



Course Director:  
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## INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATION ACADEMY

*Negotiation: The Genesis of Management*



# Negotiation Skills Training

- Managers at senior, middle and junior levels
- Labour Union Negotiators
- Conflict dispute resolution mediators
- Sales Negotiators
- Buyers
- Hostage & Crowd Control Negotiators
- Facilitators

Newsletter August 2005  
Issue 27

### PERSUASION

#### *Moving to 'YES'*

Mastering the art of persuasion is the key to managers effectively responding to the many taxing questions inherent in our rapidly transforming business environment. Effective persuasion, whereby shared and mutually beneficial solutions are arrived at, is the process through which managers will be required to **lead** their audiences towards **joint problem solving** in the future.

Careful **preparation**, proper **framing** of arguments, transmission of evidence in the most **vivid** way, and the establishment of the most correct **emotional match** with the audience could create **openness** and a **willingness to move** to positions not previously held.

In a recent article in the Harvard Business Review, Conger draws attention to the four most common **errors** made by managers when attempting to persuade audiences:

- **They try to make their case by using an up-front and hard sell approach** involving persistence, rational thinking and a lively presentation. Contrary to their belief that this will drive the negotiation to a rapid close, it more often than not merely provides their audience with a clear target to shoot at.

### FOUR DAY DIPLOMA IN NEGOTIATION SKILLS

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- **They resist compromise**, seeing it as a form of surrender. By so doing they disregard research findings to the effect that it is not possible for a manager to achieve sustainable changes in the behaviour, ideas and attitudes of his audience without

in this process also altering his or her own.

There is little appreciation for the fact that individuals and groups only open themselves to persuasion when they are convinced that

the persuader **accepts and understands their needs** and concerns.

Persuasion is wrongly seen as a one-way street, resulting in a lack of understanding for the fact that **listening** to others and incorporating their perspectives, is the key to effective persuasion.

- **They over-emphasise the importance of presenting great arguments.** In the process they forget the importance of other variables such as their **credibility**, their **ability to create a mutually beneficial mindset**, connecting with the audience at the **best emotional level** and communicating in **vivid language** that brings ideas to life.
- **They assume that persuasion is an event thereby forgetting that it is a process.** This leads to a lack of sensitivity for the fact that shared solutions very often require listening to people, testing positions, developing new positions that incorporate group inputs, more testing, incorporating compromises and then trying again.

*Four crucial variables in the persuasion equation*

### Establish credibility

When confronted with a new or contrary position an audience's first response is to determine whether the perspectives and opinions of the persuader can be **trusted**.

Most managers unfortunately **over-estimate their credibility**, not understanding that credibility primarily derives from their **perceived expertise, perceived trust** and the **relationships** they are able to establish.

Managers, who have a **history of sound judgment** or have proven that they are **knowledgeable and well informed** about their products and proposals, receive high expertise ratings. High credibility ratings are reserved for those who have over time demonstrated that they can be **trusted to listen, to act in the best interests of others and to share credit for good ideas**. Their behaviour is

characterised by integrity, consistency and a resistance to extreme mood swings.

Where an **expertise gap** exists the following remedies can be highly beneficial:

- Formal/informal education and conversations with knowledgeable individuals to learn more about the complexities of a position.
- Hiring recognised outside expertise and/or tapping the knowledge of experts within the organisation to strengthen a position.
- Using respected trade and business publications, books, independent reports and presentations by experts to support a position.
- Launching pilot projects to demonstrate on a small scale that certain ideas have value and are underpinned by unique expertise.

**Relationship gaps** can effectively be closed by:

- Meeting with the most important people in the audience you plan to persuade, to develop a range of perspectives on the issues at hand and to help them with issues that concern them.
- Involving co-workers who share similar views on the issues at hand and have well established relationships with the target audience.

**Credibility is the foundation of effective persuasion.** Without sufficient credibility, the steps that follow are futile. Fortunately, credibility is something that can be developed and nurtured.

### Explore and frame common interests

Although credibility is a crucial variable, it is unfortunately not sufficient to persuade persons to accept new or contrary positions. Acceptance of such positions requires persuaders **to explore and describe** these positions in terms that accentuate their

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**shared benefits and advantages.** Involving people and securing their commitment for ideas or plans is dependent on them identifying with, understanding and accepting the benefits/advantages they offer.

It is often extremely difficult to overcome differences in relative positions as each party become entrenched in his/her position and often feel that they **may lose 'face'** if they would move from these 'positions'. There are multiple examples of these kinds of 'positional differences and one can safely say that most court cases centre around positional differences, e.g.; my right to the piece of land v. your right; my rights as specified in the contract vs. your rights, etc.

Good persuaders are often able to move parties towards interests and away from their 'positions', enabling them to at least reach an agreement on the common interests (the bigger picture) and **open more possibilities** of overcoming the differences in 'positions'.

An in-depth understanding of target audiences is an essential prerequisite for accurate summarizing or framing of problems. Various forms of dialogue to collect information, good listening, testing ideas with trusted co-workers and asking questions should precede the framing of a position. This compels persuaders to consider their perceptions, evidence and arguments carefully, often leading to compromise even before the commencement of the persuasion process.

### Providing evidence

Once credibility is established and a common frame developed, the focus moves to providing the **most vivid evidence** to support the persuader's position. The most effective persuaders are adept at backing up numeric data with metaphors, analogies, stories and examples that **bring their ideas and views to life**. They are word artists capable of painting word pictures that are compelling and add an earthy quality to their views.

Effective persuaders understand and use the immense power of language to their best advantage.

### Connecting emotionally

On the surface, reason seems to be the primary force that drives business activities and persuasion. However, when exploring just below the surface we find that **emotion** is a very prevalent and powerful determinant.

Good persuaders are aware of the importance of emotion. They respond to this insight by showing an emotional commitment to the position they promote, and by being able to accurately sense how audiences interpreted past events, are therefore likely to get proposals accepted.

### The power of persuasion

When approached correctly, persuasion is potentially one of the most important skills in the armoury of the business manager. Our democratic order and our subsequent acceptance as a member of the global village have highlighted the need to cultivate a culture of persuasion.

Like power, persuasion can be a force of enormous good for our businesses and for all other aspects of our society. It can generate paradigm shifts, break boundaries, entrench and strengthen change and stimulate innovative and constructive solutions.

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