

5 Actionable Tips on Improving Your Negotiation Skills



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Negotiation is inevitable for salespersons, business managers, and nearly everyone that operates a business of some kind. Usually, negotiations come along with opportunities that could be in your favor. After all, that's what motivates us to make the most of every negotiation.

It could be an opportunity to persuade the customer to purchase your offer at a specific price, convince the supplier to increase the number of materials, or request your employees to adopt a particular company policy.

Besides, you might be dealing with people that aren't easy to convince. Arm yourself with these five tips to help you win the negotiation.

1. Build a Connection

Often, we may think we know the other party, but the reality is, we don't. It's never wise to assume you know what the other individual wants until you consider their position, experience, perspective, and reputation.

Be empathetic because people won't always be honest and upfront regarding what they want. Consider what you already know or what other people have told you about someone. You'll [understand the intent behind their tactics](#) and know what to say so you can persuade them.

When you understand the other party's situation, you'll know the best approach to use and steer it toward a fair and equitable result. Establishing common ground and expressing humanity can break even the most rigid negotiator.

If you don't practice this exercise, you'll only put forward your point without validating the other person's concerns. The result will be a defensive response that'll make it difficult to compromise.

2. Be a Good, Active Listener

Active listening goes beyond the 'hearing' aspect. It's the conscious choice to listen, decipher, and understand the speaker's message, whether it comes with facial expressions, words, vocal properties, or gestures.

Additionally, it's not staying silent as the other individual speaks. Instead, it's a cooperative association in which competitive attitudes don't have room. In other words, it doesn't refer to using the time the other person is talking to identify logic errors, become defensive or form arguments.

Active listening is an invaluable negotiation technique. Listening can be the key to reduce tension and enhance progress in deadlock situations. When you listen, you're signaling to the other party that you're putting your opinions aside and taking your time to consider their perspective.

Besides, listening helps you to collect all the relevant details regarding a particular situation. And with that information, you can explore the matter in a more effective and deeper way. The last thing you want to do is sit there, smile blankly, and nod your head as the other party argues their case.

Listening gives you access to more information. With more information, you've got the power to help you reach the desired goal. So, how do you exercise listening skills during a negotiation?

Powerful Tricks to Transform Your Listening Skills into a Successful Negotiation

- **Ask questions:** When you ask questions, you express interest in what the other person is saying. It also shows that you're ready to explore different sides of the argument. For example, when you formulate a question starting with, "Can you please explain what you mean by....", it shows that you're paying attention and willing to understand the other party's viewpoint.
- **Paraphrasing:** Paraphrasing is an effective way to show that you understand what the other person is saying, as it sums up what they'd said. Thus, use sentences such as, "from your explanation, I understand that your plan is to ..."
- **Giving Feedback:** Providing feedback is the best way to show you've carefully considered the other person's point of view. It demonstrates that you didn't disregard their views and that you're ready to further discuss their perspectives.
- **Acknowledgment:** Just like feedback, acknowledgment is an effective way to identify the other person's concerns so you can work together toward solving the problem.

3. Place Yourself in Their Shoes

One of the biggest mistakes that negotiators make is failing to uncover their opponent's position. For example, when selling, if the prospect isn't ready to pay the asking price, then it's important to find out what they'd like to pay.

Most salespeople usually miss out on this point. Typically, most say 'OK' and proceed to discount the price by say 10%, after which the prospect might say, 'the price is still too high'. Upon hearing this, the salesman will give more discount.

But this is not an effective approach, and only unprepared and inexperienced salespersons use it.

It's essential to prepare upfront for any negotiation process by evaluating the other side's unique position. By doing some research beforehand, you can [choose the right approach](#) so you can organize, lead the negotiation process, and eventually close the deal.

Next time the prospect objects your price or terms, you should ask them what they're ready to pay. That way, you'll have two positions and sufficient ground for negotiation.

4. Be Direct

Some people don't like small talk; they like it when you cut right to the chase. So, you need to understand them beforehand so you can prepare accordingly. If you're engaging a negotiator who takes an extreme position, you may want to come up with your own tough strategies.

But remember to always act respectfully and calmly when speaking your mind. In some situations, it's necessary to tell a negotiating party that their conduct is unacceptable and

that you won't withstand any manipulative or controlling tendencies. Prioritize self-respect, and you may get full cooperation from your opponent.

5. Don't Take Things Personally

Most negotiations don't succeed because either party is carried away by personal issues or [matters unrelated to the deal at hand](#). Instead, successful negotiators focus on a problem-solving approach, which is typically how the agreement may end.

Focusing on the other person's personality or issues unrelated to making a deal can sabotage a negotiation. If your negotiation partner is rude or unruly, try to understand their behavior without taking anything too personal.

Final Word

To win a negotiation, it's important that you [strive to understand the other person](#) first. Put yourself in their shoes, be a good listener, and build a connection. Remember, it's not always about your perspective and what you want. You also need to understand the needs of the other party.

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