

THE ULTIMATE COWORKER SURVIVAL GUIDE



WorkReign

20 TIPS TO MANAGE YOUR COWORKERS WITH INTELLIGENCE AND INSTINCT!

- 1. ACCEPT** that the workplace is a public battlefield comprised of fairly random people, most of whom you have nothing in common with and on any other occasion would not socialize with. The workplace is rife with insecure, jealous and unscrupulous people who do not live by the same moral code that you do. Understand that a large part of your job satisfaction depends on how quickly you accept that the workplace is not the place to be idealistic about people. Observe and judge your coworkers as quickly as possible and follow your gut feeling.
- 2. BELIEVE WHAT YOU SEE.** People show who they are consistently but the powers of observation and analysis are difficult. Coworkers are not mysteries. Develop the habit of observing the actions of others and believing what those actions mean and how they make you feel.
- 3. KEEP YOUR WORKPLACE ENEMIES NOT-SO-CLOSE.** Keep communication cordial, but short, strictly professional and never personal or social with those whom you have identified as workplace foes. An easy way to demonstrate cordiality to everyone is to pleasantly greet everyone you encounter with “good morning” as you keep walking.
- 4. IDENTIFY THE OFFICE GOSSIP AND THEN AVOID THEM LIKE THE PLAGUE.** If you find yourself listening to them and not gossiping yourself, you nevertheless run the risk of being observed with that person and associated with their bad behavior. Also, you run the risk of having the office gossip “notice” you – giving them license to unleash their venom in your direction.
- 5. WHEN GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY, FIND SOMETHING POSITIVE TO SAY** about your foes if asked. It may be a bitter pill but it will let those in power know that you can and will take the high road, that you are professional and strong. It will disarm your enemy and possibly make them think twice before stabbing you in the back.
- 6. THE MARINES CORPS CREED IS SEMPER FIDELIS,** meaning always faithful. Marines look after their own and are faithful to each other in the most difficult times. Marines are always able to count on each other. You will find one or two people in the workplace that will have your back as faithfully and steadfastly as in the Corps. Brothers and Sisters are hard to find in the workplace, but they do exist, and your job is to identify them as quickly as possible so that someone can have your back and you can have theirs.
- 7. COWORKERS WHO ACT IN “EXTREMES”** cannot be trusted and are to be avoided. Too friendly? Too nasty? Too nosy? Too helpful? Too needy? Too high-strung? Too social? Too quiet/withdrawn? Run, don’t walk away!
- 8. STAY IN YOUR SEAT AT WORK** – don’t buzz about visiting others. Make note of the coworkers that come to you. In The Godfather, Don Corleone told his son Michael that the person who would betray him would be “the one who comes to you.” The coworker who constantly comes to you wants something from you – and it’s not good. They might try to lure you in with offers or kind gestures. This person will betray you.



9. **KNOW YOUR TYPE.** It is true sometimes that romantically, opposites attract, however professionally, this is rarely the case. Understand who you are, what your experience is and gravitate, at least initially, toward others who share similar experiences and are least likely to resent your accomplishments and goals. Note, that it is always absolutely imperative to respect everyone, everyone, everyone, at all times. Respect is not synonymous with liking another coworker or having to engage with them.
10. **IDENTIFY THE “TEACHER’S PET.”** Pay attention to who is on the boss’s good side and do your best to be on that person’s good side as well (no matter how you feel about brown-nosers).
11. **KEEP YOUR EYES AND EARS OPEN DURING STAFF MEETINGS.** Take note of the know it all, the gossip, those who speak in turn and respect others. Pay special attention to how the office veterans treat the newbies. Respect the veterans who have survived for a reason, they’ve made friends, avoided workplace landmines and successfully negotiated office politics. Learn from them and earn their respect.
12. **IDENTIFY THE OFFICE LEADERS AND ACHIEVERS** and engender yourself to them. Tread carefully because people are competitive and may think you are cozying up to them to take their jobs. Humble yourself. Make it clear that you would like to learn from them because you can see that they are successful. From time to time (don’t be a pest), ask them for small assignments on the side “if it is convenient for them”, for example tasks that they may not have time for, and then ask for their feedback. Thank them and then repeat on occasion to maintain the relationship.
You’ll be learning, earning respect, building relationships and possible references for the future but most importantly, developing allies.
People want the people who help them to stick around!
13. **TRUST YOUR INITIAL IDENTIFICATION** of workplace friends and foes but keep on guard with friends. Friendships take years to build and you’ve likely known your coworkers for a short while. Be careful with sharing your personal information. NEVER divulge professional opportunities or advantages that come your way. Fly under the radar. Jealousy can rear its head at any time, even from those who you thought were allies.
14. **ACTIVELY OBSERVE THOSE WHO HAVE PROBLEMS,** personally or professionally and /or who complain and avoid them. These are the best indicators of unhappiness and dissatisfaction. Misery loves company so an association with such people is likely to end up poorly for you!
15. **REMEMBER** that, as in life, you only need one or two allies to make your professional life easier and healthier.
16. **ESTABLISH A TIME LIMIT** to guide the encounters you have with those identified as foes, or those who are otherwise not friends. If the encounter is casual, a good time limit is one minute. If you find yourself having to work on a project, try to just do 10-15 minute check-ins with the majority of the work over email, cc’ing a workplace friend or your supervisor if possible, and try to do the check-ins on your turf, where others can overhear. Protect yourself.
You may think that extending the olive branch to a workplace foe may ingratiate that person or open the lines for better communication. Your time is better spent working hard and nurturing relationships with friends and influencers who have been generous enough to take you under their wing. Don’t waste your time, energy and professional reputation with losers.

18. **CONSIDER** your friends and influencers as long-term relationships assets / if either they or you move on, keep in touch through email, handwritten notes, lunch dates, social outings, etc.
19. **NEVER DIVULGE ANY PERSONAL INFORMATION** to a foe and choose very carefully the personal information you share with allies and influencers. The less a foe knows about you, they will eventually become bored and set their evil sights on someone else.
20. **TAKE TIME TO DO A FORMAL ASSESSMENT** of your coworkers shortly after you start a new job. Give yourself every social advantage possible by identifying early on, who best to build relationships with.

Need help assessing coworkers or dealing with nasty workmates? Try the formal coworker assessment at WorkReign.com.

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