

# OGL 481 Pro-Seminar I: PCA-Political Frame Worksheet

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## 1) Briefly restate your situation from Module 1 and your role.

**Your Role:** You are an external customer who, along with your wife, shops regularly at Trader Joe's.

**The Situation:** The situation is your analysis of how Trader Joe's successfully operates on a business model that is fundamentally different from its competitors. This model is built on three key elements that create a perception of honesty and integrity:

**Product Transparency:** A strategy of ~80% private-label products, which allows them to control quality (no GMOs, artificial flavors, etc.) and offer a "no-questions-asked" return policy.

**Pricing Integrity:** A formal policy of "everyday low prices" with no sales, coupons, or loyalty cards, which creates a simple, transparent agreement with all customers.

**Store Culture:** A community-focused atmosphere fostered by investing in friendly, helpful, and well-paid "Crew" members.

## 2) Describe how the politics of the organization influenced the situation.

While I am not directly tied to the internal political system of Trader Joe's, I can see the Political Frame in action through the apparent concentration of power at the top. As Bolman and Deal (2021) note, authorities often control the agenda to maintain influence (p. 246). According to Trader Joe's website, they deploy a "very small, intensely dedicated, behind-the-scenes Office Crew" at their headquarters in Monrovia, CA. One can imagine the immense power that this elite group holds within the organization. The job posting page for Trader Joe's also claims that this is a lean team and postings are few and far between, further demonstrating a tight and closed circle of power. It is easy to imagine why regular Trader Joe's "Crew" members would seek to join a Union; they are fighting for representation and a voice in front of this exclusive, elite group of decision-makers.

## 3) Recommend how you would use organizational politics for an alternative course of action regarding your case.

My recommendation is for Trader Joe's to leverage the political frame by offering a tremendous amount of transparency regarding the "Office Crew" and their actions. While keeping a lean, tight-knit group of policy creators can be an effective strategy for efficiency; it brings into question the inclusivity and openness of the organization, potentially alienating those who feel they have no influence on decisions. To mitigate political tension, the Office Crew should employ clear agendas, practice radical openness, and take visible steps to demonstrate that they are leading the care of the "Crew" members in mind.

**4) Reflect on what you would do or not do differently given what you have learned about this frame.**

Reflecting on the Political Frame leads me to re-evaluate the power structures I have encountered in previous roles. Did those leaders practice openness and care, or was power gated and kept close to the chest by a select few? As I continue to grow in my career, I am paying closer attention to leadership hierarchies and structures of power. I am asking: Who is empowering their workforce and practicing openness through their actions and policies? It is vital for me to find myself in an environment that values the type of transparent power dynamics that I value and agree with.

Furthermore, this frame challenges me to define the leader I aspire to become. I now realize that claiming to be "apolitical" only leads to vulnerability. Instead of viewing politics as manipulation, I intend to use it to advocate for my team; negotiating resources, building coalitions, and breaking down silos. By mastering this frame, I can ensure power is used for empowerment rather than exclusion.

## Reference or References

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