



Tool 32-1. Political Savvy Skills for Effective Leadership in the Federal Government

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Based on Chapter 32, “Leading in the Public Sector” in *The ASTD Leadership Handbook*, edited by Elaine Biech, © 2010 ASTD

Purpose: This list will help you define four key behaviors that ensure mid- to upper-level leaders are effective in the federal government, or in any organization where political savvy is required. Use it to take a big-picture look at yourself or other leaders.

1. I recognize and use the power I already have.
 - I acknowledge the correct level of power I possess.
 - I conduct adequate research before taking action.
 - I limit the amount of deliberation time before making decisions.
 - I appropriately balance having enough information and making timely decisions.
2. I manage meetings effectively by “getting people out of the room.”
 - I have a clear purpose for every meeting I call.
 - I do more listening and resist talking in the meetings I attend.
 - I look for the commonalities within disagreements.
 - I meet individually with other leaders to acquire early buy-in.
3. I implement the “elevator diplomacy” concept.
 - I recognize the potential power in recognizing the issues and option that others view as a win-win.
 - I know that power comes from the ability to get people to voluntarily agree to comply.
 - I accept my leadership role in brokering a solution between other leaders.
 - I realize that as a leader I need to negotiate a solution that is in the best interests of my organization.
4. I make decisions easy for my senior leaders.
 - I deliberately think of all the issues surrounding the recommendation that will be important to my senior leader.
 - I accept that I will be more successful if I present a plan that allows other leaders to participate in the final decision.
 - I recognize that decisions are more likely to be carried out if the leaders have ownership.
 - I understand that if there are complications or possible disagreements, I need to prepare my senior leaders for them.

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