

To Be A Successful Negotiator, Start With What You Want

By
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A client called me recently for help in negotiating a job offer. She had been out of work for many months and she was feeling desperate. When I asked her what she wanted out of the negotiation process, she said she was afraid to ask for anything much because she needed the job so badly. She didn't feel she had much to negotiate with.

It's true that in a situation like this, the other side appears to have more power than you do. But, once a commitment is made to you in the form of an offer, the power moves to your side of the board. While you won't want to screw up the deal by being over the top in your requests (read: demands), it is still perfectly OK to ask for something. If you stop yourself from asking, then you are not negotiating. You are capitulating. It's only a negotiation when you are willing to engage the other side in a give-and-take dance for the tangibles and/or intangibles you wish to acquire.

What do you really want?

Let's look at how a situation like this one might actually go. First, be honest. What do you really want? More money? More vacation? Delayed start date? What are you willing to give up, concede or modify to get what you want? In the example, this individual was being hired as a contractor. Her customer offered to pay her a small amount before starting the work and two additional payments over the ten-month assignment. My client, who hadn't had a regular paycheck in over a year, wanted to receive her fee in monthly installments. In fact, she would have loved to be on their payroll for the length of the assignment so she could participate in their medical plan. Tall order, huh? Not necessarily!

What does the other side want?

It's just as important to know or look for clues about what the other side wants. In this case, the customer really wanted my client for the project because her background, experience and industry connections were both outstanding and rare. Did they want her enough to dicker?

What are you willing to give up?

The customer had included a substantial guaranteed performance bonus for achieving specific results as a part of the deal. That bonus became a lever for my client to ask for what she wanted. She was willing to exchange part of the guaranteed bonus for a regular paycheck and benefits.

How do you think it turned out? Look below for the answer.

Want to be a better negotiator? The best negotiators . . .

- **Aim high.** They don't settle at the outset for asking for less than what they want.
- **Gather information.**
- **Listen.**
- **Know their subject matter**
- **Read signals.** They are adept at interpreting clues about what the other side wants and needs.
- **Ask good questions**
- **Express themselves well.**
- **Think clearly under pressure**
- **Put personal integrity first**
- **Prepare. Prepare. Prepare.**

Knowledge is power! Spend time getting clear on what you want before beginning any negotiation process.

Did my client get what she wanted? If you said, "Yes, she got what she wanted", you're only half-right. Both sides got what they wanted! (For more on being a win/win negotiator, stop by the FREE Resources page on my web site at <http://www.starmakercoaching.com>)

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