

The YEBDC Small Business Information Column

by Sue Gingerich, Business Advisor

"The Art of Good Negotiating: Making Everybody Happy!"

Negotiating! Is it just another word for saying you get your way? No, not at all. Negotiating can and should be a win-win situation. Good negotiators don't "ruffle" people's feathers; they start by building an atmosphere of trust. If the people you are negotiating with know that you will deal fairly with them and won't take advantage of them, to achieve a deal, they will be easier to negotiate with! Negotiating tactics can be used in sales, but they can also be used when you want to communicate an idea you have, or when making a group decision or resolving a conflict between employees.

To be a good negotiator you should:

1. Prepare for your negotiation session by learning as much as possible about the other group's or individual's wishes and motives prior to meeting with them.
2. Have all information that you think will help to inform the other party of the benefits to your proposal collected prior to your meeting. You should also prepare a list of all the "cons" to your proposal.
3. When meeting, first listen to what the other party has to say.
4. Listen without interrupting them!
5. Be careful to study their body language and listen also to their tone of voice for valuable clues. Watch you own body language and facial expressions to be sure you are not conveying a mixed message.
6. When they have finished be sure to acknowledge what they have told you, for example:
 - o Summarizing and repeating back to them their goals or wishes, to show them that you did in fact hear what they were saying.
 - o Confirming the points you agree on.
 - o NOT making a big deal about the points you disagree on.
7. Interpret what was really said before stating the points of your proposal. Be careful not to insult the other party when you present your points.

One of the keys to good negotiating is to not rush the process, but to have lots of patience. Be prepared to halt negotiations if you or the other party need more information. There is nothing wrong with saying that either party should submit more information before a decision can be made. Make sure that all the key players, who will have a say in the final decision, are involved in the negotiation process, and that all information is relayed to these individuals during the negotiations. This will help to avoid excuses of needing to seek a higher authority to gain final approval.

Don't appear anxious! Often, if you can remain cool and appear to not care about the final outcome it will keep the other party from becoming too demanding. Also, be aware of protocol, company policies or precedence that may affect the decision making process. Be aware of any deadlines that may affect or hinder negotiations.

So what do you do if the other party isn't playing fairly? First of all, DON'T lower yourself to their tactics. Continue to negotiate, or, if there seems to be "no win" in site, withdraw your proposal/deal altogether. The fact you are willing to say "Fine, if we can't agree, then maybe we shouldn't do this at all," usually makes the other party "wake-up" a bit!

Even if a satisfactory deal is never reached, if you have handled the negotiation fairly, it will go a long way to build your credibility for future dealings with the other individuals involved.

If you have a small business and have a question or problem that you think The YEBDC could help you with please call or write to: The Yellowed East Business Development Corporation, Box 249, Sangudo, Alberta, T0E 2A0
1-800-556-0328 or 1-780-785-2900, e mail: yebdc@yebdc.ab.ca, or access our Website at:
www.yebdc.ab.ca

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