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Workplace Politics

During a summer break in high school, I was lucky enough to get an internship at an NYC startup company. Although the concept of the company was straightforward, it hasn't been thought of before. To summarize it, it is a car service with car seats for infants to young children. This company is named Kidmoto Technologies and was only a two-year-old company. Learning more about the company, the CEO had a background in the chauffeur field and had clients come into his vehicle while holding their children. This sparked the simple idea of a car service whose target audience is traveling families with small children. Their advertisements and graphics were bright colors with simple vector graphics to appeal to their audience. When I interned there, there were only two full-time employees alongside the CEO and the interns. We worked together to make the company flourish to what it is today. Even though this experience occurred two years ago, the CEO and I still maintain a conversation.

Throughout the internship, there were examples of the four sources of interpersonal relationships. The first and second sources, resource control and expertise power, were prominent with the company's CEO. Due to the company being a small startup, nearly all of the tasks must go through him before the public while also having the charisma and business expertise to lead the company forward. The third source, communication skills, came from the CEO's right hand. This person exerted their communication skills at any meeting available.

Throughout the internship, this coworker was also the one who recruited other interns while also speaking to nearly every client to form deals with. The last source, the interpersonal network, was maintained by almost everyone there. However, there was one person whose network shined brighter than anyone else's. This person didn't directly work at this location but was part of the company regardless. Their network's variety was second to none.

In my specific workplace, the most highlighted trait was the fact that making mistakes was surprisingly preferred over being perfectly flawless at everything. The CEO recognized immediately that most of his company would be making mistakes regardless of what happens. Functioning this way, the best way for a person to attain "power" in this company is a combination of expertise power and interpersonal network. To gain "power" a person must be able to solve problems. This is mainly because there are always problems that arise when working with clients. A person must also be able to turn around a failure. This revolves around the "learn from your mistakes" mentality that the CEO actively promotes. A person should form a robust network to attract more clients and continue to build further since the company is small enough to share their power and ask assistance whenever necessary. Together, these skills allowed each of the employees to continue to flourish and learn more about what it means to be part of a working crew. Whether it means working on your communication skills to speak to clients better or working on your network to have a wider variety of knowledge, or even simply working on your reputation to assist your future, the CEO regularly promoted all of this.

Throughout the internship, many friends were contacted who were working for different companies to get different perspectives. To my surprise, their experiences were nearly the opposite of mine. Their managers and bosses despised whenever they made mistakes and were punished. The managers didn't want to communicate with their employees to understand who

they were as a person, nor did they see them as anything more than just another employee who will eventually leave. In their sense, power was more closely related to expertise. My friends focused on strictly building their reputation in the company to be recognized in their manager's eyes. This only made me feel more grateful towards my manager once I heard the words of others. It was strange to me to have a manager who didn't focus on building their employees' minds and ethics. Even though we had similar jobs, our terms of "power" were drastically different. My job was focused on a combination of expertise power and interpersonal network. Their jobs were focused around strictly one aspect of expertise power. This necessarily is not a bad thing; however, there are preferable aspects of every job, and this happens to be one of them.