



Your Guide to Negotiating

What is Negotiating?

The definition of Negotiation is: “Bargaining (give and take) process between two or more parties (each with its own aims, needs, and viewpoints) seeking to discover a common ground and reach an agreement to settle a matter of mutual concern or resolve a conflict.” Business Dictionary

Negotiating is all about getting more of what you want, through knowledge, skill and persuasion, whilst still being interested in a positive result for other involved parties. They are often not all about money, they can be about resources, relationships, activities, timings and quality of services provided.

You may think of negotiating as happening across a desk with lots of fist thumping, in reality it can take place in person, over email, on the telephone or other digital communication channels. It may be done and dusted in a few hours or take 12 months to land a deal.

However and wherever it is done all negotiations have some essential ingredients.



Ingredients

For the process to be a true negotiation, the following conditions need to exist.

1. The parties involved need to at least be prepared to reach agreement. If one party is not willing to discuss and be flexible, the negotiation gets stuck
2. There should be both common and conflicting interests. Common interests get you around the table in the first place. Conflicting interests are there to give you some basis upon which to negotiate. If you all agree on everything it becomes a cosy discussion or a joint problem solving exercise, rather than a proper negotiation.
3. All parties have to be prepared to be explicit about what they want and what they don't want. Negotiations portrayed on TV and in films tend to show negotiators with cards held close to their chests. In reality negotiators speak up about what they want and are prepared to do and they know that if they don't, the negotiation will flounder. The skill is not showing all your cards too early.

4. The negotiators involved need to have the appropriate freedom to act. Make sure you have been given the necessary authority to be there and know how far you can go or how much you can give away. If you don't have this, it may affect your credibility and confidence and you will be wondering why you were asked to be there in the first place.



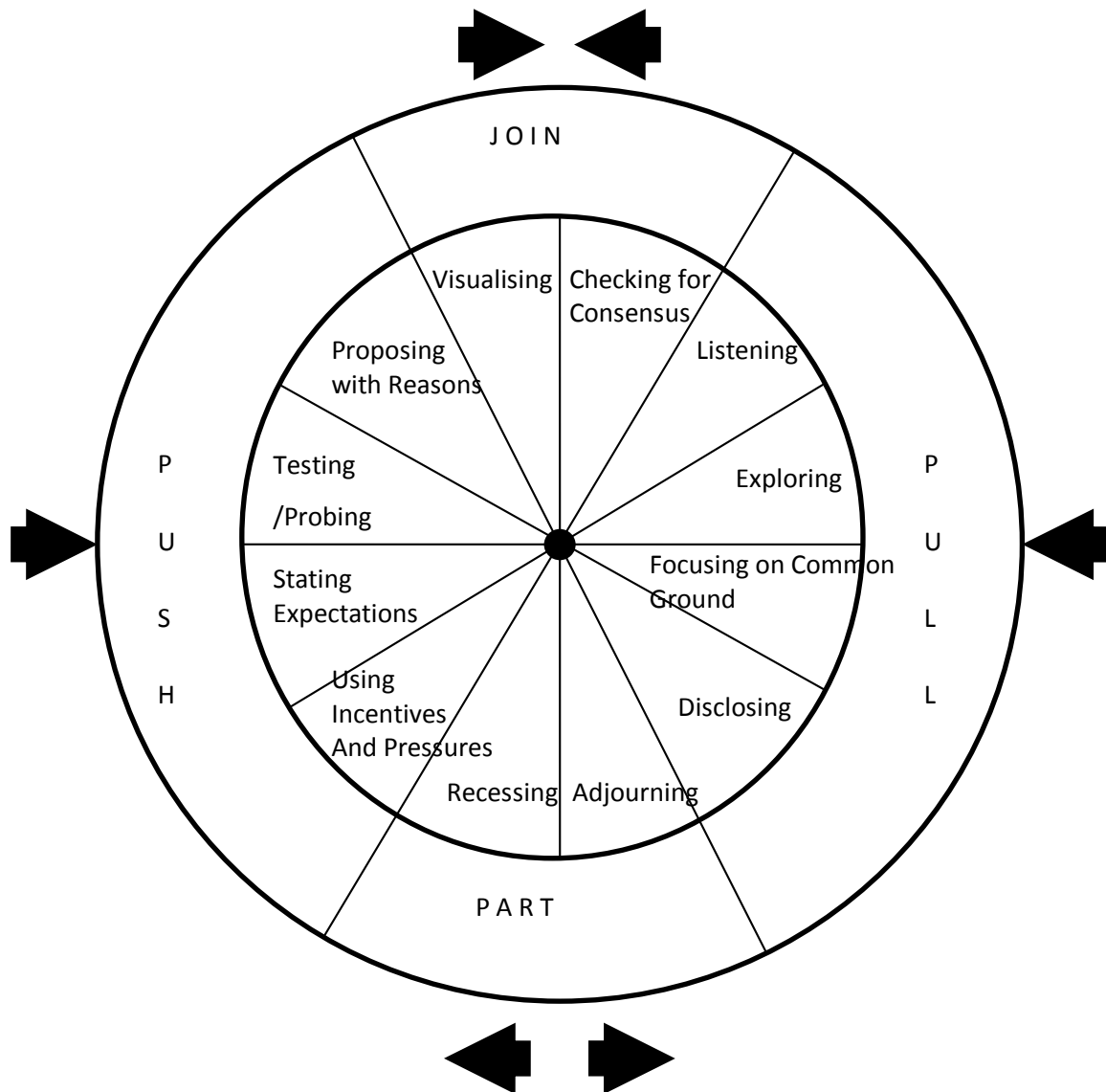
The Three Angles of Negotiation

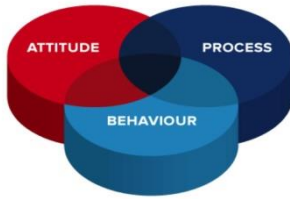
Get your attitude right. Whilst negotiation is about getting more of what you want, you also have to think long term. If you are in a business where long term relationships matter, your attitude - and therefore your behaviour, because attitude influences behaviour- needs to be more “win-win” than “win lose”. This means that you are interested in success for your side, but realise that your success will be increased the by the other parties getting something out of the negotiation too. This is an assertive rather than an aggressive (you are out to win at all costs) or passive (you are happy to let others win) attitude to negotiating. Only adopt an aggressive attitude where you have no interest in future relationships and even then, proceed with caution: you never know where these people might turn up in your work of work one day, or who they know who is important to you in your work. Only adopt a passive negotiation attitude if you have a lot of ground to make up with another party. Perhaps you owe them one or have made mistakes that need rectifying. Even then, negotiation patterns tend to stick so you should aim to get the relationship back on a more even footing before the next negotiation.



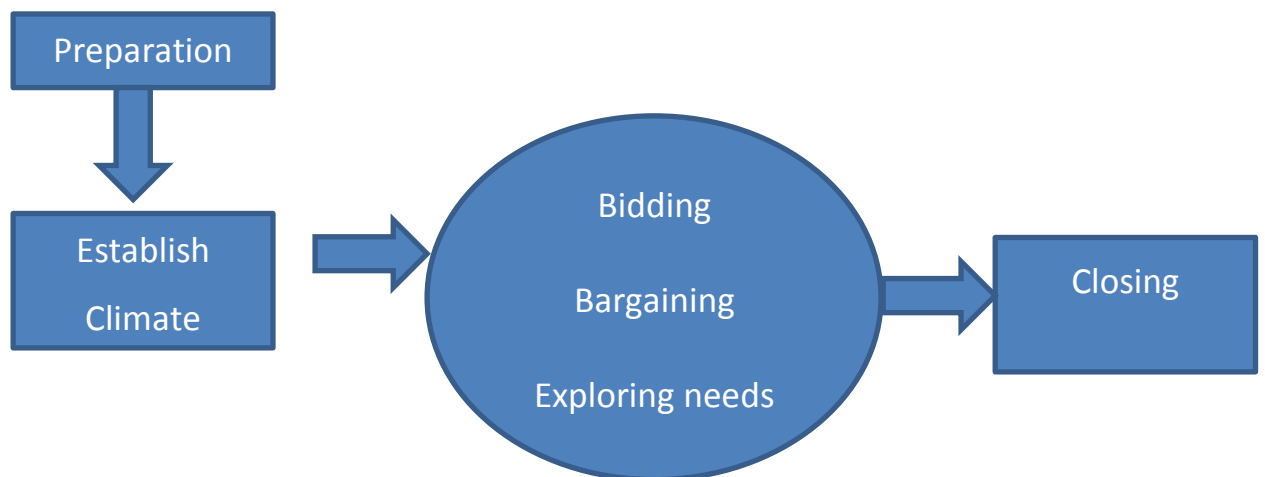
Practise effective negotiation behaviour. If you want to maintain a “win-win” approach to the negotiation, there are a range of behaviours that help you maintain this stance. Some of the time you will want to PUSH – to ensure you get your say. This involves initiating the conversation, making proposals, using incentives (and sometimes pressures) and asking quick-fire testing questions. At other times you will want to PULL – to find out more on the interests of the other parties. This involves active listening, asking exploratory questions, using some disclosure to let the others in on your thinking and also reflecting back what has been said to you to ensure you understand it correctly. There are also times when you need to JOIN – to

bring all the parties together. Behaviours that join are when you summarise, check for consensus, focus and build on common ground and paint a vision of a common future with a positive agreement. All these behaviours help to move the negotiation forward and stand your ground assertively and respectfully.





Follow a proper negotiating structure.



Do your homework before you even begin conversations. Plan what you want and need and what you are prepared to concede. Plan also what you think the other parties want and need and what questions you want to ask to help establish their position. If you have negotiated with them in past or even if you haven't but have information about them, think about their negotiating style and how best to respond. The more flexible you can be the more likely you are to maintain an effective climate.

Establish the Climate. The front end of the negotiation should be about building rapport and maintaining that throughout

Exploring needs and wants. Vital to the process to get everyone's needs out through questioning and putting your needs out through stating them. This is vital for the second stage – bidding and bargaining. If you haven't found out what you need to know, you will be bidding in the dark.

Bidding is where you tentatively discuss what the deal could look like.

Bargaining is where all parties decide where they will compromise, what they will give away and what they won't, in order to come to an agreement. Things can get sticky at these stages to hold firm to your "win-win" attitude!

Closing. This is where you confirm what seems to be the offer on the table and ask others if you are all in agreement. A no from anyone will take you back in to the negotiation process, a yes means you have reached agreement and can confirm details and what happens next. This is the end of the negotiation but could be the start of the relationship so continuing with the right attitude and efficient follow up is vital. Use this negotiating structure to help you plan and prepare for a negotiation without too many nasty surprises.

So there you have it, an overview of what negotiating is, how to approach it, the vital skills and an easy structure.

Want to know more? Talk to us about facilitating a negotiation skills workshop to help your organisation grow stronger negotiators. [Click here to contact us](#)

