

Closing the deal

5 keys to successful workplace negotiations.

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No matter what your job title may be, chances are you engage in workplace negotiations every day. Whether selling products to clients, vying for more company resources or simply managing your day-to-day workload, being able to successfully negotiate with others is essential for success.

At its core, negotiation is really about persuasion — how you present your ideas to others in a way that moves them to agree with you, reach a meaningful compromise or take action. Researchers have identified five fundamental principles of persuasion that don't involve the merits of the proposal but rather the way in which you communicate them. When you understand and use these principles ethically, you too can become a more effective negotiator.

1. Reciprocity

People tend to give back to others what has been given to them. While some people think of reciprocity in terms of exchanging money, goods or services, it involves so much more. For example, when participating in a conversation, by providing others with attention, information and respect, you will likely receive the same from them. To maximize the principle of reciprocity, you should be the first to give, and be sure what you give is personalized and unexpected.

2. Scarcity

People want what they can't have. That's why advertisements that promise "limited time only" or "limited quantities available" are so effective. In a workplace negotiation situation, it's important to describe the unique or otherwise unattainable advantages of any recommendation you make. However, research shows people are more apt to take action when they know what

they stand to lose, rather than what they could possibly gain. Therefore, when negotiating, it's important to not only tell people the benefits they'll gain, but also what they could lose if they don't move in your recommended direction.

3. Authority

People typically follow the lead of those they perceive as credible experts. This makes sense, since legitimate authorities have attained their positions by virtue of greater knowledge or skill in their field. Unfortunately, many experts mistakenly assume others will naturally recognize their expertise. Before you ever start negotiating, provide information about your accomplishments, credentials, background and expertise.

4. Consistency

People feel compelled to be consistent with their prior behaviors, opinions or actions. When someone makes a commitment actively, it's likely they'll follow through. When negotiating, you can activate the consistency principle by recognizing a prior commitment and linking it to your current request. If possible, take it a step further by getting the commitment in writing, because people tend to live up to what they write.

5. Social proof

People often rely heavily on others for cues on how to think, feel and act. Hence, the "proof" of what is correct isn't grounded in facts and statistics, but in the social environment. To use social proof effectively in a negotiation, rather than trying to demonstrate it yourself, it's important first to present testimonials from others. The more similar the testimonial providers are, the stronger your case will be perceived. **KT**

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