



How to Get Around Difficult Co-Workers on the Job and Win

- [Juliette Fairley](#)
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NEW YORK ([MainStreet](#)) — Globalization, technology, rampant regulation and fierce competition at every turn have made today's workplace a landmine that's more complicated than ever.

“The continued rise of the independent workforce or the on-demand economy have sharpened the focus on the entire work landscape,” said Gene Zaino, president and CEO with MBO Partners, a Herndon, Va.-based company that helps independent professionals launch their own consulting firm.

As a result, workers are rushing through important conversations.

“Everyone is under such tight timelines and has so much information at their fingertips that most people rush through the day checking off things on their to do list,” said Vivian Ciampi, a career coach and field expert.

Getting derailed at a meeting by well-intentioned co-workers is a common occurrence even for the most efficient of staffers.

“They are sent ten paces back and five paces to the side only to leave the meeting with more work, lost credibility, a confused and frustrated audience and no progress on the agenda at hand,” Ciampi said.

The solution is as simple as meeting privately with offending parties before the group meeting.

“Try and meet them in a non-threatening atmosphere such as lunch or coffee,” said Ciampi. “Work on developing the relationship like you would any other, by building trust and finding common ground, such as a sports team, hobby or travel. The benefits will pay big dividends.”

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Another tactic is to become a universal translator to all but guarantee success among co-workers.

“The most obvious way to get around difficult people on the job is to ask for a new assignment or transfer; however, the likelihood of this and the impact this could have on your career are not advisable,” Ciampi told *MainStreet*. “Therefore, figuring out how to co-exist with difficult people is imperative.”

Increasing confidence can be as simple as joining Toastmasters and participating regularly. Toastmasters International is a non-profit educational organization that teaches public speaking and leadership skills through a worldwide network of clubs.

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“The confidence that something like Toast Masters brings will always elevate everyone's game when it comes to effective communication,” said Ciampi.

In addition to developing confidence, becoming a successful universal translator involves applying a filter before interacting with someone by remembering why the person cares about the topic and who the audience is.

“Everything you say about this topic from this point forward should resonate with them and their agenda not yours,” Ciampi said. “There is no specific college degree that will make someone better at this. It takes intention, focus and practice and can truly be learned by anyone regardless of background.”

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One habit to avoid on the job in order to preserve career advancement is interrupting when others are talking.

“People are too busy pushing their own agendas and thinking of the next brilliant retort,” said Ciampi. “They are so focused on pushing information at people that they seldom stop to think that their information overload is too much for most people to absorb.”

-Written for MainStreet by Juliette Fairley