Skills Required to Work Effectively in an Organization

In an attempt to work effectively within an organization it is important to know the type of organization within in which one is working because this knowledge helps frame our expectations of how the environment will respond to the needs of clients, as well as our own needs as employees. This knowledge will tell an employee how to effect change within the system as well as outside of the system. For example, if one is employed by an organization that is organized according to a Scientific/Classical management perspective, there will be an emphasis on output and efficiency of work. Managers will be responsible for analyzing tasks relative to meeting the goals of the agency. An organization run pursuant to principles of Scientific Management, are characterized by a hierarchical organization of power, with a high degree of specialization, a clear division of labor and assumes workers are motivated by economic returns. This model subscribes to the principal of management known as Theory X, which assumes that humans inherently dislike work, and therefore employees must be controlled, directed, coerced or threatened with punishment in order for there to be movement towards organizational goals.

As an employee in an organization managed in this manner would benefit from having some of the following skills:
- Possess an awareness that change will come about by the ability to influence component parts of the system; and that such change will not happen quickly.
- Do not take management’s assumptions regarding their work ethic personally. (laziness, no ambition, dislike of work, etc.,)
- Know how the system works-who to go to and when
- Know where their supports are within this system
- Do not perpetuate negativity or look to negative people for support, as this will affirm management’s assumptions about an employee’s work ethic pursuant to Theory X.

Therefore, if an employee is employed by an organization that subscribes to a traditional paradigm, and that employee expects a high degree of creativity, sharing of power, respect and autonomy, they may be disappointed, as the environment will be experienced as invalidating and rigid.

Conversely, if an employee is not comfortable without a high degree of structure and prefers a clear hierarchy of power, they may be better suited to working in an environment that is organized around an alternative paradigm and Theory Y principal of management. Clearly, it is important that one either develops strategies to work effectively within the environment that does not fit or finds an environment that is a good fit.
Also, there is a need to utilize the same skills one would employ when working within a
group or family setting. For example, it is important that one establishes trust and
credibility within the organization. Obviously this may take some time, as people need to
get to know who you are. It is also useful if one develops the skills necessary to diffuse
hostilities within the organization, and learns how to be an observer of the process when
it comes to roles and conflicts. All employees need to learn how to listen and
communicate accurately with others in the organization. Ultimately, one may need to
consider changing themselves to fit the organization

As Covey presented in his book, a proactive and “win-win” approach will go along way
towards being an effective member of any organization. In order to accomplish this, one
needs to be willing to listen, (seek first to understand, then be understood), be genuine,
and accurately empathetic. Within Covey’s paradigm, we must all take personal
responsibility for management, leadership and vision. Once we live from the “inside-out”
we develop a sense of “intrinsic security” that further allows us to be a creative force
within any environment (Covey, 2003).