

Coterie can be found in any conceivable field. In fact, such 'camps' prevail around people in power and are perceived to have many benefits for the members who are a part of it. However, while being a part of a coterie can trump up your chances at work, it can also pull you down, finds out

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## DOES A CLIQUE CLICK?

### IN VOGUE

Though at one point in time, forming or being a part of a coterie spelt insecurity and hunger for power, the trend seems to be only rising in the present day scenario. According to Dhananjay Bansod, chief people officer, Deloitte in India, "A coterie is defined as a set of people with common interests. People with similar interests come together to protect and nurture these interests. Earlier, the formation of coterie was frowned upon as it allowed an unfair advantage to the coterie members to disproportionate amount of scarce resources. The recent times where speed to succeed is ever-increasing, blatant leveraging of coterie is very visible." Anil Bir, chief human resource officer, Lemon Mobiles opines, "Coterie are rampant and are becoming very popular in companies with every passing day. These coterie are formed involuntarily by like-minded employees as it imparts a sense of security, convenience and provides the employees the power to block the initiatives."

Similarly, Dr Samir Parikh, mental health & behavioural

sciences, Max Healthcare & Dr Dilpreet Brar, executive director, Max Healthcare point out that the phenomenon of a coterie, is not applicable to the corporate sector alone, but this is what can be seen in any field, be it politics, sports, or for that matter, any place where there would be groups of people working with varied hierarchies.

### WIN BROWNIE POINTS

The trend is certainly rising with more and more people wanting to be connected to top level people and be a part of their coterie. So, what are the benefits that one can derive out of being a part of any such coterie? "People have diverse interests. As the desire to succeed gets stronger each day, in light of scarce resources, it becomes extremely necessary to put forward one's 'interests' strongly. The formation of a coterie has certain pros associated with it. Coterie ensure that bullies don't unilaterally nurture their own agendas but also listen to the voice of others. Coterie also form a strong force and as such block any external (to the coterie) threat," expresses Bansod.

According to Bir, "People

become a part of such coterie as it gives them a sense of security and comradeship. To an extent, it is beneficial and certainly a positive trend as long as it is not being used politically against the company initiatives and colleagues. Members of the coterie often tend to discuss their problems with each other and derive solutions; they tend to lunch-in together and there are also occasions wherein they get together outside the workplace. These are things, which are healthy and also help individuals to understand each other's business function."

### CORPORATE CAMPS

A coterie could give one a sense of belonging, but a 'we against them' culture usually doesn't last long at workplaces, believe experts. Dr Parikh and Dr Brar feel that the basic flipside is that factors of 'group think' may have their impact, and within a closed coterie, errors in decision-making are more likely. "The 'bay of pigs invasion' is one of the well-studied episodes in history that shows how a group's thought-process can affect decision-making," they

assert.

Bansod further explains, "Every phenomenon has its pros and cons. The very strength that coterie offer becomes its limitation. If coterie enable effective representation of particular interests, they can also suppress other interests; if the coterie fob off external threats, they also prevent good ideas from being heard. Coterie often prohibit the entry to other people – who then feel left out from the society." In a world where everybody is in a hurry to go up the ladder, associating oneself with powerful people has become the way of the day. So, even if forming cliques is inevitable at work, what one needs to be careful about is, choosing the right people.

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