respond to a compliment:

- "Thank you, it makes my day to hear that."
- "I really put a lot of thought into this, thank you for noticing."
- "Thank you, I really appreciate you taking the time to express that."
- "Thank you, I am happy to hear you feel that way!"

If the person compliments you for another person's work, redirect the compliment to the correct person:

- "It is great to hear you feel that way! Actually, Amanda is the one behind this project. If you have a minute, it would make her day to hear how you feel."

If someone compliments you for something that was a team effort, share the appreciation. If you are a team leader, note the person may be recognising you for your role in leading your people, so be sure to first take the compliment, and then acknowledge the efforts of your team.

- "Thank you for noticing, it is really great to hear that. Everyone on our team has been working really hard on this over the last few weeks. I will share your feedback in our next meeting."



**How to pay a compliment**

Knowing how to compliment and recognise others is a fundamental leadership skill. However, few of us know how to do it effectively. What makes a powerful compliment? Here are a few tips:

**Be Authentic.** The most important part of any compliment is that your intention is authentic. Don't compliment the person to butter them up before making a request, soften the blow before giving difficult feedback, or to try and cheer them up after a mistake. If your intention is not genuine, neither is your compliment. Don't compliment someone because you feel you should; compliment them because you feel compelled to let them know how they impact you or others.

**Be Specific.** As with giving feedback or instructions, when you compliment someone, you want to share it in a way that does not leave the person with any questions. When we share, it is important to give details and examples to help the person comprehend the context of our remarks. When we are clear with our compliments, the person understands exactly what we are expressing and why.

**Focus on the Process, Not Just the Result.**

People rarely want to be recognised for the result, but instead, the process and effort that went into producing the result. Compliments that only focus on the result often trigger a concern for the receiver of not being able to produce the same result in the future. When recognising someone, show them that you appreciate the time, sacrifice, creativity, or care that went into their work.

Abridged from © Harvard Business Review<sup>1</sup>

**Talking point****Discuss the following questions.**

1. According to the author's research, people rarely want to be recognised for the result, but instead, the process and effort that went into producing the result. Do you agree with this conclusion? How would you explain that?
  1. Can too many compliments be given? If so, when is it too many?
  2. Have you ever received a random compliment from a stranger? What is your opinion on random compliments?

<sup>1</sup> <https://hbr.org/2019/10/how-to-give-and-receive-compliments-at-work>

3. Would you rather receive a compliment from your boss in front of your peers, or would you quietly receive an extra week of bonus pay for that month? Are most people like you?
4. Do you think it is a good idea to compliment your boss? Discuss the risks mentioned in the article.
5. Does the desire to flatter someone like a boss cause people to issue unwarranted compliments?

## Reading

### The halo effect

You are going to read an article about the Halo Effect. Match the following titles to paragraphs A - D.

There are more titles than paragraphs.

1. What causes the Halo Effect?
2. What effects can the Halo Effect have on companies?
3. How to avoid the Halo Effect?
4. Which countries have more problems with the Halo Effect?
5. What is the Halo Effect?
6. What problems can the Halo Effect cause?

### In the workplace

A \_\_\_\_\_

There are a variety of decisions we all have to make in our working lives. When it comes to people, we all have instinctive preferences that help us navigate these decisions as to who we want to work with, who we trust, and who we don't. This allows us to make choices more quickly, a vital tool in any work environment. However, when relying on our natural inclinations too heavily, we can be prone to manipulation from factors we're unaware of. The Halo Effect is what happens when we give our first impressions about someone too much importance in the way we evaluate them later on.

B \_\_\_\_\_

The degree to which we find someone attractive can obviously affect our first impressions, but in the office, there are other factors at play. For example, if you meet someone who has the same tastes in music, or they make you laugh.

Maybe they are wearing a jacket that you really like, or they've been endorsed by someone who you know and respect. Perhaps they perform a fairly simple task particularly well early on in their job? All these things can lead to us giving that person credit for being a better performer than they actually are based on evidence.

### C \_\_\_\_\_

When the Halo Effect colours the view of decision-making at management level, or in Human Resources, it will invariably lead to unequal treatment of employees, particularly when it comes to performance reviews. This could easily, and perhaps understandably, lead to resentment from those who don't feel its benefits. Worse still, the flip side of the Halo Effect: the Horn Effect, could affect employees who, for whatever reason, are viewed in a less favourable way, even if it's nothing to do with their performance and feel as if they are constantly swimming against the tide. It can also lead to a lack of diversity in the workforce if particular traits are indirectly highlighted as being desirable. You don't have to look far for tales of people getting promoted, partly because they went to the same university as the hiring manager or played golf at the same club.

### D \_\_\_\_\_

There are steps you can take to make the performance reviews process fair. Firstly, make sure that it is standardised and everyone receives the same questions with scores that are balanced evenly. The scores need to be based on measurable aspects of the job, not opinions. A further method is a 360 review where feedback on performance is taken from different departments, colleagues and possibly customers that the employee interacts with. This will greatly cut down on the possibility of the manager's view alone being the deciding factor. There's also performance management software, which can track feedback over a period of time. This could be useful in a situation where a worker has more than one manager to report to, either at the same time or over a period of time, and the feedback varies considerably between them. This will help HR to identify if there's a difference in performance or biases involved.

**Abridged from © HR Daily Advisor, PerformYard,  
Psychology Today<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://hrdailyadvisor.blr.com/2018/10/02/how-the-halo-effect-impacts-your-workplace/>  
<https://www.performyard.com/articles/halo-effect-in-performance-appraisals>  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/basics/halo-effect>

## Talking point

### Discuss the following questions.

1. Do you think that The Halo Effect may have been a problem in any places where you have worked? Why/why not?
2. What other situations do you think the Halo Effect may be a problem in other than in the workplace?
3. Who have you met in the past who may have had the Halo Effect on you? Why did that happen?
4. Can you think of anyone you've worked with who created the Horn Effect with their manager? Why was that?

## Video

### The magic halo effect<sup>1</sup>

- Make a brief using a mind map.
- What are the recommendations given in the videos?
- Which recommendations can be most helpful?

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<sup>1</sup> [https://youtu.be/kpjeMaOirvg?si=Ar\\_BZi2stUo4udFV](https://youtu.be/kpjeMaOirvg?si=Ar_BZi2stUo4udFV)

# Text Credits

## **Questionnaire What corporate culture suits you?**

Business Advantage Upper-intermediate Student's book Michael Handford  
Cambridge University Press, 2011, p.46

## **How to find out if a company's culture is right for you**

<https://hbr.org/2020/11/how-to-find-out-if-a-companys-culture-is-right-for-you>

## **Building a more human-centric organisational culture**

<https://youtu.be/fXHnU3eI6sY?si=CdbUoRZdDn6Ebo6z>

## **How to create a positive workplace culture**

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/ginnyhogan/2024/02/05/how-to-build-a-positive-workplace-culture/>

## **Reading corporate culture from the outside**

<https://www.economist.com/business/2022/07/07/reading-corporate-culture-from-the-outside>

## **When your colleagues are also your rivals**

<https://www.economist.com/business/2024/01/11/when-your-colleagues-are-also-your-rivals>

## **Do you have an archnemesis?**

<https://youtube.com/shorts/a2ej-0rCWkI?si=Gt0TJBYPbUZd2QcX>

## **Working with people who are smarter than you**

<https://www.inc.com/jessica-stillman/7-tips-for-working-with-people-who-are-smarter-than-you.html>

## **Difficult people: What to do when all else fails**

<https://youtu.be/YEEKCLUfnbI?si=mgLB1XQYtxmnqEuB>

## **Four toughest personalities at work - and how to manage them**

<https://www.inc.com/minda-zetlin/how-to-lead-the-5-toughest-employees.html>

**How to Work with a Passive-Aggressive Co-worker**

<https://youtu.be/YEEKCLUfnbI?si=mgLB1XQYtxmnqEuB>

**How to Disagree with Someone More Powerful:**

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=FbtHJm8vFpE&si=8ocj3vYcG4njF7S9>

**Nine signs you're a bad manager — even if it doesn't feel like it**

<https://www.businessinsider.com/signs-you-are-a-bad-manager-2017-3>

**Ego is the enemy of good leadership**

[https://hbr.org/2018/11/ego-is-the-enemy-of-good-leadership?ab=at\\_art\\_art\\_1x4\\_s04](https://hbr.org/2018/11/ego-is-the-enemy-of-good-leadership?ab=at_art_art_1x4_s04)

**How to criticise your staff without looking like a bad boss**

<https://smallbusiness.chron.com/criticize-staff-looking-like-bad-boss-72295.html>

**The dark and bright sides of power**

<https://www.economist.com/business/2023/07/27/the-dark-and-bright-sides-of-power>

**Workplace romantic relationships and friendships**

<https://smallbusiness.chron.com/romantic-relationships-workplace-11804.html>

**Tips for working with your romantic partner**

<https://hbr.org/2023/03/tips-for-working-with-your-romantic-partner>

**Why it is a bad idea for managers to attempt to engineer office friendships**

<https://www.economist.com/business/2023/09/21/why-it-is-a-bad-idea-for-managers-to-attempt-to-engineer-office-friendships>

**Why Monday is the most misunderstood day**

<https://www.economist.com/business/2023/12/07/why-monday-is-the-most-misunderstood-day>

**The Danger of Workplace Gossip**

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**Why you should lose your temper at work**

<https://www.economist.com/business/2024/02/29/why-you-should-lose-your-temper-at-work>

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**The halo effect**

<https://hrdailyadvisor.blr.com/2018/10/02/how-the-halo-effect-impacts-your-workplace/>

<https://www.performyard.com/articles/halo-effect-in-performance-appraisals>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/basics/halo-effect>

**The magic halo effect**

[https://youtu.be/kpjeMaOirvg?si=Ar\\_BZi2stUo4udFV](https://youtu.be/kpjeMaOirvg?si=Ar_BZi2stUo4udFV)

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