

INTRODUCTION

How much better do you have to be?

This might sound like a strange question, especially as it's not grounded in a specific context. However, think about it for a moment in relation to you negotiating to agree a deal with a potential customer; a situation in which there are several other potential suppliers in competition with you for the business.

Now, how much better do you have to be in order to win the contract at the expense of the other suppliers?

A horse can win a race by a 'nose'. The winning horse and jockey get all the glory and, whilst in horseracing there are prizes for second and third place, in the commercial negotiation world it is often a case of all or nothing – a case of winner takes all.



So, to come home triumphant or defeated can often hinge on being just a little bit better than the competition. Small improvements or refinements in skill and technique can have a massively disproportionate impact – positively or negatively.

Imagine if you made 52 small improvements – how much better would you then be?

52 CASES

All cases described in this book actually happened in real life. The only editing has been to change some of the details in order to preserve anonymity of people and organisations. For example, all names of people are fictitious, the context may have been adjusted, job titles amended and, in some cases, the industry changed.

It doesn't matter; the sequence of events is the same, as are the insights and lessons.

The cases described span a range of scenarios including business, personal, big, small, successes, failures, triumphs, tragedies, serious, funny, etc.

This is not a 'story' book; it's a learning book. So, whilst most people like stories, the key to getting the most value for you from this book is to think about each case from the perspective of insights and learning. Beyond that you need to ask yourself, 'So, what would I have done in that situation?' or 'What would I do if I were to face a similar situation in my real world?'

Why 52 cases? Originally, there were to be 50 – a nice round number. Then, prior to publication, a couple of other cases warranted inclusion. As the number 52 is associated with a deck of cards, there seemed to be an interesting connection.



Playing cards, playing games, playing your cards right, having a strategy, experimenting with different techniques, having an 'Ace' up your sleeve, playing a 'Joker', using bluff and other tactics, responding with counter-tactics, openly putting all your 'cards' on the table, winning and losing... they're all part of the negotiation 'game'.

Many people enjoy playing card games, and when it's just for fun, many don't mind losing, so long as they have a good game, and hopefully also learn from the process.

The front cover displays the metaphor of chess – another enjoyable game with a strategy, moves, tactics and counter-tactics. Just as each chess piece move can shift the power balance between two parties, and the approach and tactics vary depending with whom you're playing, so it is with negotiation.

Whilst the stakes are a lot higher, and the consequences of losing can be significant in a negative sense, many also enjoy the process of the game we call negotiation.

WHO IS THIS BOOK FOR?

This book has been written for everybody and anybody who needs to negotiate, whether that be in business or their personal life, with external parties and agencies, their internal colleagues, their friends or family.

In order to be the best you can possibly be you need to learn from your own experiences in the real world – from what works for you and what tends not to work.

However, in addition to your personal experiences, this book should accelerate your learning by studying the events and insights of others who have faced equally both triumph and disaster. As Rudyard Kipling said, *Treat those two imposters just the same.*

One interpretation of treating both triumph and disaster as ‘just the same’ is that, win or lose, you will still learn something from what happened. If you win, you know what to repeat or do similarly; if you lose, you gain clues about what not to do in the future, or at least that that approach, in that situation, at that time and with that particular party did not work this time around.

The overall goal of this book is to help you to negotiate the very best deals you can – that’s it. If you can become proficient in that skill, then your life and results will improve in many ways, in several areas and at multiple levels.

STRUCTURE... WHAT STRUCTURE?

If you’re a person who likes structure, then be prepared for a surprise.

Whilst each case is structured in the same way, there is no logical structure to the order in which the cases appear in the book. There are several reasons for this:

1. Lots of negotiation texts are structured according to a chronological process of negotiating, from start to finish. In my experience, and in that of thousands of others, that’s not the way negotiations work. Often you meet an impasse, you need to go back in order to go forwards, you need to step sideways and try a different approach, you need to jump a step or even start all over again.
2. Each case is a unique situation and, as such, it is self-contained and more than capable of standing alone.
3. Many of the cases involve tactics and counter-tactics. These do not conform

to a natural 'position' within a negotiation process as most can be used at any point, and so to arrange them in that way would be artificial.

4. Sequencing the cases may constrain your thinking as to when you should or should not use a particular tactic; keep all of the tactics in mind all of the time.
5. Surprise can be a nice thing!

That said, the game of negotiation has its own terminology, and so if when reading the cases in Part One, you come across a term you've not heard before, or for which you want to clarify your understanding, then there's a good chance that this is defined in Part Two.

THANKS

Finally, I would like to thank the countless individuals whom I have met and had the opportunity to work with in a negotiation context over the past 30 years of my professional career. Some have made suggestions for cases for the book, taken from their own real-life experiences.

Many were participants on the negotiation and advanced negotiation skills workshops that I've run around the world. You will see some of these diverse, cultural aspects showing through in some of the cases.

In particular, I would like to thank a number of people with whom I have had the pleasure to work in the joint delivery of negotiation skills programmes, or who have contributed to this subject or book in other ways. In no particular order, Nab Kalsi, Sean Sidney, Ester van Eijck, Jan Jacobs, Steve Blackburn, Tom Hampton, Paulo Vasconcelos, Julian Duckmanton, Andrew Bishop, Judi Hunter, Ian Hunter, Hugh Griffiths, Anil Joshi, Francois Maessen, David Bowman, Andrew Hupert, Hannah Vaughan, Magda Pieta, Antonia Hekkelman-Weld, Richard Summerfield, Jan Valkhof, Mike Jones, Aldo Zoli, LLOYD Wang and the recently (2015), sadly departed James Zhang.

Of course, the risk in producing a list such as this is I inadvertently miss someone off. I hope that's not the case but, if so, and you're reading this, you know where I live, so come round for a couple of drinks on me!

To everyone else... enjoy the cases...



Jon Lavelle