

5 top tips for successful negotiation

Negotiation is at the heart of everything we do. If it involves other people, and pretty much everything does, it involves negotiation.

Here are 5 top tips for improving your negotiation skills.

1. Negotiate on everything

Make 2012 the year of negotiating on everything. Try to get a 10% discount off your bus fare, try to get two pairs of socks for the price of one, try to get a complimentary digestif from the waiter. Be cheeky and just ask. Don't ask, don't get. You will be surprised by the results.

2. Ask for more

This year, set it as a practice to always ask for more than you would normally.

You never know, you may just get it. When Thomas Edison sold his first invention, a stock ticker, to the Gold & Stock Telegraph Company in 1869, he was hoping to get \$5,000 but would have settled for \$3,000. As it turned out, they offered \$40,000.

Of course, your request does have to be plausible but that just requires creative justification. And even if you ask and don't get, they are more likely to give you something, something more than if you hadn't asked at all.

3. Give more

Negotiating on everything does not mean being an annoying, stingy, tight-fisted so-and-so that everyone tries to avoid.

Quite the opposite, the other party will only do you these favours because they want to: because there is something in it for them, because you have helped them out in the first place, because you have made their day with your compliments, because they saw you help that old lady across the road.

(Short note: helping old ladies across the road against their will doesn't count).

Give more and you will get more in return.

4. Be creative

Negotiation is a highly creative process. Successful negotiations come from

creating value for both parties. People will give you more if you find a way that doesn't cost them to do so; they will give you even more if you find a way that gives them benefit too.

And this isn't always easy to work out how. It requires thinking beyond the normal constraints. Don't accept the obvious, think "what if...". Be creative.

5. Enjoy the negotiation

The last one is a bonus: enjoy it. Don't take your negotiations so seriously. If you take them lightly, see the fun in them, see the challenge, you will find yourself negotiating more and you will soon get so much better.

So its up to you. 5 top tips that can transform the results you get in your negotiations and your life.