

| Type of Difficult Person                  | Characteristics   | Tactics   |
|---|---|---|
| Hostile-aggressive                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bullies, overwhelms, and intimidates others</li> <li>• Throws tantrums</li> <li>• Criticizes and argues relentlessly</li> <li>• Believes there's only one way to handle a situation -- can't accept feedback</li> <li>• Reacts even more strongly to resistance from others</li> </ul>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't panic. Stand up to the hostile.</li> <li>• Don't take it personally.</li> <li>• Give him/her time to run down (not too long -- they'll see it as a weakness)</li> <li>• Get his/her attention carefully (use name of person clearly and loudly)</li> <li>• Get him/her to sit down.</li> <li>• Avoid head-on fight (you'll be run over).</li> <li>• Show him/her you take him/her seriously by paraphrasing what he/she has said.</li> </ul> |
| Wet Blanket                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses negativism. "It won't work," or "We tried that last year." (not the same as one who carefully figures out alternatives.)</li> <li>• Feels those in power don't care or are self-serving.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't argue.</li> <li>• State your own realistic optimism.</li> <li>• Don't rush into proposing solutions.</li> <li>• Set a "horror floor." (What's the worst thing that could happen?)</li> <li>• Be ready to take action on your own.</li> </ul>   |
| Know-it-all                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feels and exerts the impressive of absolute certainty, power, and authority</li> <li>• Is usually right</li> <li>• Cannot be dissuaded once on a course.</li> <li>• Treats others as irrelevant.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do your homework.</li> <li>• Question firmly but don't confront.</li> <li>• Present alternatives as detours.</li> <li>• Avoid being a counter-expert.</li> </ul>   |
| Balloon                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaks with great authority about subjects about which he/she has little knowledge; pretends to be an expert</li> <li>• Often only partially aware he/she is speaking beyond their knowledge</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State facts as an alternative version.</li> <li>• Give balloon a way out (in private, if possible)</li> </ul>  |
| Staller                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is pleasant and supportive, but avoids decision making until the decision is made for him/her.</li> <li>• Hints and beats around the bush as a compromise between being honest and not hurting someone.</li> <li>• Quality-oriented, can't let go of something until it's perfect--which means never.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get him/her to describe the plan in detail.</li> <li>• Rank alternatives.</li> <li>• Link plan to values of quality and service.</li> <li>• Give support after decision is made.</li> <li>• Follow up.</li> </ul>  |
| Complainer                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acts self-righteous, blames and accuses others.</li> <li>• Makes no effort to solve problem (feels powerless)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen attentively.</li> <li>• Switch to problem-solving -- what would happen if ... "What's the first step?"</li> <li>• Paraphrase -- define the problem.</li> </ul>  |
| Clam                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses monosyllables or silence (clamming up) to avoid conflict ... nonresponsive</li> <li>• May feel he/she has been backed into a corner.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask open-ended questions.</li> <li>• Use a friendly stare until clam responds.</li> <li>• Comment on what's happening ("Our meeting seems to be at an impasse.")</li> </ul>  |
| Super Agreeable                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is often personable, funny, outgoing.</li> <li>• Tells you what you want to hear, but lets you down in a crisis.</li> <li>• Commits to actions they won't or can't follow through on -- to stay on "good terms" with others.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let him/her know you value him/her as a person by telling him/her directly.</li> <li>• Compromise/negotiate if conflict arises.</li> <li>• Get his/her commitments in writing.</li> <li>• Follow through.</li> <li>• Be prepared to take action on your own.</li> </ul>  |
| Deadwood                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doesn't contribute anything to the actual team effort.</li> <li>• Is often in a power position.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand why the person is there -- he/she may occupy a role position in the formal power structure that is important to the smooth functioning of the informal power system.</li> <li>• Try assertiveness if the person becomes difficult.</li> </ul>   |
| One Who Takes All the Credit (Plagiarist) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steals credit for others' achievements, ideas, roles, organizational abilities, etc.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confront the plagiarist in front of a mutually respected third party.</li> <li>• Emphasize the team effort, if applicable.</li> <li>• For written material, send additional copies of it, with your name on it, to people higher than the plagiarist.</li> </ul>   |