

Becoming a Master Negotiator



People underestimate the importance of mastering negotiation techniques. Especially in business or sales negotiation, it is not enough for you to think on your feet. What matters more is how prepared you are for any business negotiation.

To be a powerful negotiator in the world of business, it is essential that you master the art of negotiation because that is how you can effectively close more deals and gain more respect from the other parties.

So what is the difference between a good negotiation technique and an ordinary one?

The main differentiator for an effective negotiation model is that it emphasizes *studying the intentions* behind the other party's behaviours.

The moment you recognise that there is always a positive intention in every behaviour, the use of sales negotiation techniques in business negotiation often results in a highly desirable outcome as it tends to **focus on how to create a win-win situation** for both negotiating parties.

Here are some highly applicable negotiation tactics you may want to consider for greater success when negotiating with others:

1) Avoid responding to a proposal with a counter-proposal

The reason most negotiations tend to fail is because both sides are adamant at sticking to their viewpoints. Instead of restating, clarifying and probing to find out the position of their opponents, people will often try to respond to a proposal with a counter-proposal.

2) Find options that create a win-win situation

Unless the conflicting party is satisfied with the outcome, winning a negotiation may just lead to temporary joy but more problems in the future, when your opponent tries to seek revenge or get even. You should always look for the best alternatives to a negotiated agreement.

3) Avoid attack/defence exchanges

Fighting fire with fire often does not work in a business or sales negotiation. Thus, always treat your opponent's proposal as one option and probe for the intention behind it. At the same time, practise tolerance when your own proposal is being attacked.

Very often, you will be astonished to find that you are capable of thinking up some brilliant solutions to resolve conflicts if you care enough to understand your opponent's intention behind his behaviour.

4) Separate intent from behaviour

In a common scenario, where a sales department is facing a standoff with the finance department, it is always possible to find a positive intention behind the behaviour of the latter's staff, for instance, a desire to increase the company's bottom line and make the business more prosperous. Since the intentions of both parties are similar and positive, there will always be a better way of achieving what you and the other party want.

5) Always give suggestions and ask questions

Be polite and ask questions such as, "May I offer a suggestion?" or "I'd like to ask a question". This will often help in lowering your opponent's defensive barrier so that you can effectively plant suggestions into his mind and make him more receptive to your proposal.

6) State your reasons before making a proposal

A good negotiation strategy often allows you to "disarm" your opponent before "launching an attack" on them.

As stated earlier, the reason why many negotiations often fail is because the conflicting parties are overly suspicious of each other and are constantly trying to defend their own stand whenever the other party states their proposal.

By choosing to state your reasons first, you are effectively removing this invisible barrier and making it easier for you to bring up your party's proposal for discussion.

7) Anticipate Objections

There will always be objections, and the best way to handle them is not to avoid them, but to anticipate and handle them tactfully.

This anticipation not only helps you to remain calm when handling the objection but also enables you to handle it more constructively.

Mastering these effective and proven sales negotiation techniques is not going to happen overnight. Be persistent and consistent in your efforts to learn the ropes, and you will become a more accomplished and successful negotiator.

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