

Messenger

Vol. 8 No. 12

December, 2010

Negotiation Strategies Part 2

Last month we began our look at negotiation strategies. This month we'll continue by looking at the stages of negotiation. As I researched this concept, I realized that these stages happen not only in the workplace, but in our personal lives as well. For instance, at my house negotiations have been taking place between my kids and husband and I about Christmas presents. Have you been there? Our boys see something on TV that they "have to have", but mom and dad don't agree. As we try to get them excited about something else, my husband and I found ourselves going through the stages! First, we prepared how we'd bring up a different gift idea. Then we all debated and bargained. We're still working on the closing process, but we'll get there.

Preparation

In order to be ready for a negotiation, you must prepare. Understand everything you can about the issue. In all stages of negotiation, you must give in order to receive. According to Tim Hindle, author of Negotiation Skills, "The key to negotiation is to realize that all parties need to gain something of value in exchange for any concessions they make." You should attempt to have a win-win situation by knowing what is important for each party. In order to do this, you must be flexible.



There are nine steps to help you prepare.

1. Identify and clarify your objectives. Write down all your objectives and put them in order of priority. Identify issues that are open to compromise and those that are not.
2. Divide your priorities into three groups:
 - Those that are ideal
 - Those that represent a realistic target
 - Those that are the minimum you must fulfill to feel that the negotiation has not been a failure
3. Prepare yourself. Allow for preparation time and research. Assemble your research data. Develop your logic deductively and inductively. A conclusion is drawn from examples based on experience
4. Assess the opposition. Look at the situation from the other party's point of view. Try to identify their objectives and prioritize them. Analyze their strengths and weaknesses.
5. Choose a strategy. A strategy is an overall policy designed to achieve a number of specified

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You can't win any game unless you are ready to win.

Connie Mack (1862-1956)

Professional baseball player and manager

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objectives. You should keep your negotiating strategy simple and flexible. Your strategy will depend on several factors:

- Personality
- Circumstance
- Issues under negotiation

6. Understand your personality. Your personality will determine your negotiation style. Are you an Avoider, Compromiser, Accommodator, Competitor, or Problem Solver?

7. Understand your opponent. This may be one of the most beneficial steps. Knowing how the other side thinks will help you be more prepared. For example, if the person is analytic, give him statistics, figures or graphs. Is she more influenced by things that look, feel, taste, smell, and sound good? Tailor your proposal to include the factors that will persuade him or her the most.

8. Prepare an agenda. An agenda is a written list of issues to be discussed. Your agenda should use simple language and include timings for each of the issues under discussion. Once it has been made, stick to it!

9. Create the right atmosphere. Have a positive atmosphere. Attend to the small details. Make

sure everyone is comfortable and there is enough lighting and supplies. Do not negotiate longer than two hours without a break. The proper location is also important. Should the meeting take place on "home turf" or on neutral ground?



Proposal

Put forward a proposal with as little emotion as possible. Listen carefully to your opposition; their

wishes may be closer to yours than you expect. Be willing to adjust your strategy if you can see a compromise early on in the proceedings. Look for any similarities in your negotiating positions. Take notes of the offers made, trying to record them verbatim.

Bargaining

After you have heard all of the proposal, ask for a break to consider it. While you might not actually need time to think it over, your position may be damaged if you respond to the other party's proposal too quickly. You can indicate that every concession you make is a major loss for you. While you're going back and forth with the other party, try to limit the information you freely share. Information should be exchanged as part of a compromise and not just given away. Ask lots of questions; the more information you have, the more you can control the negotiations.

During this time, the other party may try to throw ploys at you. Good negotiators need to be able to recognize and counter the ploys and tactics that are commonly used during negotiations. Ploys are used to distract you and dominate the discussion, shift the emphasis of the negotiation and reshape the terms of the issue, or to manipulate you into closing negotiations before you are ready. Some common types of ploys are making threats, bluffing, using intimidation, and making emotional appeals. Ignoring a ploy will neutralize the intended effect.

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***Wisdom is the reward you get for
a lifetime of listening when you'd have
preferred to talk.
Doug Larson***

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Merry Christmas!

The Mathis
Group would
like to wish you
a very merry
and blessed
Christmas season!



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Do not take ploys personally – they are only being used for manipulative purposes.

Closing

A negotiation can be brought to a successful conclusion only when both parties have made concessions that are mutually acceptable in order to reach an agreement. Each party should be clear about their objectives. The consequences of failing to agree must be considered. A final offer should be proposed only when the atmosphere is cooperative and receptive, and the other side must be convinced that it is genuine. Allow time for your offer to be discussed before it is accepted or rejected. Encouraging closure can help move the process along. Prompting an action, such as “Please sign here” or “Does this mean we have a deal” are great ways to close the negotiation.

Earlier I mentioned that asking questions helps you have control over the situation. John Ilich’s book Winning Through Negotiation has some excellent advice. Questions are excellent probing tools that help you to get information to which you might not otherwise have access. General questions are best at the beginning of the bargaining. Specific questions call for more confined answers and are useful at

any stage of the bargaining. Leading questions seek a “yes” answer and put your opponent in a “yes” mood. You can use questions that require a choice to get a commitment from your opponent. Questions that call for obvious answers put your opponent in an agreeable mood and give you good bargaining momentum.

Knowing how to prepare, bargain, and close a negotiation are vital for success. If just one of those areas are weak, it can hurt the entire process! Next month we look at negotiation and conflict. We’ve all been in negotiations that haven’t been pleasant. We’ll show you some tips on how to work through them.



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The Mathis Group, Inc
Dr. Keith Mathis
106 Lakeview Woods
Eureka, MO 63025
800-224-3731
636/938-5292 voice/fax
keith@themathisgroup.com
www.themathisgroup.com
www.pmexpertlive.com
www.trainthegov.com
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