

# Negotiation

## Practice Guide



Negotiation is a common and daily event for most people. If done well, negotiating is a partnership in problem-solving, a joint decision-making process that works towards better solutions and gives everyone more of what they want and need.

Being a good negotiator at work helps you to:

- Achieve better outcomes for yourself and clients.
- Create sustained relationships built on trust and respect.
- Resolve conflict and differences of opinion peacefully.
- Reduce the stress that can often accompany negotiations.
- Build a productive and effective team and organisational culture.

To be a good negotiator you need to be observant and strategic, a good communicator and a person who not only wants to get the best outcome for yourself, but for others too.

Here are some key steps to achieve a successful negotiation:

### Planning

Good preparation leads to good negotiation. Therefore, before even entering a negotiation it is wise to spend some time deciding on:

- 1 What you want (your goals) and why these are important to you (your needs).
- 2 What you are willing to be flexible on and what you can't be flexible on.
- 3 What strategy you are going to use to achieve a win/win solution.
- 4 What might be the needs of the other party and how could you meet those needs to achieve your goal.

### Create a Cooperative Environment

The secret to negotiation is to have a good relationship with the person you are negotiating with. Trust, rapport and confidence between people make it easy to do a deal. This means you have to create an environment

where all parties feel safe and the right information is shared to allow people to work towards common goals.

To achieve this cooperative environment you need to:

- Gain rapport with the other person by using active listening.
- Listen to the other person's perspective and respect their needs and position.
- Have a problem solving, win/win approach.
- Agree on common goals.
- Make a conscious and committed effort to avoid tactics that undermine or sabotage a peaceful and respectful approach to negotiating.

To create a cooperative environment you should also think about when and where you are going to talk. The room temperature, the seating arrangements and the information or report you take with you can all either help or hinder the process. Consider who else needs to be there with you (a supporter or team) or whether you need to speak to the person in private over coffee.

*The most important trip you may take in life is meeting people half way.*  
Henry Boyle



### Influencing Others

To get the best out of a negotiation, you need to influence the other person. You do this by using good communication skills. Effective negotiators develop, nurture and strengthen their lines of communication throughout the process, before, during and after negotiation.

When communicating during negotiations, you have a choice about which communication style to use: passive, aggressive or assertive. Both passive and aggressive behaviour can create frustration and negativity. By being assertive however, other people know where you stand and how you feel. Assertive communication empowers you to express your needs and goals clearly and confidently.

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Empathy is a very useful and powerful communication tool to help you influence others. Empathy is identification with and understanding of another's situation, feelings, and motives. It is the process of understanding and appreciating the other person's emotions and positions. It means to "put yourself into his/her shoes".

Empathy is important because what is valuable to you might be different to what is valuable to someone else. In a negotiation you need to try to understand their perspective. If you demonstrate empathy, you will be able to build rapport and trust with the person you are negotiating with, making it much easier to influence them.

There are other things you can do to influence the other person and the negotiation process. They include giving rewards or recognition, providing information, giving financial incentives, giving them greater responsibility or security. In fact, anything that meets the other person's needs. Being coercive and using punishment to influence others should be avoided, because these tactics usually make people defensive and feel threatened.

*It's all about trust, respect, integrity, and being other-centred. I believe that the attitude in business today needs to be: what can I do for you to get you to cooperate with me?*

Frank Bucar

### Making Agreements

Reaching agreement is usually the final stage after preparation, listening and exploring options. The negotiating process should always be to aim for the people who are negotiating to come to some sort of agreement.

Good agreements are fair and represent a solution or way forward that everyone is happy with. They make everyone feel that the outcomes have met at least some of their needs, if not all of them. They ensure that trust between the negotiators is still intact and relationships have not broken down.

Once the negotiation is over it is important to get the agreement into writing. You can do this via an email, a

form, minutes of the meeting or a contract. Whatever way you choose to confirm the agreement get it sent off or if required, signed as soon as possible because the longer it takes to make the agreement in writing, the more likely people will forget what they agreed to and more conflict could arise!

### The Do's and Don'ts of Negotiation

- Do plan your strategy.
- Don't focus on positions. Instead, understand and meet the other person's needs.
- Do build trust and rapport with the person you are negotiating with.
- Don't view the other person as an opponent, but as a partner.
- Do use good active listening skills.
- Don't lose patience and make the other person feel threatened or pressured.
- Do use assertive communication skills.
- Don't agree to something you don't want.
- Don't hurry the agreement stage.
- Do put the agreement in writing.
- Do check the detail of the agreement carefully.
- Don't put the detail off till later.



### Recommended Reading

Fisher, Roger and William Ury. (1983) *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*. New York: Penguin Books

Illutla, M., & Nicholson, N. (Eds.). (2004) *Negotiation: How to make deals and reach agreement in business*. Norwich: Format Publishing

Lum, R. (2005) *The Negotiation Fieldbook, Simple Strategies To Help You Negotiate Everything*. New York: McGraw-Hill

Dale Carnegie Training, (2009) *The 5 Essential People Skills, How to Assert Yourself, Listen to Others, and Resolve Conflicts*. London: Simon & Schuster UK Ltd