

**Worksheets - Negotiations (1): Building relationships****1. Negotiations quiz**

1. In what situations do you negotiate? Who do you negotiate with? Think about both your work and your private life.
2. What's the difference between sales techniques and negotiation techniques?
3. What makes a good negotiator?
4. How important are trust and liking in negotiations?
5. Is there an important difference between the way you might approach one-off negotiations (e.g. selling your car) and negotiations as part of a long-term business relationship?
6. How can you avoid being manipulated in a negotiation with a more experienced negotiator?

**2. Reading: Negotiations – the basics**

- A. In practice, none of these defensive strategies may be necessary. Most good negotiators understand the importance of creating long-term trust and protecting their reputations, so they'll do their best to keep you happy. This is one reason why used car salesmen aren't as manipulative as we might expect them to be – they have a reputation to build and protect.
- B. Good negotiators build strong long-term relationships. In many ways, this is even more important than the traditional 'bargaining' element of negotiations. If you leave the negotiation feeling defeated or cheated, you're not going to want to negotiate with that person again. If you find out later that the other person took advantage of your naivety, again, you're not likely to want to do business with that person. You may even try to get out of the contract you have agreed; in many situations, it is legal and normal to declare a contract null and void if you have been deceived. You're also unlikely to recommend the deceptive negotiator to other friends and colleagues, and you may even go public with the story of your bad experience, which will damage the person's reputation.

- C. But if you do find yourself in a negotiation with a professional manipulator, what can you do to protect yourself? The three keys are awareness, preparation and control. Firstly, simply be aware of the situation and its risks. Think very carefully before making any commitments. Secondly, find out as much as you can before the negotiation, especially concerning prices – what price are other people offering for similar products and services? You also need to research your own needs very carefully, including a deep understanding of what you don't need. Thirdly, make sure you don't lose control. Don't be afraid to walk away from a negotiation if you're not sure, and take time to discuss your concerns with friends and colleagues. Of course, the other negotiator may tell you that you can't go away and think about it, that the decision must be made right here, right now. But that's almost always just a bluff. In a high-stakes negotiation with a professional, a rushed decision is almost always a mistake.
- D. We all negotiate all the time: with our husbands and wives, with our parents and our children, and with our friends and colleagues: *What time do the kids have to go to bed?; Whose turn is it to go to the supermarket?; Can you help me with my presentation?* Of course, these situations don't always feel like negotiations, not least because these are all long-term relationships. But they have a lot more in common with professional negotiations than you might think.
- E. It's interesting that this assumption doesn't work when buying a souvenir in a tourist resort, where long-term relationships don't exist – one reason why you need to be especially careful in such situations. It also doesn't really work when you're buying or selling your house or flat – the classic one-off sale with huge potential short-term gains for manipulators. Fortunately, most people aren't naturally manipulative; so again, relationship-building is almost always the best approach.
- F. On the other hand, the situations that we tend to think of as 'typical negotiations', such as buying a used car, haggling over the price of an overpriced souvenir in a tourist trap, or selling your flat, are much less typical than they seem. These are all one-off negotiations, where there's no time or need to build long-term relationships. In business, almost all negotiations are long-term. Both the used car salesman and the souvenir seller are using sales techniques (or sometimes manipulation tricks). Of course selling is an important skill in life and business, as is an awareness of the tricks that other people may use. But this isn't really what negotiations are all about.

### 3. Relationship-building techniques

Match the techniques for building relationships on the left with the explanations on the right.

1. Finding things in common	a. Research has shown that if you give something to another person, they almost always feel obliged to return the favour ... or even a much bigger favour. Of course, there's a limit: you can't be too cynical and expect someone to knock 10% off their asking price just because you've bought them a nice coffee. But a little genuine kindness can go a long way.
2. Showing an interest	b. There's no doubt that we like people who are like us. In other words, if we can identify with them and understand them as people, not just business machines, we're much more likely to want to do business with them. In practical terms, there are two sides to this technique: one is to ask questions to find out about the other person. But just as importantly, we need to be open about ourselves, to help the other person to understand us too.
3. Flattery	c. This can go both ways. Firstly, show that you're treating the other person as an individual, someone special. That means remembering their name, and maybe organising something based on the likes and dislikes they've expressed. Secondly, show that they're dealing with you as a person, not just your organisation. If you're taking them to your favourite restaurant, make sure they understand that it's not just an anonymous place to eat, but something that you've chosen personally, which says something about who you are.
4. Generosity	d. Say nice things about the other person or their organisation. If that person bought you a meal, tell a third person how nice the meal was and how much you enjoyed the conversation. If you've just arrived in their office, say how nice it is. If you notice a diploma on the wall, ask about it and make sure you sound impressed when they tell you. But whatever you do, make sure you sound convincing – there's nothing worse than false enthusiasm!
5. Gratitude	e. When the other person is talking about himself/herself, we need to listen carefully and show that we are listening. This means not just making 'listening noises' like 'I see' and 'Really?', but actually being interested in the other person. Remember what they are telling you, so you can bring it up next time you meet (e.g. <i>How's your daughter getting on at university?</i> ).
6. Personal touches	f. Whenever the other person is kind to you, always make sure you say thank-you. It may seem like a tiny detail, and perhaps an obvious one, but in fact it can make all the difference. Just imagine how you'd feel if someone failed to thank you for your own kindness! And when you say thank-you, don't just say 'thank-you'. Tell them how kind they've been and how much you appreciate it.

#### 4. Dialogues

Fiona Jackson is in Munich to negotiate the sale of up to five large industrial packaging machines to a large manufacturing company. Read these three extracts from her conversation with Hans Braun, the Director of Operations. Answer the questions for each extract.

##### Extract 1

1. How do Hans and Fiona flatter each other? What adjectives do they use?
2. How do they respond to each other's flattery? What grammatical structure do they both use?
3. Why do you think they focused on flattering each other's companies?

H: Ah, hello. Ms Jackson? I'm Hans, Hans Braun.

F: Good to meet you at last, Hans, after all those emails. And please call me Fiona.

H: OK, welcome to Munich, Fiona. Sorry to keep you waiting, by the way. I had an urgent phone call and couldn't get away.

F: No problem. I was just admiring your brochure. It's really impressive. I didn't know you had so many famous clients!

H: Thanks. Yes, well, we've got a great sales team, and we really go for quality in a big way here, much more than some of our cheaper competitors.

F: Well, it certainly seems to be an effective strategy, judging by these recommendations.

H: Thank-you. Yes, they're very positive, aren't they? We've also heard some great things about your company. I was looking at your website yesterday, and I thought it was really interesting. I loved the 'Our story' section, you know, the story about how your founder started the business from nothing. Fascinating.

F: Yes, it's amazing, isn't it? I'm glad you read that – it means you've got a better idea about our approach to business.

##### Extract 2

4. What do you think of Hans's opening question? How else could he start a conversation to find things in common?
5. How many things in common did they find?
6. What phrases do they use to show interest?
7. What techniques did they use to echo what the other person said?
8. What example of generosity and gratitude is in the conversation?
9. How easy would it be for Hans and Fiona to continue this conversation? Why?

H: So, is this your first time in Munich, Fiona?

F: Well, yes and no. I came with my family when I was about 14, but ... well, that was a very long time ago. I don't remember much about it ... just museums and football.

H: Football? Are you a fan?

F: Not really. But my dad was ... I mean he still is, obsessed with it. So he took us to matches all over Europe.

H: Wow. That's really interesting! I'm also a little obsessed with football, but I don't drag my kids around to watch matches!

F: No, it wasn't so bad. It meant we got to see lots of interesting places. How many kids have you got?

H: Three: two girls and a boy. They're growing up fast. My eldest daughter is at university already.

F: Really? You must be very proud. My kids are still very small, so I've got all that to look forward to. What does your daughter study?

H: English, would you believe? She wants to study in Bristol next year.

F: Bristol? That's interesting. My brother studied there. He had a wonderful time. It's a really nice city. I could ask him if he's got any advice, you know, where to go, where to avoid.

H: Well, that would be excellent. I'd really appreciate that. You know what it's like to be a parent – you never stop worrying about your kids.

F: Absolutely. My son's going on karate camp next week, his first time away from mum and dad, and I'm really stressed about it. He's only nine.

H: Karate camp? Sounds interesting. I used to do a bit of karate myself, many years ago. Is he good at it?

### Extract 3

10. What is the main example of generosity in this conversation?
11. How does Hans add a personal touch?
12. How does Fiona express gratitude? What do you think of the two techniques she uses?

H: So I thought we'd start with a tour of our factory, so you get a really good sense of what we do here and what we need. I'd also like to introduce you to a few of our key people here, if that's OK.

F: That's great. It all helps me to get a better picture of how we can help you.

H: That's what I thought. And then for lunch, I'd like to take you to one of my favourite restaurants ... a short drive out of the city.

F: Oh ... that would be lovely, but please don't go to any trouble. I'd be happy with a sandwich!

H: No, I wouldn't dream of it. This project is very important to us, so we want to treat you well! It's a lovely restaurant, and I've booked my favourite table. So I hope you're hungry!

F: Well, that's very kind of you. In that case, you must let me return the favour if ever you visit our factory in Edinburgh.

H: OK, that sounds nice. Thank-you.

## 5. Practice

Work in pairs. Use these ideas to role-play similar conversations. Invent any details you need (e.g. the name of the city). Try to use the six relationship-building techniques as often as you can – but make sure you don't sound artificial! Try to keep each conversation going for at least two minutes. When you've finished, swap roles and repeat the role-plays.

### Conversation 1:

- A: Greet the other person. Apologise for being late.  
B: Say something nice about the brochure / the office / something you can see (e.g. a diploma on the wall)  
A: Say something nice about the other person's organisation.  
B: Continue the conversation.

### Conversation 2:

- A: So, is this your first time in ...?  
B: Yes → Explain what happened  
*No, but I have been to ...*  
*No, but I've heard a lot about it. Isn't there a ...?*  
A: Continue the conversation.

### Conversation 3:

- A: Explain your plans for the day's events. Offer something generous (e.g. a nice meal, some evening entertainment, a symbolic present).  
B: Express gratitude.  
A: Make person B feel special.  
B: Try to return the favour.  
A: Continue the conversation.