



TenStep Supplemental Paper

13 March 2004

Negotiating for Success

To succeed in a career in HR, negotiation skills are a must. They are essential for working out project details, obtaining resources, purchasing equipment, negotiating contracts, and landing a new job or promotion.

Whether you are a project leader or a senior HR manager, strong negotiation skills are a must for communicating effectively with peers, superiors, customers, and vendors.

A good negotiator is bound to gain more respect within the organization. This skill is handy, especially in an organization where consensus from many different groups and managers is required before beginning a new project.

Steps to success

So, how can you acquire the skills you need?

The key is good communication; poor communication can severely hamper effective negotiations.

- To be effective, you must persuade and negotiate within the audience's frame of reference. Knowing what you want to do isn't enough. You have to be able to describe it to them in terms that they can relate to.
- If someone is asking your department for something you can't provide, instead of immediately responding that you lack resources, try to listen to the other party. Focus on what the other person's interest is in the outcome of the problem. Try to understand the other person's concerns and needs and build a trusting relationship with the person with whom you're negotiating.
- Don't make the mistake of trying to outsmart the other person; instead, strive to work together. Although initially this strategy may appear difficult, it will ultimately be productive.
- Finally, recognize that being a successful negotiator does not always mean getting your way. For many professionals, this concept can be hard to grasp because of today's competitive environment.

Difficulties come from the fact that negotiation requires compromise without a score and more patience than employees are used to.

Getting results

Once you acquire essential negotiation skills, you can put them to use in many situations.

- Strong negotiation skills will help you achieve smoother relationships with both internal and external customers.
- They will help you better define statements of work, project requirements, and pricing, as well as manage expectations for mutual satisfaction.



TenStep Supplemental Paper

- By negotiating, you can avoid potential conflicts and serious consequences when there is a difference between preconceived customer ideas and system requirements or overall system design principles.
- This skill is also useful in large, global companies where the practical need for standardization may conflict with specific local requirements: You can use your negotiation skills to adapt your HR strategy to address varying local needs within the context of your broader, standardized, global design strategy.
- Negotiating skills help in working with internal customers. They can help to successfully move from possibility to practicality, to balance schedules and resources, and to obtain a commitment.
- Negotiating can help you obtain better prices and contracts from vendors. Using this skill, you can avoid locking your company into multiyear agreements and can secure the best deal while proving your own worth.

Reaping rewards

Effective negotiation skills are essential to building a successful HR career. Negotiation skills are one of the three keys to organizational success.

To be truly effective, an employee must not only have the required skills, he or she must be able to persuade others to adopt his/her approach. Negotiation is also a very important part of teamwork, which is becoming more and more common in organizations. The bottom line is that good negotiation skills can help employees become much more effective and productive.