

Negotiating Techniques Exercise

mlt June 14, 2007

Try this exercise to help understand various negotiating techniques.

In an NCMA audio seminar on June 13, Mark Scholz presented a slide showing various negotiating techniques used in competitive negotiations. He used “competitive” to define negotiations where one party seeks to negotiate to the detriment of the other and “techniques” to describe what we have sometimes called negotiating “tactics” or “strategies”. Mark made the point that many people become comfortable with one *technique* and tend to use it a more, and sometimes more than they should.

Since each *technique* might be more advantageous in certain circumstances, it’s not good to get locked in to one *technique* and use it exclusively. A better approach to negotiation is to use different techniques when circumstances warrant. Mark suggested that one way to help ourselves understand various *techniques* was to find obvious examples. Mark gave us one example – and I think it would be worthwhile to expand this into a group discussion exercise.

Try this exercise to help understand various negotiating techniques.. See if you can fill in the blanks with examples. Compare notes and discuss with your colleagues in a staff meeting. As a more revealing discussion, talk about which techniques each person in the group tends to use more and ways to expand into using alternate techniques.

I’ve added Mark’s example to his list of Competitive *Negotiating Techniques* below to get you started and included a few examples of my own

Negotiating Technique	How it sounds	Public example of this technique
SOFT techniques	Condescending and groveling	
Association	...you have to agree because others already have	
Tale of Woe	...poor me, just help me out this one time	
You’re more important	...Since you can do anything you want, I was	
You know more	...I just can’t figure this out and you are the capable expert	Detective Columbo on TV

HARD techniques	Can lead to resentment and animosity	
Blame 3 rd party		
Carrot		
Deadlining	Hurry sale ends at midnight, prices will never be this low again..	Car dealer TV ads;
POPOP (put the other party on the defensive)	...it's your fault, now what are you going to do to make it right	
Name Dropping		
ANALYTICAL techniques	Impersonal and aloof	
Budget Limitations		
Credentialing		
Disclaimer		
Little Professor	...let me explain the numbers to you and I'm sure you will agree.	
Standard Industry Practices		

Commentary by mlt:

Do the various techniques overlap? Yes, here is an example: “ ... Your CEO asked me to provide feedback about how good of a job you are doing.”

Can more than one be used in a negotiation? Sure, in any complex negotiation various combinations of techniques may be used to resolve different issues.

Are these all? Nope, there is no magic to this list. It’s just a list and terminology that Mark compiled. There could be others, such as the “defacto ploy”, “good cop/bad cop” or the “walk out”.

Do people really use some techniques more frequently? Yes, I can think of people I have worked with who are very predictable because they use the same technique again and again.

Does repeatedly using the same technique weaken your negotiating skill? Yes, consider the car dealer “sale ends at midnight” ad. Today, does anyone really believe the prices will never be low again?

Can we use these types of techniques and still conduct a win-win negotiation? Yes, the techniques are a means to the end and may be necessary to make a point or motivate the other party to negotiate in good faith.

For the philosophers in the crowd; Machiavelli has a good point, but how you use the power [or negotiating skill] and what you do with it makes a lot of difference.

Mt