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Savvy: Dealing with People, Power, and Politics at Work

Jane Clarke
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As director at the business consultancy firm of Nicholson McBride, Jane Clarke has participated in and witnessed good and bad politics in corporations. With clients including the London Business School, Freshfields, and Morgan Stanley, and as a contributor to the BBC Business Breakfast Club and *The Independent*, Clarke's is a voice worth heeding in business.

In an age beset by the intense politics of corporate and economic restructuring, she observes: "Research findings have always been clear cut: the most successful people tend to be politically adept. They understand that all organizations are political systems. Perhaps more importantly, they know how to work them. If you want to get funding, influence others, win people over in conflict situations, get recognition for what you've done, and ultimately get on, you need to be politically savvy. And this has never been the case more than it is now."

To that end, Clake has produced an easy-to-read manual of helpful ways to understand and maneuver in office politics, which she defines as "the informal, rather than formal, way of getting things done." Recognizing that politics can be used to positive or negative ends, she notes that "People who demonstrate political savvy are those who … use it for the pursuance of common goals. This is constructive when the individual is seeking success for the organization or team, but it can be destructive when motivation is selfish or unethical, or if unacceptable methods are employed to achieve the individual's ambitions."

In twelve chapters that include "Mastering the Art of Persuasion," "Understanding and Handling Conflict," "Dealing With Relationship Breakdown," "Managing Your Boss," "Dealing With A Bully," "Making Networks Work for You," and "Making the Right Impression," Clarke offers reflective exercises to help analyze and improve methods of dealing with politics in the workplace. Four common character types – Machiavellians, Barbarians, Naives, and Stars—are analyzed, with tips and case studies for managing relationships with each. Not to be missed is the appendix and online survey for identifying and improving one's own political style.

A book as helpful for new employees as for experienced managers and entrepreneurs, *Savvy* is a clear and helpful guide for those who seek to work with others toward the common good.
PAMELA HARRIS KAISER (June 18, 2012)

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