

4. The 11 Types of Political Players (& How to Deal With Them)

Types of Political Players

Office power players are individuals who focus heavily on office politics.

Some of them focus more on office politics than actual work and some have little interest in playing for the team (but they will pretend they do).

This lesson focuses on “archetypes” which, in lay terms, are basically stereotypes.

Very few people fit a stereotype 100%, but there are also advantages with stereotypes.

To begin with, they make it simpler to understand human nature and, in this case, office politics.

And second, they are still relevant to improve our social intelligence and social skills.

That’s because many of us do tend towards one category or another. And even people who are not in any category at all will, depending on times and situations, will behave accordingly to a certain stereotype.

And, finally, certain corporate roles have a much higher percentage of a certain stereotype.

For example, you can expect an executive or CEO to fit the “overachievers” or “sociopath” more often than your colleagues will.

Let’s start.

Psychology of Political Players

There is a public article dealing with this same topic.
The public article focuses more on the psychology behind each player.
If you're into the psychology, [check it out here](#).

If you're more into implications and practical solutions, then this lesson focuses more on solutions.

#1. The Taskers

The power dynamic of tasking-executing is that people who assign tasks are bosses, and people who execute on those tasks are subordinates.

By telling others what to do, taskers are positioning themselves as the most powerful party in that relationship.

Here are typical expressions of tasking:

***Tasker:** Can you do this for me please*

The standard format

***Tasker:** Can you (please) take care of it by EOB it's very important*

The "very important" bit makes them sound smart and strategic.
It's indeed people with high-level visions who are able to assign the correct priority to tasks.

And as they look strategic and leader-like, you become the tactical pawn who executes orders.

***Tasker:** Come here I need your help on something*

When you move to them, you look like the flunky who's supporting the one who does real work.

***Tasker:** Thank you for taking care of that for me*

Sneaky, sneaky, sneaky.

It's cushioned as if they are thanking you, but it's a power move that makes them sound like magnanimous leaders who properly recognize their teams' work.

***Tasker:** (Standing up to go to the meeting room) Come on, let's go*

With this one, they lead, you follow.

They make it seem like you were in standby, waiting for them to be ready. It looks like they were wrapping something important and you were doing nothing.

Who Tasks

Usually it's either very ambitious people, power hungry individuals or socially inept individuals who make it too blunt and obvious and rub people the wrong way.

The power-hungry needs to be in charge.

The highly ambitious see themselves as management material and are planning to be your boss.

The socially inept don't realize how annoying they are -and that it's not usually a good idea to piss people off.

And finally, there are frustrated and petty ones who need to feel someone and are looking for scraps of status. Tasking others means to them that they are somebodies.

Beating Taskers

Sadly, bosses can be as petty as anyone else, and some bosses will be playing daily power moves, telling you what to do when there was absolutely no need to make it sound like an order.

Here is a meme on it:



If your boss is fresh in the position and/or if he is very open-minded and with a growth mindset, it's possible to address it with him on a 1:1. However, that's a minority. Most bosses who task for power are petty and insecure and they will take that type of feedback as a personal affront to their power and authority.

If you are not sure where your boss stands, err on the side of safety here and don't bring it up with him.

What you can do with a boss is to minimize and sterilize each tasking attempt (we discuss it in another lesson) without escalating.

If the tasker is a colleague, you should never accept that behavior in the long run because it would be a de-facto admission that they are more senior and they will be the ones to get a promotion.

Here are some examples:

Tasker: *Can you do this for me, please*

Tasker: *Now I'm finishing a high priority task, but I'm always happy to help. Send it over now and remind me again in the afternoon*

Basically, you are complying and avoiding any escalation, but you do it on your terms and by assigning a task back on them ("remind me in the afternoon")

Tasker: *Come here I need your help on something*

You: *Yooo, listen to this guy, come here, do this, do that, who you talking to man? "*

This is a more direct approach, but you need to deliver with laughing and joking.

Do it while you actually walk there, so you show yourself as actually willing to help, just requesting a different tone. When you reach him, touch him as well so you rebuild the bond while at the same time you are communicating to treat you more respectfully.

All well-adjusted people will get it that they need to change their tone and you will come across both helpful and powerful (and socially intelligent).

Tasker: *(Standing up to go to the meeting room) Come on, let's go*

You: *(2 seconds pause) Just one second... (5 seconds pause) OK, let's go*

If you think this all seems petty it's because *it is*.

Unluckily this is office politics for taskers play: a petty little game. But if you don't answer blow by blow they'll tangle you up in their web and after a few months you'll become their bitch.

So this is like cleaning home: few people relish it but you gotta do it.

The good news is that as you neutralize and play the same game back on them most taskers will understand you're not an easy power picking.

At that point, you will go for the opposite approach: you will offer help and you will be warm and welcoming. Since you now do it from a position of power, most taskers will unconsciously go along with the new relationship.

And for those who don't stop?

Some taskers just don't know any better. If you have any authority in the team, get them fired because they destroy team cooperativeness. If you don't have that type of authority, focus on growing it and getting rid of the inveterate taskers. Those types of people only belong in poor performing teams, and you don't want to be part of one.

As they say, you can't fly with the eagles if you're scratching with the taskers.

#2. The Grumpy Players

The grumpy players operate on the assumption that the less people can task them, the more office status they acquire.

They play office politics very defensively, fortifying their desk-turf from encroachment and keeping as much as their time for themselves.

Grumpy colleagues are very difficult to deal with: being difficult *is* their game.

They often are difficult for their own bosses and individuals with official authority over them, let alone for colleagues.

There are two types of grumpy players:

1. Passive
2. Agressive

Indeed the issue of the grumpy players is the inability to be assertive.

Mad Max in The Wolf of Wall Street is an example of grumpy aggressive:

<https://youtu.be/rC9uDbq6WWE>

Of course, that's a movie and it's exaggerated.
But here is an everyday example of a grumpy player:

The image shows a screenshot of a WhatsApp chat conversation with three messages. Red arrows point from specific phrases in the messages to blue-bordered boxes containing analysis. The first message is from 'Sofia' and the second and third are from an unnamed contact.

Message 1: Sofia [redacted] wanted to join and give a speech as fast as possible, literally in one or two weeks, so would be great if we can speed it up. Thank you! 😊 (12:39)

Annotation: Soft form of tasking

Message 2: @ [redacted] Good morning, did you happen to give him a guest slip with the Information that they can write an Email to us? If not, please use it especially when I am not there. It helps me a lot to find out who is writing me, with what kind of request and how many times did they already visit the club. Just for the future. 😊 I can contact him. No worries. 👍😊 (13:14)

Annotation: Counter-tasks to defend authority

Message 3: @ [redacted] U proceeded with my steps with Sofia...I gave her the Information about the fee, trasfering the money, the documents she needs to fill out...and didn't hear from her anymore...I also automatically let her know that membership will be possible from September on due to summer vacation ([redacted] is on holiday, can't make any payments and half of August is gone) so everything is on track and we don't need to speed up anything. 😊 (13:20)

Annotation: Looks snippy and defensive. Avoid sarcasm: it looks passive aqgressive

That reply can be the sign of a grumpy player. It can signal thin-skin and suggest the player is more concerned about defending his turf than working well and being a good team player.

PRO Tip: Always avoid the wink. It looks passive-aggressive and like you want to hit back but don't have the courage of speaking directly.

And Milton is an example of passive grumpy:

<https://youtu.be/jsLUidiYm0w>

With very different styles, they both reach the same goal: people don't want to deal with them. So they get more independence.

That independence comes at the huge price of destroying the team morale though. Grumpy players are never team players.

Never hire a grumpy player or, at least, if they're brilliant at what they do, keep them away from the core team.

Beating Grumpy Players

If they are already in the team and you can't get rid of them, there are three ways to dealing with grumpy players: make them feel good, make them friends or power-bend them.

Making friends is never a bad strategy, but the issue is that some grumpy players don't respect friendships and, even as a friend, you're often still dependent on their moods.

As a matter of fact, if they refuse your cooperation after you've already made friends, they diminish your status even further.

Those types of grumpy players are the individual with which the famous Machiavellian line "being feared is better than being respect" applies.

There are several different ways to power bend them:

Detached insistence

Keep asking what you need to ask and expecting what it's your right to expect even in the face of latent aggression.

When they will realize you're not backing down, you'll get what you want and chances are they'll dial down their aggression and end respecting you.

Detached insistence + request for proper behavior

If the grumpy player is publicly disrespectful it's good to add a request for proper behavior as soon as you can.

Here is my experience with this technique:

After having been snarled at and told to wait I was standing beside the desk of the grumpy player for maybe 2 minutes.

I made it a point to becoming ever so slightly conspicuous in my waiting to underline I wasn't cool with it.

When she was finally done with her task she accompanied me to the meeting room, acting annoyed all the times.

The tendency here is to let the grumpy player more easily off the hook. But you must resist that.

I forced myself to ask all I needed to ask and get all the information I needed to get in spite of the grumpy player's latent -or not so latent- aggression.

Once I was done I told her I didn't appreciate her attitude and I hoped our relations could be more respectful in the future.

"Hope" was to take the edge off and was made it sound like "I expect".

It's not difficult to push grumpy players off the edge anyway.

And as expected, she flew off the handle.

It wasn't easy to stay cool.

But with the best detached insistence I could muster, I made present that I didn't appreciate being yelled at and repeated that I appreciated a more respectful relation.

Unluckily I wasn't in a position to tell her "behave properly or don't talk to me at all" because I needed her and she didn't need me.

But I was hoping that a show of detached resolve alone would be enough to power bend her.

A few days later as I was eating lunch with a colleague she approached our table and apologized, more than once, with a smile. My friend, who always afraid of approaching her, was shocked that the scariest grumpy player of the company had come to apologize.

Showdown escalation

The first time they get aggressive you can decide to treat it as a showdown and escalate.

It's possible they will play self-righteous and try to paint you as the one preventing them from doing their work.

So be prepared to take the moral high ground here. Say that this is an organization where you work as a team and that type of behavior is unacceptable in a team.

If they keep going, you keep focusing on the one thing that makes you right in the eyes of every onlooker and superior: there is no excuse for being rude and aggressive.

Putting pressure through their boss

Try to be in a great relationship with their boss, or get an official mandate from his boss to ask for the grumpy player support.

Go through official channel

If Mr. Grumpy is an obstacle to delivering great work, consider escalating via his boss or your boss.
Ideally though you won't be the first or the only one to complain.

Make them feel good: appeasement strategy

It's not uncommon that grumpy players are grumpy because they don't feel valued -not an excuse of course, they'd be valued more if they weren't grumpy-.

But that's something you can leverage: by making them feel important, it's possible to turn them around with a carrot instead of a stick.
Tell them they're the only who can help, that their contribution makes a difference and go to lunch with them.
It's even possible they will become so dependent on your ego boosts that they will be looking forward to your visits.

Whenever you have no direct authority I recommend trying the carrot before you consider the stick (ie.: going the friendly ingratiating way instead of the power bending one).

Just a note on the friendship: if you're a junior employee yourself, watch out with becoming too close with a grumpy player. They might drag you down.
Here is the rule of thumb:

Befriending losers as a powerful man is an act magnanimity.

Befriending losers as a powerless man is a case of "misery loves company".

-The Power Moves

3. The Sticklers For The Rules

"Sticklers For The Rules" stake their claim to power with laws, regulations, and SOPs.

They can use the rule of law either defensive or aggressively.
Here are some examples:

***You:** hey hi man, my keyboard broke, they told me you guys can help*

***Stickler:** please go through the official channels and ask my boss
for allocation I'm busy now*

It's similar to the grumpy player, but more assertive, more powerful and harder to deal with it.

It's because, technically, they are right. The procedure might require you to get an official allocation for them to perform a request.

And that makes it harder for you to make them look like the bad guys because, hey... They're just following procedures (bit reminiscent of the nazi "just following orders", right?).

***Stickler:** do you have the badge with you? You need to have the badge or I will not let you in*

You will notice the difference of how a Stickler uses rules for his own power.

If he had been a friendlier, team-playing folk, he would said the same with a much different approach. For example "hey man, I'm sorry, but I really can't let anyone in without a badge. There is little I can do to help in this situation".

Beating Sticklers

Sticklers can advance a bit when they actually take care of learning the rules and regulations really well. In that case, they become the "go to guys" before you need to actually engage a lawyer.

And they acquire some status in the meeting rooms where they're always the first to tell you why something *can't* be done.

However the people who advance the most are power players who focus on how to make things and what can be done.

So don't waste your time picking fights with sticklers.
Make them friends, but don't get too close -you don't want to waste too much time with mid to low-level employees-.

The only time when a stickler becomes a real problem is when they make it difficult for you to get things done.
That can happen for example if you're a project manager and don't have direct authority on some resources and/or you constantly need a stickler's support to get your work done.

Ask What YOU Can Do For Them

If you've already tried to make friends from a position of equals and that didn't work, try this move: make a heart to heart conversation and ask them what YOU can do to improve your relations.

Yes, you are basically going there as a beggar.
Explain how it's impacting you, how much you'd appreciate their help and that you're ready to do anything (not true).
If that works, you will then work your way up to an equitable relationship.

Escalate It

If it's becoming an issue for your deliverables, you address it with your boss or you risk taking the blame for them.

Transfer their authority to you

A wonderful and resolute power move would be to go over their head and get official authority over them.

Which is something that this scene in "The Edge of Tomorrow" depicts:

<https://youtu.be/ynjOUts1aKo>

#4. The Overachievers

You know these ones, don't you?

Speak too much at the meeting
Seek responsibility and power positions in all fields
Unashamedly take all credit even though it's been a team effort

When there is some credit to loot, the overachievers takes no prisoners.

There are two types of overachievers:

Dr Jekyll = they can be nice on their own but turn into monsters in the presence of bosses and upper management. They are the most dangerous because they can better hide their true selfish selves

24/7 overachievers = it's "always on" with them, they never stop pursuing power opportunities. They're often lonely and isolated

Tracy Flick in the movie Election is an example of the 24/7 overachiever (some people dubbing her "young Hillary"):

<https://youtu.be/D8IU0xfQ-V4>

If you're not like them, you will come to despise them. But if you want to stay in that company or team, you gotta fight.

Beating Overachievers

Don't make mistakes with the overachievers: they rarely change their evil ways, even when they seem they're being friendly and warm. Their goal is to go up, not to make friends.

Catch them in the act: contradict them

Renee Evenson, author of "[Powerful Phrases for Dealing with Difficult People](#)", says that the best way to deal with overachievers who take credit for teamwork is to speak up right away.

I agree with it.

If you let them get away with it the image of them as the leaders start to cement in people's mind. And your resentment will grow without an outlet, which is unhealthy.

Directly take the issue to your boss

If the credit taker gets awarded with money, bonus, a promotion or a public praise for a shared achievement, let your boss know you're not happy.

The [Dale Carnegie Training](#) says not to complain lest you want to sound like a whiner. They also say that usually, at work, the person who sounds the most adult and mature wins.

That's true, and they propose this much better approach:

***You:** Dear boss, I understand you're happy with Tracy's work and I'm glad about it because she delivered some important parts.*

But there's one thing concerning me, and that is that this was a group effort and all of us taking part devoted a significant amount of time and did a good job, including me. When the time comes for my performance review, I want to make sure I get the same recognition that Jack did.

Rally the troops against him

If they are as annoying as you think they are, chances are you're not the only one to dislike them.

You want to leverage the discontent and slowly but surely isolate the credit taker.

The colleagues and people around you will fall into two categories: the apathetic ones who are too dummy to notice and care; and the smarter ones who care, notice and hate.

With the haters talk about the issue openly. With the apathetic ones, your strategy is not the common enemy because there is no enemy in their eyes. So you go for an alliance based on friendship.

If you do your job well the credit taker will soon have enemies or neutral colleagues. You will have friends and allies. Now you have effectively isolated them.

Keep your eyes on the prize: the boss

Some credit takers are good at pampering their bosses. You must make sure you don't lose any ground there.

If you are lucky enough to have one of those bosses who don't like credit takers and knows what's on, you've almost won: the more you can make their game obvious, the more they will be digging their graves.

If your boss is a dummy, then you gotta keep on play the game.

#5. Suck-Up Players

The suck-up players are all about fawning on their bosses.

They shower their managers with compliments, listen to what they say as they nod and always say yes.

O'Neil in the movie Platoon is an example of a suck-up player with Barnes:

<https://youtu.be/bWduxRfYeuA>

Contrary to what most people think, pure suck-up players rarely go far and you shouldn't be wasting your time focusing on them.

That's because the suck-up is ultimately a defensive play. Like a needy baby seeks a friendly and nurturing mom, the needy suck-up player seeks a friendly boss.

They are often more motivated by fear than by opportunity. Fear of getting sacked, fear of falling on the wrong side of the boss -whom they see as a superior to them- and fear of losing status in the team.

The world of suck-up players is a small world, and that's why if you got ambitions you must stay friends with them but not too close.

Similar to the suck up players, but much more dangerous are:

#6. Power Aligners

Power aligners seek power by aligning themselves with power.

They take on the same values of the boss, of the company or of both and champion them as if they were their own.



Here is how a power aligner operates:

Imagine a team meeting with your boss, you are making the case that a customer was abusive to you, and the power aligner chimes in:

Power Aligner: *But that's not what we stand for. It doesn't matter what the customer said to you. I know it can be hard, we are here to offer the best service we can, no matter what*

How are you going to reply to that?

The boss is nodding at the power aligner's comment and you're now in a catch 22.

Tell them they're right and they win.

Keep defending your position and you dig yourself deeper. And that's the power of power-aligning.

Another example:

***Power Aligner:** Did you ask if they could give a discount? Always ask for a discount, it can save us a lot of money*

See what they're doing?

Acting like your future boss and presenting themselves as representing the company -"us"- (yeah, sure).

Even if you say you did ask for a discount, you are still proving yourself to them.

Power Aligners in The Animal Kingdom

The animal kingdom proves that power-aligning can work wonders.

Think of the "king of the Savannah", the most revered animal ever: the lion.

The lion is on the brink of extinction.

Lions attack human beings, the true power-players of this world.

Now compare it to the dogs.

Any dog would lose out against lions.

But dogs aligned with human beings, and pet dogs are thriving.

Beating the Power Aligners

Never, ever attack them frontally.

And especially never, ever do so in front of people.

The power aligners derive their power by aligning with the organization, the culture, the boss or all the three of them.

When you attack them, it's like you are attacking the whole company. The more you attack them frontally, the more it looks like they are management material... And you don't fit in.

You must play the same game back on them.
You must agree with them, you must talk about "we", "us" and "team above all" (or whatever your team espouses).

When you play the same game you become unassailable.
Yes, you might have done a mistake, but you're not assailable when it comes to personality, team fit and, as well, future promotions.

Here is an example:

***Power Aligner:** But that's not what we stand for. It doesn't matter what the customer said to you. I know it can be hard, we are here to offer the best service we can, no matter what*

***You:** You damn right!*

Thank you for remind me!

I let my passion get the best of me there. But if there is something else I believe in, is admitting mistakes, making up for them and growing. I'm gonna call that customer first thing out of this meeting and personally invite him to dinner to make up for it

Yes, it becomes a "holier than thou" game.
Not pretty, not fun, and not genuine.
But we never said that corporate politics are pretty.

#7. The Power Players

Somewhat similar to the Grumpy players -but they're not necessarily grumpy- and the Can't Task Me players.

But their resistance comes down to a personality which is hell-bent on power and winning.

Similar to sociopaths, they see the world like a chessboard.

They are:

Dominators: power-hungry men who want to give orders, not take them

Resistors: they have troubles with bosses and authorities

With power players you often end up stuck into what I call “control” games, which are pretty and useless. One example is “I task you / I task you back” games or “I task you / I refuse” similar to what we saw with the “tasker” style.

Control games can degenerate into hollow power struggles that damage both parties.

Watch out with these players if you’re a boss because they will sometimes work behind their boss’ back to bring them down or destroy their reputation.

Beating Power Players

If they are causing you troubles to deliver your work, it’s your right to fix it and approach them directly, for example:

***You:** You have been ignoring my requests and I cannot work like that. We need to talk about how to work together*

Or:

***You:** I feel like we have an issue and you don’t like working with me. I’d like to talk about it, maybe we can find a solution*

After you have your chat, you need to make sure than from then on you give them ask in a way that a power-obsessed individual will not interpret as an encroachment on his freedom.

For example:

You: *(going by his desk) hey, Mark do you happen to have one minute for me?*

(you are allowing him to say no, giving him the power he craves)

Mark: *for you? always*

You: *Ahaha thanks my man. Look I'm having some troubles with the financials of Appodeal.*

(you take the blame for not understanding)

I was thinking maybe you can help me understand your anlaysis

(you phrase your request in a way that doesn't triggert their resistance)

Too long for you?

Well, yes, this technique is all about kids' gloves.

If that's not your style there is always firing, power bending, escalating etc.

But why not try a different approach for once.

Remember, power is about getting what you want, not bossing people around and escalating every single issue.

#8. The Shunners

The shunning game is the game of isolation.

It's most often played by women and it's a form of silent social punishment.

The shunners form a clique to socially exclude the target of their political machinations.

When the target approaches one of them, the shunner is curt, detached or even ignores them. If the victim tries to directly address the issue, the shunners can easily -and will most likely- deny it.

The shunners are all communicating: “we’re together and similar, you’re not and you don’t belong and we’ll be the happiest once you leave”.

Sarkozy played a shunner game with Merkel against Berlusconi:

<https://youtu.be/D8NtEXnc4jY>

Beating the Shunning Game

Shunning games are hard to beat.

Now imagine Berlusconi had been there in the video above. He’d *know* that Sarkozy is an enemy and he’s forming a collation with Merkel against him.

But if he were to escalate openly, he would look childish and argumentative.

As a silent type of aggression, the shunning game can easily be denied.

This is what a good shunner would have replied:

Shunner-Sarkozy: *We? Ignoring you? Laughing at you? Where did you get that from.*

We’re here to work for the good of our Union, and we’re happy if you join us with constructive input

See how an astute shunner would approach it?

Not only would they deny and make you look crazy, but they would make you look petty, unhelpful and selfish.

A better strategy then is the good old “divide and conquer”.
Work up the members of the groups who are *least* sold on office politicking until you befriend them and break the game.

A compliment from one of the players, a smile or asking “how are you”. These are all signs that you can work on one of them.
As you get better, your goal will be to counter-isolate the shunners who hate you the most, making them look spiteful.

The Devil Wears Prada has one example of a shunner dynamic that might be on the way of breaking (the main shunner is looking too spiteful):

<https://youtu.be/HSPYgwP9R84>

The moment a shunner looks too spiteful and too into the shunning game compared to the other players is a sign that you’re on your way to winning

#9. The Vanity Players

The vanity players will show off their wins and achievements in an effort to impress others and make them jealous.

Pump them up but don’t waste too much time with them: they’re rarely dangerous and rarely go anywhere.

You can use them for manipulation though, for example instigating them against your common boss.

How to do it?

Simple: by leveraging their grandiose, vain self: let them believe they could do and be so much more if it weren’t for their idiotic boss who is

clipping their wings.

They will buy because they *want* and *need* to believe it. And you've easily made an ally against your boss if needed to.

#10. The Put-Down Players

These are the bosses who scream, berate and abuse employees.

Their emotional pay off is this:

1. If I can abuse them, I must be someone
2. If I can tell them they're shit, that must make me better

Beating Put Down Players

Your colleagues will hate them as much as you do.

Hence, don't try to fight them on your own but be the catalyst to organize a firing squad.

Make your colleagues feel like the only way to a better life is by getting rid of the tyrant and they might even make the dirty work for you.

When you can get everyone against them, you will have the power of numbers on your side.

Then it's time for mutiny.

The story of the Bounty Mutiny is an example of an organized revolt against a put-down boss.

#11. The Scapegoat Players

The scapegoat game picks on someone to shift the blame.

It can get very dangerous if the scapegoat player is your boss scapegoating on you or if it's a CEO that doesn't want to face the

reality.

They make for a really toxic environment and they often crash and burn. But in the meanwhile a few heads could easily roll -and you might not want to roll-.

Beating the Scapegoaters

Don't get too emotional but be ready to counteract with facts and figures if it's a colleague.

If to scapegoat is your boss, then you might want to take part of the blame even if you know you have little to do with it.

Here is an example from a sales manager perspective, with the boss trying to scapegoat a drop in revenues:

***You:** We seem to be pointing out at one single factor for the issue here and my opinion is that there might be, or at least we should investigate, about other possible contributing factors.*

By not pointing your finger against anyone you avoid an adversarial situation.

Now people are listening and you can make your case from an almost neutral and super-partes position:

***You:** I have analyzed the data and the number of our calls and meeting has dropped, that's true.*

However that happened despite the fact that we have had more outreaches, more cold calls, and even more meetings.

With the same pitches and templates as last year.

That makes me think that it's not sales the sole issue.

I suspect that our competitors' new products have something to do with it

Or you can use leading questions for a softer approach:

You: OK, there might be something there. Do you feel like sales is the only issue here or could there be something else

As soon as you get an opening, broaden the discussion:

You: What else could have contributed

As people start chipping in, you chip in as well with what you believe are the real culprits.

#11. Shirker Players

These are the “lazy guys”.

But they shirk their duties with a systematical approach.

They shirkers use a passive-aggressive attitude to procrastinate and avoid dealing with the difficult tasks -or avoids tasks altogether-.

He might pretend not to see your emails, pretend to forget or fail to deliver on purpose so that you will not ask them again in the future.

To deal with them, always set a deadline and offer to help them. Your offer to help is designed to guilt-trip the shirker and remove their excuses.

And don't forget to check on them and look for alternatives. If you want to win, you gotta build a winning team around you.

And that does not include shirkers.