



NEGOTIATING FOR SUCCESS INSIGHTS

Seven Proven
Tips to Improve Your
Negotiating Skills,
Results, and Outcomes

By Negotiating Coach® Michael E. Sloopka

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Introduction

People are – or should be – negotiating all the time – in their personal lives, social lives, and in their business lives. Negotiating is an essential life skill. Everyone can improve their negotiating skills.

Most people are intimidated by the prospect and process of negotiating – and often view negotiating as an uncomfortable haggling and bargaining process that may involve confrontation, anxiety, and stress. Perhaps you're concerned about being taken advantage of – or missing out on potential opportunities in your personal, social, and business negotiations.

My goal and commitment is to help people improve their negotiating skills. In this E-book, I provide several practical and easy-to-apply negotiating tips you can use in your day-to-day, real-world negotiations.

Whether you're an experienced businessperson looking for some new negotiating strategies or a novice looking to become more proficient at negotiating – then reading, understanding, and applying these tips should help you!

I look forward to working with you individually – or your company or industry association to help people improve their negotiating skills, business results, and outcomes.

Good luck in all your negotiations!

To your success and prosperity,



Michael E. Sloopka
Negotiating Coach®



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Negotiating for Success Tip

01

There Is No Such Thing As a “Born” Negotiator

Most people I've encountered during my 30-year negotiating skills training, coaching, consulting, and speaking career believe they are better negotiators than they are – which often creates a false sense of confidence and competence when negotiating. There is nothing wrong with self-confidence; however, when people don't have the necessary negotiating skills and fundamentals and rely instead on charisma or a previous technique that was more about being lucky than skilled, this self-perception creates learning barriers to skill improvement.

While some people have a natural feel for the negotiation process – becoming a more effective negotiator is a learned skill. Too many people negotiate based solely on their instincts.

When inexperienced people who lack basic negotiating competency face a more experienced and skilled negotiator during a negotiation, the more skilled person will likely do better in the negotiation.

Skill beats instinct! Don't be lucky – be good! Silly gimmicks and quick-fix remedies are ineffective in today's more sophisticated, competitive, and complex world.

Key Takeaway: Invest in learning the proper negotiating process, strategies, tactics, techniques, phrases, questions, and questioning techniques to use in your personal and business negotiations.

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Negotiating for Success Tip

02 Never “Wing It” In Your Negotiations

There should be no such thing as “winging it” in your negotiations – or believing that using a trick or a tactic will achieve your desired outcome.

Whether you’re involved in a simple or complex personal or business negotiation, you must understand and accept that negotiating is an art, science, and sport. The negotiating process involves many moving parts and subtle nuances influencing all outcomes.

Negotiating is played by a set of rules; however, there is no official published rulebook that people must follow – and there is no governing body that determines how the other party involved in a negotiation should negotiate and/or behave.

If you understand, learn, and apply the right gambits and corresponding countergambits (the term gambit is chess terminology, meaning manoeuvre for advantage) – then you can control and manage the negotiating process to effectively counter the moves made by the other party involved in the negotiation. Remember: You can’t make money faster for yourself – or your company – than when you’re negotiating effectively.

Key Takeaway: To become a more effective and successful negotiator, you must learn, practice, and apply a proven negotiating methodology and process, as well as strategies, tactics, techniques, and phrases. The payoffs and benefits of investing in learning to become a better negotiator can be significant.

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Negotiating for Success Tip

03

Be Conscious of Time Pressure When Negotiating

Have you ever wondered why some people request things at the last minute during a discussion or negotiation? Here is something to think about: Is this practice based on a person's procrastination or poor organizational or time management habits – or is using time pressure in a negotiation a shrewd tactic?

Here is why good negotiators always put the other party under time pressure. The rule of thumb to follow when negotiating is that 80 percent of the concessions are made in the last 20 percent of the time available to negotiate.

Therefore, it's a smart strategy to put people under time pressure when negotiating – because financial and non-financial concessions will usually be made if a person is put under time pressure. In a negotiation, inexperienced and untrained negotiators will concede their position quickly and will likely make large or small concessions if time pressure is applied early in the negotiation.

To avoid coming under time pressure, always make sure you assemble and line up all the relevant details of a negotiation up front – don't leave things to be "worked out later" if time pressure can be used against you.

Two examples of how time pressure can be used against you are as follows:

- A customer asks you for a price quote at the last minute and threatens you with the loss of business if you don't comply and get them the price quote by the deadline.
- In a personal scenario, your teenager tells you at the last minute that they're going out and won't be home until much later than the mutually agreed-upon curfew time.

Key Takeaway: To help yourself deal with time pressure – never tell people you are under a deadline. Alternately, consider when you can use time pressure as a negotiating tactic in your favour by introducing things late in the negotiation if time will be on your side.

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Negotiating for Success Tip

04

Don't Underestimate the Importance of Gathering Information and Doing Your Research

Gathering and exchanging information is an essential stage in the negotiating preparation and planning process I teach at my negotiating skills training seminars. The importance of gathering and exchanging information should never be overlooked: Almost always, the side with the most in-depth, relevant, and accurate information about the other side has the distinct advantage in any negotiation.

Invest time to gather information about the other side by asking yourself the following questions before negotiations begin:

- What are the other side's real needs from this negotiation?
- What pressure is the other side under in this negotiation?
- What is the other side's real desired outcome?
- What options and alternatives does the other side have?

Information is more likely to be forthcoming when there is an informal atmosphere – so, if possible, try to gather information informally. Remember: Sharing information forms a bond – while withholding information in a negotiation can often be used to intimidate the other side.

How and Where to Gather Information?

It's surprisingly easy to gather information. All you have to do is be willing to invest the time to do your research and ask well-prepared blueprinting questions; people will often provide you with valuable information that could be beneficial during negotiations.

While some of the recommendations below may be obvious to a few people, most of these sources of information are often overlooked. This is because people need help understanding the importance of gathering information and, therefore, rush the negotiation process.

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Negotiating for Success Tip

04

Don't Underestimate the Importance of Gathering Information and Doing Your Research

Don't be lazy or sloppy when you negotiate – do your research!

Below are six ways you can efficiently gather information by using today's advanced and immediate access to technology:

1. Conduct careful research by using the Internet.
2. Set up proper and detailed Google Alerts to receive information about people, companies, and competitors. If done correctly, the search information will be sent directly to your e-mail inbox.
3. Visit LinkedIn to carefully research valuable information about peoples' personal and company profiles.
4. Develop a library of great open-ended blueprinting questions you can ask during negotiations – and don't be afraid to ask the tough questions.
5. Ask other people who have previously dealt with the other side involved in your negotiation.
6. Suppose you're involved in a business negotiation. Have your subject matter experts or specialists mix with the other side's experts or specialists (e.g., home inspectors, auto mechanics, scientists, engineers, accountants, technical experts, R&D personnel, etc.).

Key Takeaway: During a negotiation, the side with more in-depth, relevant, and detailed information usually has the advantage and will be able to optimize their outcome.

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05

The Power of Using the Words Propose and Proposal When Negotiating

Using the correct terminology during negotiations can dramatically impact outcomes. People need to understand the importance, significance, and value of using the words propose and proposal in negotiations.

Using the words propose and/or proposal in negotiations **implies flexibility** to the other side.

My recommendation is to use the following **key phrase** in negotiations:

“What do you propose...?” Then, substitute your consideration immediately after using the key phrase.

Some examples of how to use the words propose or proposal while negotiating are as follows:

- “What do you propose we do to address these problems?”
- “ I’m sorry you’re disappointed with the performance of our product.
- What is your proposal to address your concern?”“Based on your marks in the first semester of Grade 11, it appears unlikely that you’ll be accepted into university. What do you propose to do about it?”

Also, it would be best if you always tried to maintain momentum in a negotiation to avoid arriving at an impasse or deadlock. You should always try to imply some flexibility to the other party involved in a negotiation.

An example of implying flexibility in a business negotiation would be the use of the following statement and question:

- “Perhaps there is some flexibility in our pricing proposal. Can we take a moment to discuss some other products that you may wish to include as part of this order?”

Key Takeaway: Using the words propose and proposal in a negotiation will help you imply that you may have some flexibility and a desire to reach for compromise to arrive at a mutually beneficial Win-Win outcome.

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06 Don't Negotiate Based Solely on Percentages

Whether you're a salesperson negotiating with a customer on pricing or a promotional discount or a university or college student negotiating monthly rent with a landlord, be careful not to negotiate solely on percentages when buying and selling.

The use of percentages can be very misleading in a negotiation. A customer might request a 1 percent rollback on pricing – which, on the surface, appears to be an insignificant amount – until the seller calculates and understands that the 1 percent discount requested by the customer equates to a \$43,784.97 price concession.

In a personal negotiation, a 20 percent discount on the purchase of an item on sale can appear to be a healthy discount offered by a retailer – until the consumer calculates that apparent high percentage discount equates to a savings of only \$3.85.

In a business negotiation, always focus on profit contribution dollars – not just margin and markup or cost-savings percentages. Also, always be aware of the “dollar value” of your time – and don't invest too much time and effort into low-value negotiating situations that won't generate a favourable return or outcome.

Remember: A negotiated dollar is a bottom-line dollar.

Key Takeaway: Always understand the financial consequences and the “real dollar value and cost” of concessions in a negotiation.

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07

Hearing the word **“No”** in a negotiation (or even during a discussion) is usually an opening negotiating position. The opposite of love is not hate – it’s indifference. People who are indifferent or not engaged in the negotiation or discussion are not likely to do much of anything.

Interaction, debate, discussion, and receiving objections from the other party in a negotiation should be considered as “buying signals.” When people hear **“No”** during a negotiation, discussion, or even in an exchange of e-mails or text messages, they often stop negotiating and reaching for compromise – because they assume **“No”** means **“No.”** **However, perhaps the word “No” means “maybe.”**

So, what should you do when you hear the word **“No”** in a negotiation?

Everyone who attends one of my negotiating skills training presentations or seminars loves this powerful tip. When you hear the word **“No”** in a negotiation or discussion with another party, you should use the following phrase/question:

“Under what circumstances would you...?” Follow this phrase/question by including your key “consideration.”

Examples of several “considerations” in a business negotiation are as follows:

- “Under what circumstances would you not put this project out to tender?”
- “Under what circumstances would you award us 80 percent of your annual business?”
- “Under what circumstances would you accept a price increase?”

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Negotiating for Success Tip

07

Examples of several “considerations” in a personal negotiation are as follows:

- “Under what circumstances could I have a no-charge room upgrade to a junior suite?”
- “Under what circumstances would you agree to clean up your bedroom every week?”
- “Under what circumstances would you agree to change the closing date on the house purchase?”

Key Takeaway: Always use this phrase/question when you hear the word “No” in a negotiation. Using this phrase/question in a negotiation helps broaden the scope of a negotiation and also gets the other side’s new opening negotiating position or criteria. With the information you learn from using this phrase/question, you can “reframe and bracket” your objectives for the negotiation.

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Five Ways to Improve Negotiating Skills, Results, and Outcomes:

1. **Negotiating Skills Training:** Book Michael for a tailored, impactful, engaging, and motivating in-house 60 to 90-minute presentation, half- or one-day seminar, or two-day learning workshop for one of his various negotiating topics by e-mailing him directly at michael@sloopka.com.

Visit our [WEBSITE](#) for information about our various tailored, in-house negotiating skills training programs.

2. **Speaking Engagements:** Book Michael for a tailored, impactful, engaging, and thought-provoking 60-minute to 2-hour presentation or half-day seminar for one of his various negotiating topics at an upcoming conference, convention, or meeting by e-mailing him directly at michael@sloopka.com. Visit our [WEBSITE](#) for additional information about our various negotiating program topics for industry and peer-to-peer associations.
3. **Negotiation Coaching Packages:** If you're an individual or owner of a small business who wants to take action to improve your negotiating skills – or you need negotiating coaching expertise for important, high-value negotiations with vendors, customers, employees, business partners, lenders/banks, etc. visit our [WEBSITE](#) to learn more about Michael's coaching packages.
4. **Negotiating for Sales Success Online Course:** If you're in sales, sales management, marketing, customer service, or own a business, this self-paced online course is for you! Negotiating for Sales Success is a proven course that will teach you how to be a more SUCCESSFUL negotiator.

The course includes modules, a workbook, and numerous valuable, easy-to-use digital tools and resources to help you become a master negotiator. Visit our [WEBSITE](#) to learn more and [ENROL](#).

5. **Digital Learning Products:** Visit our [WEBSITE](#) to purchase digital negotiation learning products that can help you improve your results and outcomes. The digital learning products include several beneficial E-books, the Negotiating Personality Type and Corresponding Negotiation Style Self-Assessment Questionnaire, and Michael's Best Practices Key Verbal Negotiation Phrases, Scripts, Questions, and Questioning Techniques Audio Learning Program.

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Meet Negotiating Coach[®] Michael E. Sloopka

Michael E. Sloopka is the Founder and President of Selling Solutions Inc. and negotiatingcoach.com[®]

Michael is a recognized negotiating expert and a highly rated negotiating skills teacher, professional speaker, and negotiation coach who assists organizations and individuals by joining their teams for specific negotiating projects or training and coaching their staff to negotiate more effectively.

Offering more than 30 years of successful negotiating experience in sales, marketing, purchasing, supply chain, operations, distribution, and consulting – from small businesses to multinational corporations, from personal transactions to multimillion-dollar extended supply agreements and contracts – Michael has added hundreds of millions of dollars to his clients' collective bottom line through effective education, consulting, coaching, and negotiation facilitation. He has taught over 50,000 people in 31 countries how to become better negotiators.

He has personally conducted complex North American and global negotiations with major food, mass merchandiser, home centre, and club channel retailers, including large, globally recognized multinational packaged goods manufacturers. He has also facilitated lease negotiations, the sale of businesses, and customer and vendor agreements on behalf of his growing stable of clients.

He is also a leading expert in diagnosing selling and buying behaviour and the decision-making dynamics that directly affect the outcome of a negotiation. Michael has written articles or contributed to articles for the Globe and Mail newspaper, Investors.com, Forbes.com, AMEX Open Forum for Small Business, and Selling Power and Profit magazines.

Selling Solutions Inc. and negotiatingcoach.com[®] focus on providing negotiating expertise and turnkey support tools to improve performance, business results, profitability, and outcomes for global corporations and individual members of various industry and peer-to-peer associations.

Michael's early business career included diverse exposure to a wide range of industries – from selling radio advertising to marketing sophisticated three-dimensional technology to Hollywood movie studios. Michael worked for highly-regarded classic packaged goods companies such as Frito-Lay, Monsanto, and NutraSweet in senior sales and marketing roles. Michael successfully managed a \$40 million (US) business by age 31 and guided NutraSweet's unique branded ingredient strategy in Canada.

Michael graduated from the University of Western Ontario's Richard Ivey School of Business Executive Management Program and Conestoga College's Business Management and Communications Diploma Program. Michael continues to broaden his academic knowledge by participating in ongoing negotiation education at various leading educational institutions.

In addition to Michael's negotiating expertise, he also helps his sales process transformation clients better match their sales and marketing processes, strategies, behaviour, and tactics to the actual buying behaviour of their customers and strategic accounts by utilizing Selling Solutions Inc.'s proprietary Perpetual Cycle of Forensic Selling[®] teaching methodology.

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About the Company

negotiatingcoach.com® is an international negotiating skills training, coaching, and consulting firm that teaches negotiation skills and the decision-making dynamics affecting negotiation outcomes.

negotiatingcoach.com® is a proven solution provider and the benchmark for providing high return-on-investment negotiation solutions, ranging from negotiating skills training programs and coaching expertise to complex organization-wide negotiation consulting initiatives.

Offering more than 30 years of successful negotiating experience and expertise in sales, marketing, purchasing, distribution, and consulting – from small businesses to multinational corporations, from personal transactions to multimillion-dollar extended supply agreements and contracts – negotiatingcoach.com® has added hundreds of millions of dollars to its clients' collective bottom line through its effective negotiating skills training, coaching, consulting, and negotiation facilitation.

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