
Principles of Successful Negotiation

Of a truth, we all spend much of our professional and personal lives negotiating and managing conflict. As organizations become less hierarchical, less based on positional authority and with many fewer clear boundaries of responsibility, conflict—or at least differences of opinion—will likely become an even greater component of our work lives in the future. Studies have shown that negotiation skills are among the most significant determinants of career success, and while negotiation can be said to be a bit of an art, there are specific techniques that anyone can learn.

What is Negotiation?

Negotiation is the art of working with a person or group with different views in order to produce the mutually beneficial agreement. Negotiations are formal discussions between people who have different aims or intentions especially in business or politics, during which they try to reach an agreement. Negotiation is a technique people engage in to settle differences. It is a mechanism through which agreement or compromise is reached in order to avoid contentions and dispute. The discussion process to arrive at an agreement between different parties, each having their own interest and preferences can also be tagged Negotiation. Negotiation ensures a give and takes decision-making process involving various parties with different opinions and preferences.

According to ROBBINS; Negotiation is a process in which two or more parties exchange goods and services and attempt to agree on the exchange rate for them. The degree to which the interests of the parties are aligned can facilitate the range and type of outcomes generated for resolution.

In addition, Negotiation also occurs in non-profit organizations, government branches, legal proceedings, within and among nations and in personal situations such as divorce, marriage, parenting and everyday life.

Self-interests is always involved in Negotiation as it always forms front and center, but should not blind either party to the interests of the other. Thus, negotiation is not a zero-sum game, in which people strive to outwit each other in order to get the best deal they can at the expense of their opponent. It is not persuasion, in which the persuader triumphs over the persuaded.

Features of Negotiation

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- Two Parties
 - Predetermined Goals
 - Expecting an Outcome
 - Parties willing to modify their Positions
 - Parties should understand the purpose of their negotiation.

Reasons for Negotiation

- To reach an Agreement
- To make a Point
- To settle an Argument
- To Compromise
- To beat the Opposition in cases of positional negotiation

Types of Negotiation

1. Distributive Negotiation – (Win-Lose Situation)

The most distributive feature is that it operates under a zero-sum game. The gain made by one person is a loss incurred by the other person. All parties involved in the negotiation indicates the point where the settlement will be made. The Sellers goal is to negotiate the highest price possible; the buyer negotiates as low a price as possible.

2. Integrative Negotiation – (Win-Win Situation)

Integrative bargaining (also called interest-based bargaining) is a negotiation strategy in which parties collaborate to find a "win-win" solution to their dispute. This strategy focuses on developing mutually beneficial agreements based on the interests of the disputants. The parties involved cooperate to maximize benefits by integrating their interests. All conflicting parties involved in the negotiation process looks at the problem together, try to search for alternatives and to evaluate them to reach a mutually acceptable decision or solution for all parties.

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The art of negotiating is needed in the everyday life. However, mastering this art in the business world is critical to be successful in our careers, because poor negotiations can negatively affect our company's future or cause us to lose important customers. Even when most negotiating strategies may seem natural, it's not uncommon for people to make mistakes. Luck, the charm is not the causes of successful negotiations. Discipline and perseverance, on the other hand, could unlock our ability to get the best deal possible under any circumstances. In the end, practice and preparation are what makes a good negotiator. The following are principles of Successful Negotiation.

1. Gather your information. Information is the foundation of effective value creation. Without knowing who our counterpart is, it is almost impossible to establish any good negotiation points. We must have adequate information about the person or company we are negotiating with, as it helps to build cases for our argument. What is the background of the other party and we should also know about their interests or hobbies? The knowledge of this makes it easier to generate rapport with them. It is also important to identify the parties' history, context, issues, and dynamics. We must be aware of what issues are important to us and what issues are important to the second or third party as the case may be. Also, we must identify what our positions are, where our strength lies and their positions, interests, and priorities in the negotiation.

In the words of Chester Karrass, the following strategies should be applied in order to gather information accurately for the needed purpose.

2. Build relationships. In handling conflict to result in a solution, some form of trust is essential and it's more important when negotiating. However, trust has to be earned, as it doesn't magically appear or has to do with the chemical reaction. It must be built or developed through relationships and friendship. Like any project that is worth the effort, building relationships takes time and dedication. But how can we do it? We can start by discovering common backgrounds and interests. For this matter, we can also include in the negotiation, individuals that have a common interest with the counterpart in the conflict. It should also be noted that first impressions matter and therefore it is essential to be aware of our body language, initial statements, and dress code. We should also be careful about keeping our promises and being reliable. Finally, emotional intelligence comes to the fore when closing a deal. We exhibit it to avoid looking aggressive or arrogant when explaining our point of view. We should also use it to manage the other party's emotions through flattery, humor and other methods to break any possible tension.

3. Know your BATNA and your opponents' BATNA. To explain what BATNA (Best Alternative to Negotiated Agreement) is, we could say that it is what we are going to do if we cannot reach

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an agreement and how good that option will be for us. We must also know our counterpart's BATNA. By knowing that, we could have a better understanding of what the ZOPA of this negotiation will be (Zone Of Possible Agreement). By knowing our BATNA we could also define our bottom line or limit. In other words, the most that we are willing to give or the least we are willing to take to reach a negotiated agreement.

4. Listen. Negotiation is not all about preparing speeches, questions, and counter questions. As much as they are important, it is also very sacrosanct to ensure we know how to listen. Our ideas and plans might change if we listen attentively to other parties' argument and counter-arguments. Being a good listener is a good strategy and weapon in hand to win a negotiation and not be the loser. As Stephen Covey added, "Seek first to understand, then to be understood", we must pay equal attention to the verbal and non-verbal communication engaged in before, during and after the negotiation. Adherence to this principle could cause a great win as a better solution could be revealed to both parties.

5. Take care of your target. Target is what you think is the reasonably possible solution to get out of a negotiation. However, the most vital rule is, never reveal your target at the beginning of any negotiation, because your opponent will hardly agree with your first proposition and for this reason and they could get a better bargain, we should manage our first offers and concessions to our advantage. But after the first offer has been made, negotiators should make concessions because they enable the parties to move toward the Zone of Potential Agreement (ZOPA), they also symbolize each party to bargain in good faith and finally, they tell the other party of the relative importance of the negotiating items. It should also be noted that for successful application of concessions, they need to be clearly labeled and also should be accompanied by an expectation that the other party will reciprocate with the willingness of meeting in the middle.

In the application of the principles during Negotiation, the following should be considered as it makes the negotiation hitch-free and to your advantage,

1. Separate the people from the problem – in other words, be kind to people, tough on issues, avoid character assassination and be objective in all issues.
2. Focus on interests, not positions. The interest of the party in which you represent should be the utmost aim to be achieved.
3. Generate a variety of possibilities before making a decision and.
4. Define objective standards as the criteria for making the decision.

Conclusion and Implication for Sustainable development

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Negotiation is concerned with the basic way of getting what you want from someone else, usually using verbal communication. As much as we negotiate in most of our conversation (formal or informal), there are principles which tend to guide those conversations to make it fruitful (to be in our favor) in the end.

The essence of negotiations is for conflicting parties to work together to solve a problem, and when this is achieved, we can say the negotiation was successful and this success will be attributed to the principles the parties involved heeded to. The principle ensures that all parties see the situation at hand with an unbiased mind, so the objective is achieved and reasonable agreement is reached.

The initiative that eventually brought the Sustainable development goals to life went through lots of negotiations and dialogues with countries before an agreement could be reached on the 17SDG's and it should be noted, that in pursuance of the goals by nation-states to be achieved in their countries, conflicts may arise and negotiations would take place to achieve development that will be inclusive for all.

Government is the driver of these goals; equal representation of all parties in talks that will move the nation forward should ensure adherence to the principles of negotiation which will go a long way in helping the government to fulfill their promises and cater for all parties equally and accordingly.

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