

Effective Negotiation Skills Workshop Course Outline: Two-Day Duration

Day 1

Introductions and Purposes – Presentation and Group Discussion

In this introductory section we will outline the general purposes of the workshop and present, briefly, the analytic approach that underlies and informs the course structure. As part of the introductions, we will ask participants to identify and discuss challenges related to their important internal and external negotiations.

Assumptions and Paradigms – Interactive Exercise

This is a powerful, fun, and engaging multi-round negotiation exercise. It is also an important context-setting component that engages people immediately and has a very thought-provoking debrief. It raises a number of fundamental issues that interfere with our ability to produce good results in our interactions with others, such as: (1) The pros and cons of competitive versus collaborative behaviours; (2) Whether negotiations and conflicts need to be battles, or whether they could be transformed into something more constructive; (3) The notion of taking leadership in a problem situation; (4) Issues of trust; (5) Relationship as a factor in negotiations; (6) the definition of “success” in negotiation; (7) Long-term vs. short-term objectives; and (8) A number of other unproductive, disempowering assumptions we often make in our day-to-day interactions with people, and how they get in our way. This will set a powerful and thought-provoking context for the rest of the workshop, and specifically highlight some of the benefits of collaboration. The exercise is fun and energetic, and sets the tone and stage for all else that will happen in the workshop.

Defining Success in Negotiation – Brief Presentation

The Defining Success in Negotiation presentation outlines an organized way of thinking about a good outcome in negotiation – The 8-Elements of Negotiation. Building on the premise that clearly defined objectives are much easier to achieve than simply a desire to “win” or “beat” the other side, this 8-element definition is a tool that participants can use to define negotiation success in every internal and external negotiation in which they engage. This segment should provide participants with the analytical structure they need to enable them to determine and prioritize appropriate goals for their negotiations.

The Contract Negotiation – One-on-One Role Play

Working effectively in a complex environment more often than not requires some form of internal and/or external contracting. In The Contract Negotiation, participants have a chance to prepare for, negotiate 1-on-1, and perhaps to watch a demonstration negotiation (either by two participants or one participant and an instructor). Together, the preparation and negotiation provide an opportunity for participants to synthesize the concepts and to experiment with different approaches.

The review and discussion typically highlight: (1) the dynamics of cooperative and competitive approaches to negotiation; (2) the power of legitimacy; (3) methods for changing the negotiating dynamics; and (4) the effect of walk-away alternatives on negotiation style. The review and discussion would also focus on such problems as advocating for an advantageous, or mutually advantageous, agreement when "my position seems weaker than theirs." This segment focuses participants on the challenges of obtaining optimum **for both sides** in their negotiations while at the same time maintaining strong cross-boundary working relationships.

Key Lessons and New Questions

Here, participants will be given an opportunity to do some individual reflection on the day, summarizing for themselves the Key Lessons and insights they derived from the day, and also identifying any new questions that may have arisen over the course of the day, or lingering questions that they still would like guidance on.

End of Day 1

Day 2

A General Strategy for Negotiation – Presentation and group discussion

This presentation sets forth some of the reasons why negotiators often obtain unsatisfactory results in negotiation, and presents some "rules of thumb" which are useful both in planning for and conducting negotiations. These "rules of thumb" are designed to be kept in mind and used as a guide in all negotiations, and are particularly helpful as a joint problem solving model for internal negotiations. To illustrate the points and make the behavioral strategy come alive, we will use a series of videotape vignettes to show the participants what various pieces of the General Strategy For Negotiation look like in action. Particular attention will be paid to issues of separating relationship from substance, getting underneath hard positions to probe for underlying interests, using objective measures to make decisions, and dealing with explicit and implicit threats.

Application to “Live” Negotiations

Now that the participants have gained some familiarity with the 8-Element Negotiation Framework, we provide an opportunity for them to apply it directly to challenging negotiations they are currently facing at work. This enables participants to connect the tools directly to a real negotiation, providing both insights on how to use the framework, and also new ideas about how to approach the specific negotiation they are wrestling with.

The Partnership Dispute – Two-on-Two Role Play

The Partnership Dispute presents a situation of significant conflict (and possible opportunity) between parties with a complicated relationship history who are unsure whether continuing the relationship makes sense. The insight gained from pulling apart this complicated fact situation using the 8-element framework allows participants to experience the power of systematic preparation. Participants will see how preparation can affect the resulting negotiation dynamics, allowing strong conflict to be handled productively. The review raises the question of how participants can ensure that they prepare more effectively for their own future negotiations.

Finally, coming where it does in the session, the case gives participants an opportunity to try out and build skill in implementing all of the concepts discussed up to this point.

Dealing with Difficult Negotiators – Presentation and Role Play

The Systems of Negotiation presentation and subsequent role-plays illustrates how the various elements of negotiation are combined and weighted differently to produce identifiable styles or “systems” of negotiation. Given differences in culture, operating environment, or the nature of a given transaction, people consciously or unconsciously choose to use a given system. This presentation focuses on how to identify different systems, and on what factors to consider in choosing a system. Most important, this presentation outlines ways of changing the unproductive system someone is trying to use to a more productive one. Some portion of these role-plays is often conducted at the front of the room in a stop-and-start fashion, with commentary from participants and coaching from the facilitators.

Putting It All Together: Going Forward and Personal Action Plans

In this final module we will ask the participants to review all of the tools and concepts of the session and 1) identify specific places in their day to day lives where they can and will immediately implement some of the ideas; and 2) articulate places, for themselves, that they want to focus their personal professional development.

End of Workshop