Overview

- Defining power and counterpower
- Contingencies of power
- CASE - Foreign exchange confrontation (p. 423)
- Consequences of power
- VIDEO - The Whitehall Studies
- Empowerment
- Harassment
- Models of organisations
- Organisational politics
- Persuasion
Chapter learning objectives

1. Define power and counterpower.
2. Describe the five bases of power in organisations.
3. Explain how information relates to power in organisations.
4. Discuss the four contingencies of power.
5. Discuss the role of power in sexual harassment.
6. Explain how organisational power creates problems in romantic relationships at work.
7. Summarise the advantages and disadvantages of organisational politics.
8. Describe six types of political activity found in organisations.
9. Describe the conditions that encourage organisational politics.
10. Identify ways to control dysfunctional organisational politics.
11. Summarise the key features of persuasive communication.
Politics of telecommuting

Gary Withers, managing director of Drake International New Zealand, leads the Auckland-based consulting firm from his home in Queenstown. Withers says telecommuting keeps him away from office politics, but experts warn that telecommuters may become victims of office politics.
Defining power

Power is the capacity of a person, team or organisation to influence others

- the potential to influence others
- people have power they don’t use and may not know they possess
- power requires one person’s perception of dependence on another person
Power and dependence

Person B’s counterpower over Person A

Person A

Person B

Person A’s power over Person B

Person B’s goals
Model of power in organisations

Sources of power

- Legitimate
- Reward
- Coercive
- Expert
- Referent
- Moral responsibility
- Relational

Power over others

Contingencies of power
The limits of legitimate power

*The Caine Mutiny* illustrates the limits of legitimate power in organisations. Captain Queeg (Humphrey Bogart, seated left) asked his crew to do more than they were willing to follow, so they staged a mutiny.
Sources of power

- Legitimate power
- Reward power
- Coercive power
- Expert power
- Referent power
Information and power

- Control over information flow
  - based on legitimate power
  - relates to formal communication network
  - common in centralised structures (wheel pattern)

- Coping with uncertainty
  - those who know how to cope with organisational uncertainties gain power
    - prevention
    - forecasting
    - absorption
Contingencies of power among pilots

These pilots at Germany's Lufthansa Airlines won 30 per cent pay rises after staging two 24-hour strikes that grounded hundreds of flights and cost the airline more than US$23 million. Pilots are powerful because they have low substitutability (only other pilots can replace them) and high centrality.
Increasing non-substitutability

Differentiation

Controlling tasks

Controlling labour

Controlling knowledge
Contingencies of power

Sources of power

Power over others

Contingencies of power

Substitutability
Centrality
Discretion
Visibility
Consequences of power

Sources of power
- Expert power
- Referent power
- Legitimate power
- Reward power
- Coercive power

Consequences of power
- Commitment
- Compliance
- Resistance
VIDEO - The Whitehall Studies

- What did power give Sir Richard that Richard Campbell did not have?

- What do the findings of this study suggest about the relationship between hierarchy, rank, stress, communication and power.

- How could we express this relationship diagrammatically?
Consequences of power revised

Sources of power

- Expert power
- Referent power
- Legitimate power
- Reward power
- Coercive power

Consequences of power

- Commitment
- Compliance
- Empowerment
- Stress
- Resistance
Empowerment

“Empowerment is power sharing, the delegation of power or authority to subordinates in the organization.” (Daft, 1995).

DISCUSSION

Identify tactics that empower employees at the lower levels of the organisation.

How would these differ from tactics that might work with middle managers?
Disempowering tactics

- Establish lots of rules, precedents, routines.
- Reduce task variety and flexibility.
- Do not reward unusual or innovative performance.
- Require approvals for non-routine tasks.
- Assign tasks peripheral to the core business.
- Locate away from influential people and action.
- Reduce flow of organisational information.
- Reduce contact with senior staff.
- Reduce participation in programmes, meetings etc.
- Reduce participation in decision making and problem solving activities.
Sexual harassment and power

- Harasser stereotypes the victim as subservient and powerless
- Harasser threatens job security or safety through coercive or legitimate power
- Hostile work environment harassment continues when the victim lacks power to stop the behaviour
Office romance and power

- Co-workers believe that employees in relationships abuse their power to favour each other

- Higher risk of sexual harassment claims after relationship breaks off
Organisational politics

- Attempts to influence others using discretionary behaviours to promote personal objectives
  - discretionary behaviours – neither explicitly prescribed nor prohibited

- Politics may be good or bad for the organisation
Types of organisational politics

- Managing impressions
- Attacking and blaming
- Creating obligations
- Controlling information
- Cultivating networks
- Forming coalitions
Conditions for organisational politics

- Personal characteristics
- Scarce resources
- Tolerance of politics
- Complex and ambiguous decisions

Conditions supporting organisational politics
Controlling political behaviour

- Provide sufficient resources
- Introduce clear rules
- Free flowing information
- Manage change effectively
- Remove political norms
- Hire low-politics employees
- Increase opportunities for dialogue
- Peer pressure against politics
Persuasive communication

Communicator characteristics
- Expert
- Credibility
- Attractive

Communication medium

Message content
- Present all sides
- Few arguments
- Emotional appeals
- Inoculation effect

Audience characteristics
- Self-esteem
- Inoculated
Summary

♦ Power is an important OB theme as the power to influence others and the way this is done contribute to culture of an organisation and ultimately its success.