

Negotiating Effectively Some quick tips

Good negotiators have mastered the art of **give and take** - they properly assess the needs of the other party, consider their own needs and then nicely judge the making and seeking of concessions so as to achieve **mutually beneficial** outcomes. .

Certainly, we negotiate almost every day in both our personal and professional lives. Sometimes, it can prove beneficial to stop and reflect upon some of the “nuts and bolts” to the process. Here are some quick tips that may help you add some further finesse to your approach to negotiation

- **Thorough Planning & Preparation**

Start by thinking through your objectives. Ask yourself questions such as -
What do I want? What am I willing to give? What do I know about the needs of the other party?
What are my options if I cannot reach a fair deal with this person? How important is the relationship and the goodwill factor? If trust is low, do I need to insist on a penalty clause?

- **Take some time to build rapport**

When first meeting with the other party, take a little time to build a friendly and co-operative atmosphere. Emphasise the common goals and interests which you both share. It will be much easier to negotiate with an ally rather than an adversary.

- **Establish the opening position of the other party, ask plenty of questions and stay alert for body language signals.**

It is essential you understand completely all the elements of the other party' opening position. Find out what they want. Show them you are genuinely interested in their needs, hopes and aspirations. You will likely need to dig beneath the surface to discover their real motivators.

- **When it is time to present your position, do it firmly and persuasively.**

The impression the other party forms of you will initially be determined more by how you say things, rather than by purely what you say. Project a positive but reasonable image. In a low trust situation, you might sometimes want to project that have other options readily available to you – although, if you want a collaborative outcome it will be unproductive to engage in games.

- **Be willing to trade, and be creative**

Negotiation implies that there is going to be a need for some “give and take”.. By discovering what the other party values and by being clear about what you can provide - there opens up room for concessions and hence, movement towards agreement. Whether its lowering the sellers price through conceding quicker terms of payment or increasing the volume of the order, the key is to connect any concessions you make to getting something that you value in return. But remember to open up your mind to exploring all the possible options for trade.

- **Aim for win-win by exploring underling interests, rather than sticking to fixed positions**

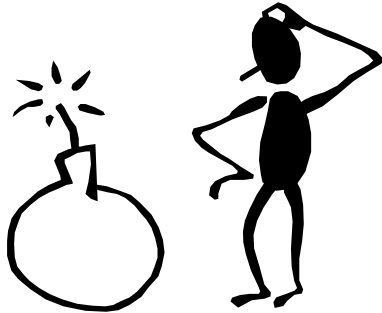
Let them know you are looking for a fair resolution of the issues. Ask questions like "Why is that important to you?" "What result would that achieve?" "Why does that seem the best option to you?". Help them understand why things are important to you. Co-operation can result in synergy, potentially enabling both parties to ultimately get more than what they thought possible.

- **When reaching final agreement upon the terms, watch out for ambiguities**

At the conclusion of the negotiation, make sure there are no grey areas left. These may otherwise be interpreted differently by the other party at a later stage - leading to an unnecessary dispute. Be aware some parties may attempt to leave deliberate ambiguities.

- **Consider the long term implications**

Ask yourself if you want to deal with them again. If so, it is likely in your interests to check that they feel the outcome is indeed a fair one. If they don't feel they've been treated fairly, then the danger is that next time (if there is one), they will be aiming to get "even".



“If they later end up looking for excuses to escape an unfair result, any gains you may have achieved may prove to be only short-term anyhow”

- **One More Time : Pursue fairness for a durable agreement**

If all the participants view the process itself as fair, they are more likely to “buy into” its result. Moreover, the focus on fairness can have an important impact on the substantive result. If the parties to a negotiation can agree on standards against which elements of the agreement can be measured, it can give each a face-saving reason for agreeing.

To be considered successful, an agreement must be durable. Parties who walk away from the table grumbling may regret their commitment and only honour it grudgingly, subsequently searching for escape routes.

- **Remain flexible**

The good negotiator has a wide range of skills and tactics in their repertoire. When one approach is not getting you the results you desire, try something different. There may be occasions when you discover that you need to abandon false assumptions you may have made about the motives of the other party – and completely change tack.

- **Know when to walk away**

The greatest source of power you have in any negotiation, is to what degree the other party perceive that you are prepared to walk away. If you have identified alternatives, it is obviously going to be easier to walk away. Good negotiators recognise when it is wise to simply conserve their energy.

- **But keep the door open**

A "No" can slam shut doors - sometimes it is better to say "If we were able to do that for you, what could you do for us?". If you do decide to walk away, remember to do it graciously, you want to avoid a situation where the other party feels that it would be a loss of face for them to subsequently contact you. Try saying “If you change your mind, we'd still like to hear from you”

- **Build the relationship**

Negotiation is certainly about issues, but it is also about feelings and personal relationships. The relationship that is established, for better or for worse, surrounds and profoundly impacts the outcome of the negotiation. One must constantly work at managing relationships during the negotiation, and bear in mind that for many people negotiation can be a stressful experience (although, we know that it does not need to be).