

Mastering the Power and Influence Process This chapter could be titled, “How to Win Friends and Influence People in Negotiations.” The premise is that you as a negotiator may wish to influence other people by swaying their opinions, convincing them to make concessions, or preventing them from engaging in difficult or conflict-oriented behaviors. And you also want to avoid being overly influenced by others simply because they know how to use influence tactics to their advantage on you. What are the ethics or the appropriateness of seeking to influence others? Clearly, if your goal is to be manipulative and get them to do things that are good for you but bad for them, and you and they will regret it later, then that’s taking influence too far. And clearly, if you seek to influence someone’s behavior or decision by concealing important information, lying, or otherwise deceiving this person, you are taking influence too far. That’s not what this chapter is about. But you might think that’s what this chapter is about, particularly if you’ve encountered manipulative, deceitful, or overly dominating behavior in other negotiators in the past. We find that negotiators are often more ethical and feel better about the process when they understand the uses of power and influence more fully. There are many appropriate ways to exercise influence. The more mastery you achieve in this area, the less tempting those unethical and deceitful tactics will be because you won’t need them to achieve your results. We’re starting this chapter with a look at the ethics of the topic because there is something off-putting about the study of influence 238 c11.qxd 5/30/06 11:50 AM Page 238 to many of the people we encounter in workshops and classes. If you feel that way, then think about the reality that this is what this entire book is about. Fundamentally, negotiation is all about each party’s efforts to influence the other. Social interactions are all about influence. No person is an island. Yet most people never study influence in depth, and so they go through life, and negotiations, in constant ignorance of the forces of influence at work around and on them. Your mastery of the arts of power and influence not only puts you in control of your negotiations; it can also help inoculate you against a great many ploys and tactics that will be used against you. While most negotiators don’t know all the tricks in the influence book, many have perfected two or three of them and will use their special weapons on every unsuspecting negotiator they encounter. These tactics are surprisingly effective and subtle. Some negotiators have won over and over by using just one or two of the more potent techniques—but not against you; you at least will be prepared to identify and counter their influence moves. We’ll start by reviewing some of the defensive tactics you can use to protect yourself and then move on to consider other influence tactics you can use to persuade and influence others.

Four Easy Defense Moves There are several major tactics you should be aware of and protect yourself against. Watch Out for Cascading Yeses Many salespeople, and some of the savvier negotiators, frame their exchanges with you in such a manner that they get you saying yes early on by asking you simple, easy-to-agree-to questions. They ask, you say yes, and a nice, friendly pattern is established. You’re comfortable and so are they because everybody is agreeing and things are going along smoothly. Before long, you begin to feel less comfortable, because the questions are not as easy to say yes to. Sometimes the other party will leave the problematic issue or concession to the very end and disguise it as just one more minor detail. At that point, it’s socially awkward to switch gears and jettison all that MASTERING THE POWER AND INFLUENCE PROCESS 239 c11.qxd 5/30/06 11:50 AM Page 239 nice agreement you’d been forging together. You may accommodate and give in. Or you may

object, but not as strongly as you would have otherwise, and end up compromising in a way that you'll view as unfavorable in hindsight. 1 Obviously a Con Here's a letter that came unsolicited by e-mail to one of us recently: Hello, My name is XXXX XXXXXX and this e-mail is sent to you from the Philippines. You get e-mails every day, offering to show you how to make money. Most of these e-mails are from people who are NOT making any money. And they expect you to listen to them? I'm sure there has been a time in your life when you thought about starting your own company and or work while staying home. This is now possible with this online business. Don't worry, I'm not trying to sell you anything . . . but I'd like to ask you a question. If I offered you my help and support to start your own homebased business with the opportunity to earn more than you ever did in less than two years, will you send me a "thank you" card??? If your answer is YES, e-mail me back for more information. It won't cost you a thing but little time to read and understand and decide whether or not you want a change in your life. This is so obviously a con that 99 percent of those receiving it will delete it. But it is a great example of the cascading yeses tactic: "Don't worry, I'm not trying to sell you anything, but I'd like to ask you a question." You will encounter far more sophisticated versions of this influence tactic as you engage in business negotiations. But they all at some point reveal the same message by reassuring you they aren't asking for a commitment on your part, they just want to ask you a question. And let us ask you a question: If someone asks you an obvious question that he or she knows you agree with, and you say yes, does this now earn the other person any special influence over you? "No" is the right answer! Whenever you detect a variant of the "let me ask you a question" tactic, refuse to be drawn in. It's going to be an influence game. Even if it isn't as obvious as the one in the letter above, it's the same wolf in sheep's clothing. 240 MASTERING BUSINESS NEGOTIATION c11.qxd 5/30/06 11:50 AM Page 240

**Defend against cascading yeses by recognizing this tactic.** If you are being maneuvered into agreeing repeatedly, recognize that the other party is herding you in his or her desired direction. And a good rule for negotiators (if not sheep) is, Never let yourself be herded. Break the pattern by saying, "Okay, you've asked a number of questions; now it's my turn. I'd like to ask for some more information. Are you willing to answer my questions?" This can put you back in control of the interaction and allow you to manage the negotiation according to your agenda. Alternatively, if you are already sure you don't want to agree with the other party, you can just say, "I could say yes again, but I know where this is going, and when you get around to asking me to . . . , I'm going to say no. So it will speed things up for me to say no right now." By putting your firm objection clearly on the table, you give the other person the option of addressing it, for example, by offering a concession or making some more attractive offer. Or the other party may prove to be inflexible, in which case you can terminate the negotiation. Watch Out for Power Plays Businesses and other workplaces are hierarchical: some people have more positional power than others. Those with more power due to rank are in the habit of telling the less powerful what to do. They do not negotiate. And business-to-business relations can be hierarchical too if one company is far larger or more prestigious than the other. For example, a small business selling services to the federal government finds itself being told how it will do business and how long it will wait for payment rather than being asked. When one party assumes it can roll over the other because of its size, rank, expertise, or position, its power play is often accommodated. But do you always have to accommodate more powerful

players? You can defend against power plays by recognizing that you do have control over the outcome in every negotiation or interaction. You always have the choice of saying no. It may not be the most pleasant choice, but the choice is yours. Yes, you are probably trying to think of exceptions to this rule right now. This isn't a hostage situation at gunpoint; you have a lot more choice than you think. We know the example is extreme and we aren't planning to train you to negotiate at gunpoint, but the point is that you want MASTERING THE POWER AND INFLUENCE PROCESS 241 c11.qxd 5/30/06 11:50 AM Page 241 to look for and take advantage of any openings to negotiate with someone who is making a power play. Your boss isn't armed. You can negotiate with him, even if he doesn't invite you to. A good way to deal with power plays by bosses and other very powerful people is to reframe the discussion by bringing up the various trade-offs involved in doing what they want. (Refer back to Chapter Seven on compromise for a detailed discussion of how to do this with your boss.) Another related tactic is to frame the discussion in a collaborative style by sharing information about what you'll need to do in order to accomplish this person's goal (refer back to Chapter Ten). In this tactic, you shift the discussion around to what he can do to help you accomplish his goal by helping you overcome the barriers to complying with the request. You are talking about how to do what he wants, so he won't view you as resisting his power play. But when you engage him in a discussion of how you are bringing him into your world, he will usually begin to negotiate in a more open, even-handed manner and stop barking out absolute orders. Another approach to these negotiations is to say "yes and . . ." rather than "no, because . . ." We find this to be true in our work as consultants. To counter power plays by clients without driving their business away, we try to say, "yes, and . . ." instead of "we can't do that," "that's not in the contract," or "yes, but that will cost extra." For instance, you could say, "Yes, we could expand the workshop to cover those additional topics and we could deliver it to firstline supervisors as well as middle managers, and we could give you a very favorable price on the additional development costs because we already have a lot of the needed content, plus we could probably discount the per capita rate for the added participants since we'll be there anyway and it will only involve adding a couple more of our staff to help facilitate the larger group." Everything you've said is positive, not negative. But you've managed to lay out your parameters and educate your clients that you can't accommodate every request they may have for free. Watch Out for Strange Requests It may be a strange request to ask you to watch out for strange requests, but we have our reasons. Research shows (and experience reveals) that an unexpected request has considerable persuasive 242 MASTERING BUSINESS NEGOTIATION c11.qxd 5/30/06 11:50 AM Page 242 power when used in certain ways. If a poorly dressed person asks you for a quarter in Times Square, you will not be surprised—and you probably won't even break stride for long enough to think about whether it's a good idea to grant the request. But what if the same person came up to you in the lobby of a well-secured office building and asked for \$1.50 to buy a copy of the Wall Street Journal? This unexpected request, in an unusual context, demands your attention. You would probably ask, "Why?"—or even give it to the person to reward the creativity of the request. And if there is any plausible explanation at all, you would probably do your best to provide the needed money. (In fact, in experiments, people usually gave the money no matter how poor the explanation.) You might even give the person a five dollar bill if you lacked change and suggest he or she go somewhere and make

change. In other words, you'd be much more compliant and accommodating than usual simply because the request was packaged in an unusual way. Negotiators who have been tough in earlier interactions may take advantage of this influence tactic by switching to a friendly, helpful style that is at odds with your previous expectations. It is easy to say no to someone who acts consistently negative or rude. But it is a lot harder to say no if the person is acting in a surprisingly pleasant, polite manner. For one thing, you don't want to be responsible for returning relations to the bad old days of unpleasant argument.<sup>2</sup> (By the way, con men often use this tactic by approaching their mark with an unusual business opportunity or request for help. But that's a topic for another book.) Many business negotiations will start out in a formal manner and create a stiff, arm's-length pattern of exchanges about the contract. Then, when the parties are fairly close but there are a few more details to resolve, they may suddenly warm up to you and begin to socialize with you. They may take you to an expensive restaurant for dinner with fine wine or offer expensive front-row seats to a sports event or show. It's amazing how those final objections will often melt away when these master influencers switch styles on you. Defend against strange requests and unexpected behavior by focusing away from the behavior and evaluating the substance of the request or position instead. By violating your expectations, the other party has forced you to attend to the influence-seeking message more closely than you would have otherwise. But stop as soon as you realize that the "something strange" tactic has drawn you in. MASTERING THE POWER AND INFLUENCE PROCESS 243 c11.qxd 5/30/06 11:50 AM Page 243 Ask yourself, "Is there any good reason from my perspective to be in this negotiation in the first place, or is it just the oddness of it that got my attention?" If it's the latter, use the avoid tactic right away. But if you still want to stay engaged in the negotiation, next ask yourself, "Ignoring their behavior and the context, what is the substance of their offer or position? Is it reasonable and attractive? Would I accept it if it were delivered in a more ordinary manner?" Often the answer is no, and you need to come back with a strong counteroffer instead of being seduced by a well-packaged but unfavorable proposal. Never Let Someone Get You Intoxicated During a Negotiation Don't try to negotiate over a lunch or dinner where alcohol is being served. Drinking and negotiating don't mix; in fact, they produce a doubly toxic cocktail. You will probably be more agreeable after three glasses of wine than you are right now (unless you find it necessary to drink in order to get through our chapters; if so, please don't tell us). It's amazing how many times someone makes a concession while engaged in social drinking. We don't like to admit the next day that those concessions or agreements were perhaps a bit rash, but if we are honest with ourselves, they usually were. Research has shown that negotiators under the influence think they are doing better in a negotiation when in fact they are doing considerably worse.<sup>3</sup> If you find yourself in a situation where drinking and business seem to be mixing, it may be impolite to refuse to socialize; in fact, it may be bad for business. But you don't have to drink. Order a nonalcoholic beverage and resist efforts to get you drinking. Or make sure that once you engage, any business discussions are deferred until later. This is particularly a problem in non-American cultures, and you should be prepared to socialize as necessary while politely deflecting their offer to drink. Those who don't normally drink at all already have lots of experience in handling such social drinking situations. Influence tactics and ploys all have in common the quality of trying to herd us in a direction that doesn't usually feel all that good if we think hard enough

about it. Whether someone is trying 244 MASTERING BUSINESS NEGOTIATION c11.qxd 5/30/06 11:50 AM Page 244 to get you to say yes to an unreasonable request or is offering you a drink you don't want, it's important to recognize the influence ploy and formulate your countermove before reacting. How to Use Power Now that you've inoculated yourself against some of the more common ways in which negotiators will try to exert influence over you, we will turn to the proper use of power and influence in your own negotiating tactics. Tapping into Free Sources of Power Negotiators often approach power as if it is something they have no control over: either they outrank the other party, for example, or the other party outranks them. Not so. It is possible, even essential, to manage power throughout the negotiation. Sometimes you may need to maximize your coercive power in order to try to tip the balance in your favor during a distributive tug of war on an issue of importance to you. Other times, you may want to balance the power and reduce its importance in order to create a comfortable, open environment for collaborative problem solving. But whichever way you want to shift it, the power dimension is always there and must always be part of your master negotiating strategy. Here are some ways you can increase your power by using "free," no-cost approaches to framing the offer or the deal:

- Offer a reasonable, fair position. The more reasonable party gains power by virtue of his or her position. Reasonableness and high-mindedness tap into a limitless source of power, one we might best call moral authority. Reasonableness knows no rank and is independent of the size of your organization. It doesn't correlate with age or who is taller or better dressed. If an objective third party would agree that you are being reasonable and fair and have right on your side, then your position has the negotiating power of reasonableness. The high road is the powerful road in most negotiations. Conducting yourself with dignity and offering reasonable proposals gives you some power over less reasonable and less well-behaved negotiators. MASTERING THE POWER AND INFLUENCE PROCESS 245 c11.qxd 5/30/06 11:50 AM Page 245
- Ideas are powerful. If you offer a fresh idea or approach, ask an insightful or helpful question, or are viewed as a helpful problem solver, you will gain the power of ideas. Creativity taps into the power of problem solving. Innovative thinking is extremely powerful.
- Technique is powerful—perhaps more powerful than anything else in negotiating. One of us (Alex) plays a lot of racquet sports and is part of a loose group of racquetball players who meet weekly at the University of Massachusetts to duke it out. Among the group, two retired professors are usually the winners. They have managed to fend off younger, fitter players for many years, including some graduate students who are less than half their age. How? Their technique is superior. They may not be able to outrun Alex, but they don't have to, because they make him run twice as much as they do. You can't assess the relative power of two players or two negotiators until you see them in action.
- You can gain power through persistence. If you work harder to find a solution, persist longer in your efforts to win concessions, and generally seem to care more and be willing to invest more in the negotiation, you often gain power over less committed and persistent parties. Motivation matters. The person who cares most will, all else equal, always win more at the table. So don't overlook the power of persistence. Persistence seems to work for a number of reasons. Persistent people are comfortable being in a contentious mode with others, they don't fear or avoid the conflict, and they are flexible as well as determined. They redefine their strategy and approach as the situation changes.

4 Testing Power Power may be implied but not

stated or acted on. If one party has much more power than the other and both recognize this, then the less powerful party may act accommodating in order to avoid a test of power. Watch pedestrians and automobiles interact to see this principle at work. Most pedestrians gladly cross at a crosswalk or light if they see that the cars are stopping. But if the cars don't seem to be willing to stop, the pedestrians step back onto the side of the road and let them pass. Most pedestrians don't want to risk a head-on collision with a car. There are also many times in a negotiation in which the party perceived to be more powerful (such as a senior executive) is simply accommodated, as if the others were fearful of being run over by him or her. Rather than assuming that the more powerful party will use force to get his way, we recommend testing this person's resolve. It's far less risky to find out how determined he is than to find out whether oncoming cars will stop to let you walk across the road. Simply put your own concerns, position, or suggested solution forward in a polite but clear way, and see what the response is. Does the more powerful party resort to a threat based on his power? He may, but in the majority of instances, he will not. Instead, he may go ahead and negotiate with you in an orderly manner. In that case, you've eliminated the advantage of power, at least for now, because you've gotten him to negotiate without flexing that power. Don't assume you'll lose the negotiation just because the other party has more power. It is not always advisable, or comfortable, to exercise power, so test to see if he really intends to do that.

**Understanding Your Own Power Choices** Why don't more powerful negotiating parties always use their power? To understand why restraint is often advisable, think about how you might use your own power in a negotiation. What could you actually do with it? For instance, perhaps you are negotiating with someone who reports to you. Or maybe you are representing a large company that buys from a smaller one and could do without the relationship. How might you use that power to get your way? If you are in a position of power, you have a choice of strategic approaches. First, you may choose to exercise that power in the negotiation in one of two ways: by being directive or by making threats.

**Directive: Giving Orders or Instructions** The directive approach presumes the other party will do as you say. This approach works well if she accommodates you or follows your orders. But what if she doesn't? You now have a choice of escalating to try to enforce your orders or of switching to a different style. For instance, you might now say (if she refuses or objects), "I didn't realize you'd have an issue with this. What's your concern?" That would be an invitation to a collaborative sharing of information followed by joint problem solving. Or you might invite her to compromise by saying something like, "What did you have in mind?" to draw out a position or offer from her, to which you could suggest a reasonable compromise. (In this case, reasonable means something that gives in partially but does not go as far as halfway, since you can hope reasonably to use your greater power to sway the compromise in your favor.) Whichever style you switch to will provide you an out and allow you to avoid escalating to an enforcer role—unless you really want to, in which case, you will use threats and ultimatums.

**Threats and Ultimatums** You may "show your sword" by letting the other party know what costs you will exact if he does not comply. For example, a manager might say to an employee, "Sam, you've skipped the last four team meetings, and you are behind on your share of the work. I need you to catch up by next Friday and to attend all team meetings

for the rest of this month. If you don't do this, I will initiate disciplinary action by writing the problem up for your employment file." In this case, it may be appropriate and necessary to pull rank and issue a well-thought-out ultimatum to this employee. Some things are nonnegotiable. In fact, many managers and supervisors make the mistake of being too flexible and accommodating about poor behavior; they fail to reprimand the employee and document the problem according to the employment policies of their organization. The problem with threats and ultimatums is that people often use them without having thought them through completely. The assumption is that you'll prevail by threatening to exercise power and won't actually have to do anything. But what happens when someone calls your bluff and dares you to make good on your threat? Often we find that we aren't comfortable executing what we said we would do. Even if our position of power makes it possible for us to fire an employee who has missed four meetings in a row, it might not be practical or easy to do so, or we really don't want to endure this person's wrath when we carry out the threat. If the employee says, "I think you are out of line to fire me over this. As you know, I'm having some health problems right now, but 248 MASTERING BUSINESS NEGOTIATION c11.qxd 5/30/06 11:50 AM Page 248 other than that I've been a model employee. In fact, your performance review of me last year was favorable. So go ahead and try to fire me, but I don't think you'll get very far." And the employee is probably right. This manager spoke without thinking and should have either avoided an ultimatum or made a more conservative and careful one (such as explaining the formal procedures for taking disciplinary action, which no doubt go through many earlier stages before reaching the point of firing).

**Tamer Power Choices** There are a number of ways we can use power to have less dramatic, but perhaps equally significant, effects. **Reframing Around Interests** Instead of pulling rank and trying to prevail because of your greater power in the negotiation, you could shift away from the power dimension and instead use your influence to initiate a discussion of needs and an effort to problem-solve. Interest-oriented negotiating is at the heart of the collaborative style and often informs compromises as well. It can be difficult to get the other party to open up and engage in the honest exchange of information and ideas needed to pursue interest-based solutions. Pushing the other party away from a distributive (competitive) approach and toward an interest-based discussion is a more benign use of your power. In the case of the employee who isn't coming to team meetings, for instance, you might say, "As your manager, I could of course write up these performance problems and treat this as a disciplinary matter; however, I don't want to do that. Instead, I'd like to see if I can help you balance your team duties with your other work. What's going on right now? Why is it difficult for you to attend these team meetings? Or is there some other reason that you haven't been going?" This approach starts with a reminder of your positional power and the responsibility it brings with it to manage the employee's performance. But it then shifts the frame by showing that you are interested in helping the employee solve this problem rather than in disciplining this person. If you persist in asking open-ended questions and seeking information about the causes of the problem, **MASTERING THE POWER AND INFLUENCE PROCESS** 249 c11.qxd 5/30/06 11:50 AM Page 249 most employees will eventually open up and engage in a problemsolving discussion with you. **Reframing Around Rights** Another way to avoid having to use your power is to reframe the negotiation in terms of rights. The rights approach makes reference to obligations, rules, conventions, precedents, or prior agreements. It seeks a solution based on what the

parties agree is right or correct. For example, you might ask a vendor you think is late on shipments if he or she is complying with the terms of the contract. If the vendor is in fact so late as to be out of compliance with the contract, your question will remind him or her that you could take recourse by canceling. But you didn't have to say that, and you won't feel obligated to carry through on a threat if the vendor continues to run late. It keeps your options open to avoid threats and instead discuss the rights of the situation. And if you are in fact in the right, this moral authority gives you a different sort of power that may be even more useful in persuading the vendor.<sup>5</sup>

### Accessing Sources of Power

What if you are negotiating with someone (or some organization) that is particularly difficult or powerful and you feel you need to seek additional power to counter their's? Here are some sources of power that you may be able to tap into (in addition to the "free" sources of power we already discussed: reasonableness, fresh ideas, negotiating technique, and persistence).

#### Information

Buy some time in a difficult negotiation by avoiding or postponing for long enough to do additional research. Seek information about the other party, about options, and about precedents, procedures, or rules that might be favorable to you. Do research: find data, statistics, history, and background to support your arguments. And if you are dealing with technical or complex issues such as foreign currency fluctuations and their effect on price over time, become expert in these topics or find a helpful expert to advise you. Information is power. Yet most negotiators shortchange the research phase and rush into engagement with the other party or parties.

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#### Often the party who appears better informed wins simply on the strength of the arguments.

#### Position Power

Ally with someone in a position of power. Even if you aren't in a powerful position yourself, you may be able to find a champion who is. This is where a deep network comes into play. If you are already known and trusted by senior executives, you can now go to them and ask for help with your problem. If you have not built these relationships, it will be harder to build a personal relationship, but you may still be able to find someone in a position of power who has an alignment of interests with you. For example, if you work for a small importer that sells to a large retail chain, you could go to larger vendors or your trade association for help in resolving a dispute with the retailer. Others may share your interests and be willing to lend some of their weight to your argument.

#### Control over Resources

In some offices, the most powerful person is the one who controls the purchasing of basic supplies. You don't want to get on the wrong side of the person in purchasing who decides whether you can get an upgraded computer this year. Negotiations are often over disputes about resources. Perhaps the oldest and most classic example of a resource dispute is the one that arises between those who live upstream and downstream on a river. Those on the downstream side always feel that they aren't getting their fair share, but it's hard for them to do anything about the problem since their upstream neighbors are in a geographical position of control. At the same time, even if you can control some resources the other party needs, it's usually wise to avoid rash threats and ultimatums. Usually you want to let your resource control power be implied and avoid having your bluff called and being stuck between backing down or escalating. Resources of importance in business negotiations can include human capital, supplies, money, equipment, and services. When resources are widely disbursed, as they tend to be in organizations today, the individual who makes the effort to gain control over them has a significant power advantage that can be used to



punish or reward others or simply to enter into reciprocal exchanges of favors.<sup>6</sup> MASTERING THE

POWER AND INFLUENCE PROCESS 251 c11.qxd 5/30/06 11:50 AM Page 251 Time

Time is an especially powerful resource and can often be controlled through negotiating tactics. Whenever you negotiate, work hard to buy yourself as much time as you can. For example, never make unnecessary time-based promises to your constituencies. (Don't tell your boss that you plan to come back from the next meeting with a closed deal, for example.) Also, seek ways to turn up the time pressure on the other party. If you have the ability to impose a deadline directly, consider doing so. Or if you know that there are deadlines affecting the other party, slow the pace and let the clock run down until those on the other side become more eager to do a deal with you. The party without a deadline in negotiation usually has an advantage, because they can put pressure on the other party to agree before the deadline. Having a Seat at the Table Another form of power derives from having a seat at the table during negotiations.

Researchers have experimented with situations in which one party (out of multiple parties) was not included at some of the negotiations. Even if that person controlled resources and had some power as a result, she tended to get the short end of the deal if she wasn't able to participate in all the discussions.<sup>7</sup> This may be news to researchers, but it's an old tactic to negotiators who are masters at scheduling and locating meetings so as to make it difficult for someone they don't want there or to hold the meeting when they know key people are unavailable. Groups often make decisions when an opposing member is absent. The crafty negotiator occasionally uses this tactic to get around a difficult person. Using Power by Framing a Strong Influence Message Perhaps the preeminent way to influence others is to deliver a compelling or convincing message. As long as you can get your message to the other party, you have a chance to exert this influence, even if he or she is a lot more powerful than you are. Here are some things that have been learned from the study of persuasion and advertising about how to frame a strong and persuasive message. 252 MASTERING BUSINESS NEGOTIATION c11.qxd 5/30/06 11:50 AM

Page 252 Plan Your Message Structure and Style Often what matters is when and how you say something, not so much what you say. You may, for example, have multiple points or concerns to raise.

Which should go first, which in the middle, and which last? Research is consistent in showing that anything buried in the middle is going to get short shrift. It may be forgotten, and it won't be taken as seriously.<sup>8</sup> So put the important stuff at the front or back end of your message (or both, to reinforce the point). Is there a rule for when to put a key point at the start versus at the end? The first thing we hear in a list is often memorable; this is called the primacy effect. Negotiators can increase their influence using the primacy effect by starting with something the other party wants to hear. It will be memorable and may give a more positive feeling to their memory of the entire presentation, even if followed by a number of points that they view as negative. Sometimes master negotiators open with supportive, relationship-oriented comments or thanks, followed by statements of their commitment to work together and build a profitable relationship. These positives tend to have more impact when said first and help make the others more receptive to requests or demands that follow. But if your goal is to make sure the other party remembers an important but complex or unfamiliar point, put it at the end to take advantage of the recency effect—that is, we tend to remember the last thing we heard, especially when the list is hard to recall. Master negotiators may use this technique when dealing with complex technical issues or

multistep projects. In these sorts of deals, you may get the other party to agree to do something, but will they remember to do it later or even recall the details of exactly what they said they'd do? Maximize the odds of their following through by going into the details of what to do at the end, so they walk away with a clear recall of these important instructions. One of us has a colleague who does a popular two-day workshop on customer service. She approached us about the idea of collaborating to turn her workshop into a book and training manual. We offered to provide some help and advice, since we have a lot of experience in creating written materials. In a wide-ranging discussion of a number of topics, we told her to make sure she captured the MASTERING THE POWER AND INFLUENCE PROCESS 253 c11.qxd 5/30/06 11:50 AM Page 253 content of her workshop by bringing a tape or video recorder with her next time she presented and recording both days. Then, we told her, she could have it transcribed to create a written text of the workshop. Once it was captured in a word processing file, we said we'd show her how to edit and format it into a manual and might even help her publish it. Then we talked about a lot of other things, like how to publish books and workbooks and where to sell them. Two months later, we received a video from her. It was not the video we'd suggested she make. Instead, she'd gone into a studio and shot some footage of her presenting a fifteen-minute summary of the workshop. "Could you help me market this video," she said, "and by the way, when are you going to help me write up my workshop in book form?" Well, no time soon. Not without a transcript or something to look at. We still had no idea what she actually did in that two-day workshop. What had gone wrong with our agreed-on plan? She'd remembered that she was "making a video for us" but had gotten confused about the specifics of it and what it was for. Since she doesn't usually write things down, the importance of a transcript had escaped her, and in her mind the project had gradually evolved into something else. We had to tell her that although we still liked the idea of working with her in principle, we were in fact no further along than last time we met and were not going to do anything to help her until she captured her workshop in written form for us to review. The disappointment and wasted time could have been avoided with a clearer delivery of our instructions, which were in essence the terms of our offer. We should have delivered these terms at the end and reviewed them carefully, so that they would have been remembered accurately. Even better, we should have summarized the discussion in a short e-mail or note so that it would be clear what we explained to her. Make sure the first and last thing they hear or see is your key point or most important requirement. (Notice that we structured this paragraph to illustrate the advice it gives.) Put Yourself in Their Shoes Before Trying to Make Them Walk Your Way What is the best way to formulate a proposal or argument? You will be most persuasive if you have thought about the other party's perspective first and can ground your argument in an understanding 254 MASTERING BUSINESS NEGOTIATION c11.qxd 5/30/06 11:50 AM Page 254 of those priorities and concerns. For example, if you are presenting a proposal for funding a new product, ask yourself if the decision makers are more interested in making big returns or in reducing financial risks. If they are risk averse and you keep talking about the great possibilities but never explain how to avoid a loss if the product fails, you won't get their vote. Understanding their concerns and shaping your argument toward them is the key to persuasiveness in many business negotiations. Sometimes you don't fully understand the other party's concerns and interests until you listen to their questions and objections. If you had assumed those

executives were interested in maximizing future sales but all their questions are about reducing risks of failure, then you will realize that your presentation was off target. In that situation, you might want to tell them the truth, saying something like, "I can see from your questions that you are particularly concerned about ways of minimizing the risks of new product failure. As I didn't know that in advance, I think it might be best for me to go back to the drawing board and prepare some projections and strategies based on the goal of minimizing risks. Would you like me to do that, and give you a modified proposal next week?" By anticipating their rejection and offering to revise your approach before they can say no, you keep the door open and prevent yourself from being shot down right away. And now you know a lot more about this group's concerns and interests, since you've been beaten up by their questions once already. Modify your proposal if necessary, and then prepare carefully to handle their objections, so that you can be more persuasive the next time you present. Choose Your Communication Medium Wisely

Imagine you are negotiating the terms of a business-to-business agreement. Should you present your contract requirements verbally, in an e-mail, or in a formal, written draft of the contract? If you are negotiating a contract that will eventually take the form of a lengthy, detailed written document, it is often most persuasive to present your desired terms in a written form that looks and reads more like a finished contract than an informal negotiating point. The legal, written form tends to add credibility to the proposal. MASTERING THE POWER AND INFLUENCE PROCESS 255 c11.qxd 5/30/06 11:50 AM

Page 255 But if you are involved in a collaborative negotiation and want to bounce some possible alternative solutions off the other party, a face-to-face discussion is probably the best choice. You don't want this person to think you are making a formal proposal, and you don't want a formal, guarded response in return. Make the message sound informal and off-the-record if that is the spirit in which you want it received. You can always use facial expressions and tone of voice to soften the impact of a tough message. Always think about the medium in terms of the impression you want the receiver to get and the way you want him or her to respond. The more formal the medium (for example, a formal offer or proposal), the more you may want to send a registered letter or overnight mail package, but the more careful and stiff the reply. If you want to control a difficult negotiator who tends to get emotional and make threats or exaggerate points when speaking, you may shift to written communications to see if that person will be more disciplined and easy to deal with in this medium. But if you are engaged in e-mail discussions that are escalating and leading to misunderstandings and bad feelings, you may want to switch to a telephone call to iron things out. Always remember that the medium is a variable, and you can control it. If the negotiation isn't going well, try changing the medium of communication. Maybe your message will work better and be more influential in a different medium.<sup>9</sup>

One-Sided or Two-Sided Message? Think about the form your arguments take. For example, let's say you are trying to win a contract to supply business services to a large company. You have made the short list and are invited to make a presentation in its boardroom. In planning your message, you have to decide if you will focus only on your proposal and its merits or also on other approaches and why you believe they won't work as well. Should you use a one-sided message that is only about your proposal, or should you explore the other side by showing the cons of other approaches you know your competitors will propose? In this situation, the two-sided approach is usually more influential. You probably don't want to say bad things

about specific competitors, since this seems tacky, but you do want to compare 256 MASTERING BUSINESS NEGOTIATION c11.qxd 5/30/06 11:50 AM Page 256 your proposal and approach to other possible approaches and show why yours is superior. After all, this is what your potential clients are trying to do: they have to compare all the proposals and pick the best one, so why not help them figure out how to do the comparison? It would be a mistake to present your argument in a vacuum as if there were no other options. The two-sided message is usually more persuasive than a onesided message when dealing with thoughtful, well-educated negotiators (we hope that's who you'll usually encounter in business) MASTERING THE POWER AND INFLUENCE PROCESS 257 Conducting Negotiations by E-

Mail Since there is an increasing tendency to use e-mail for all kinds of communication, we should briefly comment about negotiating over e-mail. It has distinct advantages: you can write out exactly what you want to say. You can take time to consider an offer and respond when you are ready rather than having to respond immediately to a verbal offer on the telephone or in person. You also have a record of who says what that can be tracked over time. And it is possible that your opponent will fly off the handle and overreact to a situation, saying all sorts of wild things in e-mail. She will exaggerate accusations, make extreme threats she can't or won't want to make good on later, or state outright lies. You can print them out and wave them around. Usually this is not a constructive game to play, but sometimes you are looking for any way to gain some influence over a difficult negotiator, and this ploy can be tried. The major liability of e-mail is that people often communicate thoughtlessly and emotionally in this medium. They don't take the time to consider what to say or how to say it. Instead, they bang off a message and hit the Send button before editing it or thinking about the consequences. And you can't reach through the screen and pull back an angry e-mail or easily apologize for it if you find out that the other party took it the wrong way. In addition, you may be held accountable for promises or commitments you made earlier but really didn't think you would have to carry out. Use e-mail negotiations to your advantage by being slow and reasoned in the way you respond; watch out for the urge to send an intemperate message, because the consequences are never good. c11.qxd 5/30/06 11:50 AM Page 257 and also when you know the other party will be exposed to counterarguments and alternatives. And if the issue or topic is already familiar to the other party, you can anticipate that they will form counterarguments in their mind as they listen to you, so you might as well acknowledge and address those counterarguments. 10 If you are going to present two or three alternatives and recommend one of them, put your favored alternative at the end. The recency effect is helpful here, and your final option will usually be more influential than the others. For example, you might present three new product ideas to the executive committee, giving pros and cons of each, but placing the one you personally favor last in the sequence to give it the best chance. 11 Be Prepared to Handle Questions and Objections Many times in negotiations, you will find you need to respond to an attack or refute a point. For example, you may present a detailed growth plan and budget in a staff meeting, only to have an associate at the other end of the table say something like, "Well, I don't know about the specific numbers, but it seems to me we tried something like that years ago and it didn't work." What should you say? If you have not thought about possible arguments against your plan, you may not have any idea as to what this colleague is referring. But if you are prepared for this objection, you might counter with something like, "Well, if you

are referring to the expansion project of 2003, I've reviewed that file and it's nothing like this. It had the same goal of growing our West Coast revenues, but it relied on a partnership with X-Y Company, which as you know went out of business later that year, so we never got a chance to test our products in the West Coast market. Our new plan uses only internal resources so we aren't vulnerable to that kind of risk." It's fair to say that many business proposals sink or swim on the strength of the presenter's handling of questions and objections after the initial presentation. The presentation itself is often treated as informative, a briefing that gets the group up to speed so that it can debate the proposal intelligently.

If you are presenting a plan within your own company, this collegial spirit of debate 258 MASTERING BUSINESS NEGOTIATION c11.qxd 5/30/06 11:50 AM Page 258 will probably be the rule. Be prepared to handle questions and enter into the debate. How best to prepare to handle questions and counterarguments? Many negotiators prepare by focusing on their own arguments and the facts that support them. This is a good start, but it is insufficient. A better preparation strategy is to anticipate counterarguments and be prepared to debate them. For example, you might brainstorm a list of all possible objections and counterarguments. Make as long a list as you can, seeking help from others if necessary to make sure you anticipate as many counterarguments as possible. Then prepare your responses to each objection or argument. The combination of preparing to support your own arguments and preparing to debate other arguments makes the best preparation. Develop arguments both for and against your position, plus the arguments to counter those arguments that go against you. 12 Make separate lists or a big table for pro arguments, con arguments, and counters to con arguments to make sure you are fully prepared. Reducing Anticipation of Counterarguments As you make an argument or present a proposal, those listening will be thinking about their counterarguments. In fact, the better portion of their attention often goes to what they are going to say, not what you are saying now. 13 Their focus on counterarguments reduces the effectiveness of your arguments. How can you reduce this tendency of them to listen with only one ear? One strategy is to distract the other party or, perhaps more accurately, use more of their mental processing power so that they are not as able to think about counterarguments and instead have to give you their full attention. 14 For example, if you prepare a series of detailed exhibits and charts, hand one out as you make a key point. Then hand out another as you make your next key point. The physical activities of handing the charts around the table, plus the mental activities involved in figuring them out, keep the other side busy. Your words plus the chart-related activity add up to a rich enough message that you capture the bulk of their attention and they don't think as hard about counterarguments. 15 MASTERING THE POWER AND INFLUENCE PROCESS 259 c11.qxd 5/30/06 11:50 AM Page 259 Should you present PowerPoint slides along with your verbal argument, or speak without audiovisual aids? Should you hand out a written report or a set of graphs, tables, or charts to go with your presentation? Should you provide slides on a screen, plus a handout, as you talk? Normally in speaking before business audiences, we think about clarity and professionalism as we address such questions, but in a negotiation, it may make more sense to think about the level of distraction you want to provide. If you think a point will be particularly appealing to the other party or parties, reduce the amount of distraction through multichannel message delivery. Let the receivers' subvocalizations (their self-talk) go on without distraction if you think this will be positive. But

when you get to points you expect will generate resistance and negative subvocalizations, maximize the number and variety of forms your message takes to keep them so busy that they cannot generate strong counterarguments while you are presenting. Summary Power and influence are important in every negotiation, but not necessarily in the expected ways. Raw exercise of power is rarely constructive.

Negotiators who make threats or give ultimatums often regret it later when they find they've put themselves in the position of having to do something unpleasant or having to back down and look foolish. And the most persuasive and influential negotiators often avoid loud, overbearing, or overly colorful styles and instead rely on careful preparation, sound arguments, and subtle tactics to win others over. As you negotiate, always keep one eye on the balance of power and the uses of influence. Defend yourself against being herded by someone who uses strong-arm influence tactics. And make good use of those tactics you feel comfortable using, such as the presentation of a well-structured, well-argued message. If you find yourself outinfluenced and outpowered, stop and seek sources of additional power and influence for your side. We hope this chapter has convinced you that power and influence can be developed and used as need requires. Your negotiating skills and knowledge of technique are valuable sources of influence and power, as are your abilities to manage your own emotions and take 260

MASTERING BUSINESS NEGOTIATION c11.qxd 5/30/06 11:50 AM Page 260 the high road of reasoned, reasonable positions in any negotiation. The master negotiator is always mindful of power and .careful to create sufficient influence to press his or her agenda forward