

# Learn to Get What You Want

Each of us has a negotiating style. Is yours working for you? Use these tips to make the most of your style and get what you deserve.



By Lory A. Fischler

**An HR manager complained that, despite a 50 percent turnover record, her boss was unwilling to invest in orientation training to help her new hires fast-track their learning and comfort on the manufacturing floor. She was frustrated with his shortsightedness and poor leadership. Rather than respond with the sympathetic ear she was looking for, I said, “You need to become a better negotiator.”**

Negotiation is how you get things done these days. While it is unrealistic to expect to get everything you want from your boss, colleagues, team members, friends, and family, effective negotiators have much greater track records of success than the rest of us. What do they do differently? They’ve developed strategies for dealing with the five most common obstacles that get in the way:

- asking for less than you really want
- being afraid of “no”
- not knowing how to get to “yes”
- thinking more about you than about them
- letting your negotiation style work against you.

## Are you asking for less than you want?

A high-level executive confided to me that having hired hundreds of employees, he never once had a candidate ask for a salary greater than he was prepared to pay. He was surprised that people aimed lower than he expected. It is easier to feel successful when you aim low, and that is often the strategy poor negotiators take. Unfortunately, if your starting position is already less than you want, you surely will end up with a less than desirable outcome.

Effective negotiators go the other way. They ask for more than they want (but not

out of range), and then negotiate down from there. They allow enough wiggle room to show movement and concession. They are more likely to walk away hitting their original target and feeling satisfied with the end result.

## Are you afraid of no?

The biggest obstacle to effective negotiating is our own fear of conflict and getting a “no” from the other side. Poor negotiators fear a no because they take rejection personally. When they hear no to their idea, they hear “I reject you” or “You are not worthy.”

Effective negotiators don’t fear a no—they expect it. And they already have plan B, C, and D in their back pocket. They don’t panic when they hear rejection because they have developed alternatives that keep them at the table.

## Do you know how to get to yes?

I once overheard an employee reporting her efforts to get selected for a newly advertised, highly coveted job assignment. She told her colleagues that she

walked into her boss's office and said, "I would like to be considered for the new assignment." She was very proud of herself for being bold (and brave) and being direct. She didn't get selected.

Effective negotiators don't make offers; they make a case. First present the facts or reasons why, and then present your position. If your proposal comes first without the rationale, the other side has a chance to mentally reject it before listening to the supportive reasons. Don't provide more than three or four strong reasons because overloading someone with data or a long list of examples actually weakens your position.

A skilled negotiator also anticipates obstacles and barriers in advance. She comes to the table with creative solutions to counter those obstacles, and can therefore seamlessly build on the other side's ideas. When all else fails, she recognizes that it might not be the right time to find an agreement, and keeps the door open. "It looks like we might not be able to come to agreement right now. Let's take five on this issue." Somehow she is able to be in charge, even when she isn't.

### Do you think more about your needs than theirs?

Average negotiators form proposals that respond to their own needs and build a case that makes sense to them. The position of issues reflects their personal priorities. Not surprisingly, their results also are average.

Effective negotiators dedicate significant time assessing the other side. What issues are they facing? How can we appeal to their needs? They present proposals in terms that speak to the other side's priorities. Thinking like the other side also helps to minimize friction and builds empathy. Who wouldn't respond favorably to someone who is solving your problems with their solutions?

### Is your negotiation style hurting?

Even without consciously knowing it, we negotiate from one of four predictable styles:

- Driver—wants to win

- Analytical—wants to be right
- Expressive—wants to influence
- Amiable—wants agreement.

How we negotiate is informed by our style. Our learning style strengths help us be more effective as negotiators. Under the stress of a negotiation, however, our style strengths can become liabilities and get in the way.

Effective negotiators are highly aware of their own style. They use their natural talents to their advantage, but discipline themselves to keep their stress down and liabilities in check.

**Drivers.** John strives to get as much as he can during a negotiation and isn't afraid to ask for what he wants. John doesn't let negotiations get bogged down in too much detail or get sidetracked. Drivers like John have an intimidating style that puts off others. In the driver's mind, their approach is effective because it leads to concessions from the other side. Drivers can lose out in the long run with lackluster performance or even sabotage of the agreement.

**Analyticals.** Sonja has a talent for logically deciphering complex data and analyzing. When approaching a negotiation, she always is prepared and has done her homework, determining the correct, safe course of action with minimum risks. Analyticals like Sonja need to be careful about being overly focused on data and ignoring the feelings and motivations of people. Analyticals struggle with anything new on the fly. Analyticals' talent for critical thinking tends to produce "no" responses, and they often are seen as rigid and obstructionist.

**Expressives.** Laura is highly social, a quick thinker, and full of ideas and creative solutions. She "gets" people, and draws heavily on her intuition in decision making. Expressives overly rely on sociability and their verbal skills of persuasiveness. Expressives get bored easily with data, research, and details, and often come to the table without a real understanding of complex issues.

**Amiables.** Carlos is a great listener and team player. During negotiations he seeks agreements, collaboration, and

cooperation. Amiables can struggle when negotiations get tense. The "no" is hard for them to hear, and in the face of aggressive behavior or conflict, they will often yield on issues too quickly.

### Become a better negotiator

Here are five ways you can become a more effective negotiator.

**Recognize that most negotiations hit snags and impasses.** Anticipate a few no's before a yes.

**Do your homework.** Identify the key issues of the negotiation and determine your priorities as well as those of the other side.

**Think about what you want.** Develop a positional strategy to get there.

**Know your own negotiation style.**

Make sure your strengths shine through, and minimize behaviors that get in the way.

**Anticipate the other side's style.**

Mirror behaviors that appeal to them.

My HR client would have been more successful at convincing her boss to invest in an orientation training program if she had first recognized that her boss, a driver, cared about results and the bottom line; and second, done her homework. She needed to assemble data on the impact of a 20 percent reduction in turnover versus the upfront cost of training, develop a timeline for achieving results, and present a budget for a small pilot program to measure success. By becoming a better negotiator, she will get better results.

You can too. Become an effective negotiator by avoiding the five common obstacles and becoming more aware of your own style.

---

**Lory A. Fischler** is a senior associate for Leadership Development Services. She also is the designer and facilitator of *Negotiating: Win-Win Agreements*; [loryfischler@leaservs.com](mailto:loryfischler@leaservs.com).

#### INTERESTED IN ORDERING E-PRINTS?

Would a digital version of this article be a great fit for your next course, presentation, or event? Are you interested in e-prints of several *T+D* articles on a specific topic? Visit [www.astd.org/TD](http://www.astd.org/TD) for more information.

# T+D

TRAINING + DEVELOPMENT

## YES!

I would like to subscribe to **T+D** magazine—12 monthly issues that keep me at the forefront of workplace learning and performance.

- Individual rate \$150 (\$216 outside the U.S.)
- Institutional rate \$300 (\$366 outside the U.S.)

### Order Information

TD0833

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

- Check One:**
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$150 (Individual USA)    | <input type="checkbox"/> \$216 (Individual Outside the US)    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$300 (Institutional USA) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$366 (Institutional Outside the US) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> VISA                      | <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amex                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Discover                             |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Check (USD)<br>(Payable to T+D)      |

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Fax this form to 1.205.995.1588 OR Mail to:

#### American Society for Training & Development

Subscription Office, P.O. Box 11806  
Birmingham, Alabama 35202-1806, USA

Order online at [store.astd.org](http://store.astd.org)

Phone: 1.866.802.7059

Orders processed within three business days.

If you have questions, please contact [td@subscriptionoffice.com](mailto:td@subscriptionoffice.com)

Prices valid through 12/31/2010. If you should wish to cancel your subscription for any reason, you will receive a refund on all unmailed issues. Your subscription to T+D may be a tax deductible business expense. Please allow 6 to 8 weeks to receive your first issue.

T+D is published by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD)

090938.63250

