

How to Get a Job and Keep a Job: The Fundamentals of Organizational Politics

Keith Calhoun-Senghor

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An amiable career guide written with a mentor's tone, How to Get a Job and Keep a Job aims to nudge young professionals in the right direction.

Attorney Keith Calhoun-Senghor's blunt career guide *How to Get a Job and Keep a Job* addresses how to navigate organizational politics in order to be liked and to get ahead.

This job survival manual includes both advice for currying favor at work and warnings about potential pitfalls. Most businesses, it warns, are not meritocracies; often, employees advance because of politicking, and an individual's economic value may not be the main factor when cuts are implemented.

The book's recommendations vary in type and breadth: some are hyperspecific, while others are more big picture; some reflect personal stylistic preferences (as with a consideration of slow talking versus fast talking). There are encouragements to "be generous with your praise," "identify your boss and concentrate on satisfying your boss," and "never send anything when you are angry or upset"—tips that are often quite familiar. Further, it eschews being prescriptive in favor of analyzing possibilities—even examining alternative strategies like making it all look hard versus making it all look easy. It espouses the belief that different approaches work under different circumstances, or can better suit one's personal style. But all of the book's recommendations, no matter their reach, are grounded in personal experience.

Though touted as being for students, interns, and young professionals and billed as containing "the things they don't teach you in school," the book's coverage extends beyond business world basics. It discusses topics like the importance of setting parameters for oneself, dreaming big, and being open to new information. Its prose is straightforward and clear, though sometimes embellished with humor: on killing people with kindness, the book intones that this "does not mean you hire a hit man to take them out with compassion." Its whimsy sometimes undermines its credibility, though, as with an exaggerated story about "the hardest exam of my life by Professor Studentkiller."

The book includes lighthearted illustrations in the style of magazine cartoons that result in some variety. However, its regular use of italics, bold print, and all caps for emphasis is gratuitous and distracting. And the book's ending is anemic: its concise epilogue is made up of one final thought—in essence, a pep-talk platitude.

Witty and practical, the career guide *How to Get a Job and Keep a Job* has tips for winning over colleagues and bosses at work.

JOSEPH S. PETE (April 2, 2024)

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