



Negotiation

Negotiation is a communication approach intended to create “win-win” outcomes that will satisfying multiple and sometimes conflicting interests. A facilitator may or may not be used. In the workplace negotiation may also take the form of collaborative decision making. This process may include several people on a work team. It is a proactive approach intended to create processes and systems designed to improve workflow, communication, and customer service.

The following steps are used in negotiation;

1. Determine who you need to negotiate with.

- a. Customers
- b. Coworkers
- c. Managers
- d. Supervisees

2. Gather information

- a. This step is the most time consuming. It requires effective communication to allow each perspective to be expressed and fully understood. This requires clear statements which are specific about the concerns as well as listening skills which enable the listener to clarify what they understand about the other person’s perspective.
- b. One of the goals of this step is to identify underlying “interests”
- c. “Interests” are the underlying motivators that cause a person to pursue a particular solution or position in a conflict. The most powerful “interests” are basic human needs. Ask yourself or the other person why that person wants a certain outcome in order to understand their “interest”

3. Summarize the problem as perceived by each person

- a. It is essential to clearly state the problem as each person views it.
- b. In order to have a willingness to problem solve you must separate the person from the problem. It may be helpful to write the combined problem summary on a sheet of paper in order to shift focus from the other person as the problem.
- c. Focus on “interests” not “positions”
- d. If you are not thorough in identifying the problem you risk solving the wrong problem.

4. Brainstorm ideas that facilitate solving the problem.

- a. Generate options for mutual gain
- b. Include options that may only be partial solutions
- c. Avoid evaluation of the options at this step
- d. Be aware of barriers to brainstorming
 - i. Premature judgment.
 - ii. Looking for single right answer.
 - iii. Thinking that solving their problem is their problem.

5. Bargain – Discuss and evaluate each idea generated in the brainstorming process.

- a. Emphasize areas of agreement
- b. Break possible solutions into smaller parts to find areas of agreement.
- c. Focus on the future rather than the past
- d. Evaluate and explore consequences of each option
- e. Identify consequences for both people if no mutual agreement is reached
- f. Go back to information gathering if needed

6. Schedule a time for follow up

Plan to revisit the solution to determine what is working and what is not in order to reinforce the parts that are working and to problem solve the parts that are not. This acknowledges that the solution may need to be fine tuned and may prevent failure or abandonment of the entire agreement if the plan does not go as anticipated.

7. Do they want to negotiate?

If the other person does not want to negotiate you can begin by gathering information. After making a thorough assessment of the situation you may present your understanding of their goals and concerns alongside your own goals and concerns. When you present possible solutions you will need to highlight how these solutions address their goals.

Formal negotiation, often referred to as mediation or alternative dispute resolution, involves specific steps, followed in a specific order and facilitated by a neutral mediator. It is often used to resolve legal and workplace disputes. For more information about formal mediation at UT contact Employee and Management Services at 232-2327.