



[Academic Script]

Negotiation Skills and Effective Communication

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Academic Script

1. Negotiation Skills

The word Negotiation means, "A discussion intended to produce an agreement". If we comprehend each word that explains negotiation, we have to understand 'Discussion' in the perspective of negotiation. The second word is 'Intention', which has to be comprehended in the perspective of negotiation. The third word is 'produce' which we have to understand in the perspective of negotiation and last but not the least we have to perceive the word 'agreement' in the light of the process of negotiation.

Negotiation plays a major role in almost everybody's life. At some point or the other, almost all human beings enter into negotiation. In the perspective professional life, one would think of negotiation in the areas of contract, labour, wages, deadlines, work load, etc. In the personal sphere, one would negotiation in the areas of social responsibilities, social gatherings, medical treatment, ethical and moral bindings, etc.

"Any discussion that requires a decision at some level with an expected or unexpected outcome involves and requires negotiating skills."

I would like to give you a clear picture by describing a few situations in which negotiation takes place and either one or both parties in negotiation win.

1. The employees of the marketing department in a company have accomplished a project by working really hard for three

months. They want the company to give them a holiday for one week, practically five working days. They proposed this to the manager of the department but the manager was not ready to give a leave for five working days. The employees appointed a representative to talk with the manager for the same. Finally, at the end of negotiation with the representative and the manager, they came to the conclusion that the company will sponsor a trip for the employees to a nice destination for three working days.

2. A college student has wants to go for a movie with friends but at the same time, the entire group has to complete an assignment given by the professor. The parent does not allow the ward for the movie. Finally, at the end of the negotiation it is decided that the group of friends gather at the student's home, finish the assignment and only if the assignment is over they will be allowed to go for the movie and a dinner as well.

Now if you understand both these examples, the negotiation has led to a win-win situation for both the parties in negotiation. Both the parties are at benefit. If the negotiator were adamant and not assertive, the parties would not have to workable solutions.

2. Effective Communication

The components of Successful Negotiation are

- Preparation
- Communication Skills
- Emotional Control
- Final Negotiation: Closing the Deal

Let us understand each component in detail

Preparation:

In any aspect of life, preparation plays a major role. Preparation builds strength and knowledge. It allows us to know more details of the issue to be negotiated. As per the need, we may also gather details of such situations in other companies and support our negotiation by citing such issues.

In the art of negotiation, it is not the preparation of the intricacies of the issue, which is only important, but to know the person with whom the negotiation has to be done is equally important. One must understand the traits, likes, dislikes of a person before initiating the negotiation. There are different types of persons; someone may like to be informal while negotiating or some other may stick to sheer formality only. The usage of vice-versa may lead to unexpected or non-workable deals. Identifying that different personalities command different approach will facilitate more fruitful discussions and win-win situations.

Preparation also includes the negotiators skill to understand the goal. One must also be clear and ready to let go to certain limits. As both the parties in negotiation are assertive and not aggressive, they must be able to compromise at workable solutions. The only care, which both parties have to take, is not to allow the other to enforce upon the former their demands beyond their ultimate compromising limits.

Communication Skills:

The key communication skills, which are necessary for effective communication during negotiations, are:

1. Dynamic or active listening

2. Lucidity of message
3. Non-verbal approach

Let us understand these aspects of communication in detail.

Dynamic or active listening means not missing any message that comes to you and at the same time making sure that your message to the negotiating party is clear and unambiguous.

To improve dynamic or active listening, one must be aware of barriers to the same.

There are several barriers to active listening. They can be classified in two groups. Internal barrier and external barrier.

Internal barrier means the state of mind of the negotiator. He should be composed and his mind should not be wondering on any other issues other than that being negotiated.

The examples of internal barrier are:

- One may think of the movie that night, the tickets of which are in his pocket.
- One may also be preoccupied with the work pressure in the office.

Such internal barriers have to be eliminated and the negotiator should be all set to contribute to the issue discussed.

Poor listening habits are also due to the closed mind towards the person as well. One must shun the personal issues to come in between the issue being negotiated.

Lucidity of Message:

A negotiator, unless it is a negotiation to buy time, must fully endorse to the saying: "Language is a medium to express not impress". The negotiator has to develop a chronology of the

thoughts to be presented in a very easy language so that the other party understands each message clearly and does not assume anything to be fishy in the matter.

- If by chance one comes across ambiguous messages, one can ask questions or clarifications of the point presented.
- Try to focus on the points to be discussed rather than giving too much of background for the same. A verbose point will lose the focus on the issue.
- Use jargons only when necessary.
- Keep responses that are short and just answers to the questions. Avoid interesting but irrelevant points.
- Sidebar conversations waste time and the main point has to be presented repeatedly every time the sidebar conversation crops up.
- Be ready to devote time, because sometimes the negotiation meeting will be longer than expected. You must be ready to accept unwanted and surprising results if you are too hasty.

Non-verbal approach of communication:

Researches after researches have proved that 90% of the effectiveness of communication is its non-verbal aspect. The nonverbal aspect comprises body language, para-language, gestures and facial expressions.

The correct body posture, correct intonation, and the correct eye contact deliver the best result. It is important however, for the negotiator to be aware of the exceptions of body language as well.

As for example, if the person is sitting with the arms folded, the copybook definition of the same would be that the person is a little unapproachable and is restricting or resisting participation.

But exceptionally, the person would have folded arms because the air conditioner in the room shoots the cool air directly on the person and she/he resists the cold by such body posture.

Emotional Control:

The very concept of negotiation comprises situations that we may be weak in handling. We may come across issues, which we do not like at all. We may come across, discussions which may lead to some personal comments.

Overcoming such situation with proper emotional control is the most important attribute during negotiation. However, there is no one single surest remedy to overcome emotional outburst. But the best is to take a "Time-out". This will give time to overcome your emotions, may be you can collect more information by going out of the room to collect a file or to freshen up.

In the process of emotional control, you may have to deal with difficult people too. As a trait of good negotiator, one must always include difficult people in the conversation rather than avoiding them.

Final Negotiations: Closing the deal

A negotiation may not always reach conclusions, or win-win situations. It may be either agreeable or vice versa. However, if the negotiation is not postponed to further discussions, before adjourning the meeting a quick revision of the terms and conditions is necessary. This will make both parties comfortable and will depart with a common understanding.

3. Summary

Now let me sum up the lecture in short. A good preparation, effective communication skill, proper control of emotions and closing of the deal with the revision of the points will lead to a good negotiation.