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# Project Politics

*It's not personal, it is only business.*

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## **Your Hosts and Facilitators**

- **John Laverdure, PMP**
- **Dave Mayo**

# Agenda

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- Why all these politics?
- Assessing your political environments
- Types of power / influence
- Developing and increasing your power
- Audience participation

# Why all this politics..

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- ❑ Everyone has a agenda
- ❑ The world is not fair, get over it
- ❑ Politics is the use of power / influence to get things done
- ❑ Competition for scarce resources, promotions, influence, etc.
- ❑ They just don't like you, project, Nepotism, outside influences, etc.

# Levels of Organizational Politics\*

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- Minimally Political
- Moderate Political
- Highly Political
- Pathologically Political

\*from Office Politics Isn't something you can sit out – Reardon (HBR 2015)

## Visible vs. Invisible Politics

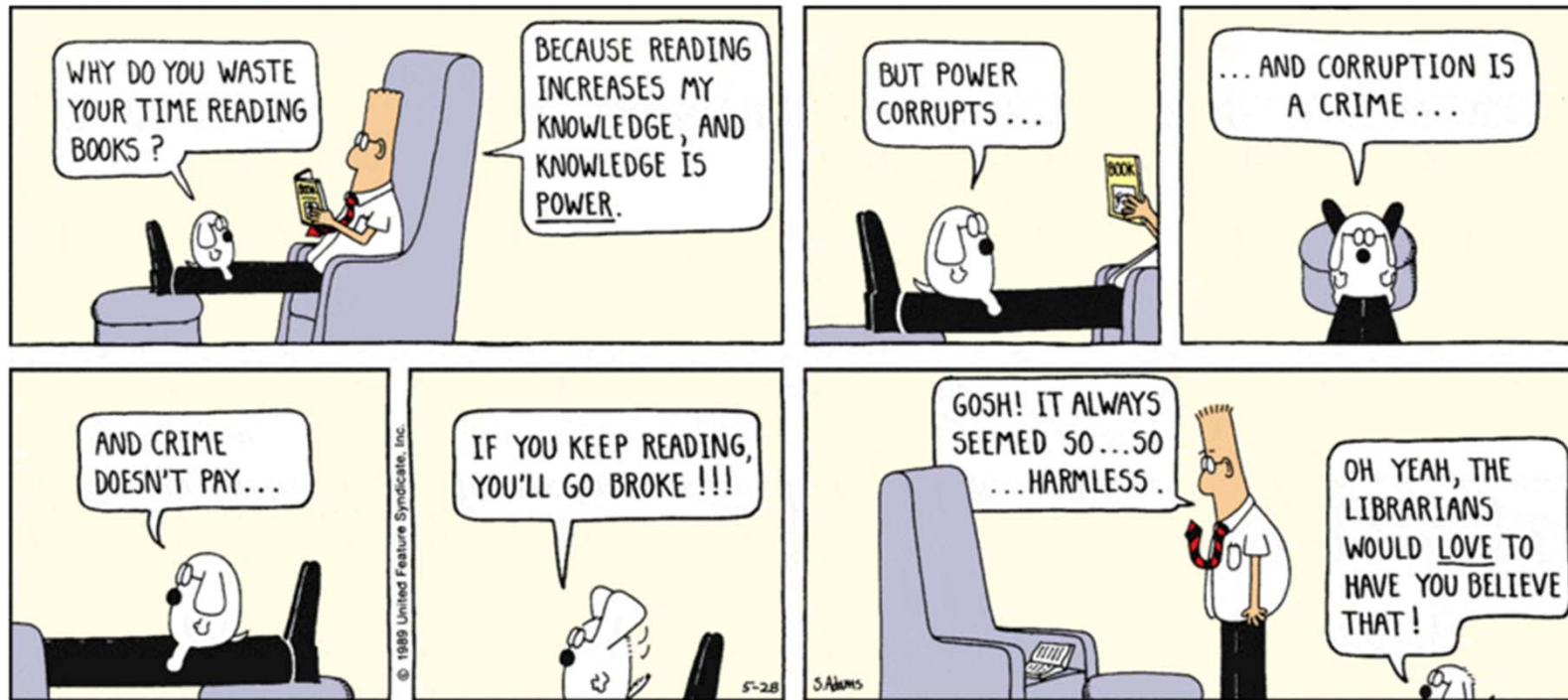
- Open vs. Guerilla warfare

What do you do if political environment does not fit with your temperament?

- Change – Yourself, Environment, Jobs....other?

# Dilbert view on Power

Sunday May 28, 1989



11/15/2016

# Types of Power

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- Legitimate
- Reward
- Referent
- Punishment
- Expert
- Informational

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# Legitimate Power

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- ❑ When you are made project manager of a project you are given **legitimate power** to tell your team what they should be working on.
- ❑ In strong matrix or projectized organization you may be completely in charge of team, in terms of doing their performance appraisal, decide on compensation etc.

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# Reward Power

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- This power is about the ability to provide someone with something that the person desires, **or** provide something that reduces the pains of undesirable experience.
  - **Essentially you either increase the comfort or decrease the discomfort.**
  - As a project manager you will have control over budget and you can decide on rewards to be given.

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# Referent Power

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- A project manager mentioning to the team that he had a lunch meeting with the CEO and he appreciated team's hard work, you are exercising referent power.
- **You associate yourself with people in power and show the team how they stand to benefit by this.**
- This type of power is often found amongst celebrities, military and political figures.

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# Punishment Power

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- This is also called as Coercive power. This power may have negative consequences. **Main goal of this power is compliance.**
  - Punishment power is exercised when someone is not performing and has to be reminded of bad consequences if there is no improvement.
  - “praise in public, reprimand in private” – have such talks always in private.

# Expert Power

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- Is **power** based upon employees' perception that a manager or some other member of an organization has a high level of knowledge or a specialized set of skills that other employees or members of the organization do not possess.

# Informational Power

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- Is the most transitory type of power. Once you give your information away, you give your power away.
  - For example, you share the secret, your power is gone. It's different from other forms of power because it's grounded in what you know about the content of a specific situation. Other forms of power are independent of the content.

# Developing & Increasing Power

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- Study workplace politics (expertise)
- Observe those that have power and those that do not.
- Identify your personal style
- Networking
- Manage Upward / downward
- Stakeholder management

# Assessing your Political situation

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- What is the political environment?
  - Does environment fit my temperament?
- What is the issue (agenda)?
  - What power being exerted?
  - Do I need to act? Is it important?
  - Do I have options to create a “win-win”
  - What are their strengths/weaknesses? Yours?
  - Do I have all the information I need? If not, get more!
  - Do I need alliance’s/support?
  - Who has power (influence) that I can use?
  - Who do they listen to?
- Create a plan of action, review & apply “what if scenarios”
  - Can I avoid their strengths? Move quickly?

# Audience Participation

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## Framework for discussion

- What was your project?
- What problem did you encounter?
- What were the political environment?
- What power roles were in play?
- How did you/ would you resolve it?



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# Break Time!

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