

TALKING POINTS

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NEGOTIATE LIKE A PRO In any negotiation, however large or small, direct communication with open-ended questions is vital.



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7 Must-Ask Questions in Any Negotiation

How to come out on top in your daily deal-making.

A negotiation is nothing more than a discussion through which both parties seek to formulate and settle upon a mutually beneficial agreement, whether this agreement is a multi-million-dollar contract or simply at which restaurant to meet for dinner. Our daily professional and personal lives are riddled with negotiations, those across a boardroom table, the OR table, the kitchen table and everywhere in between.

But, what sets a successful negotiator — one who comes out on top in deal-making more often than not — apart from those who struggle to gain advantages? Of the many strategies you can employ to improve your chances of emerging victorious in a negotiation, paramount among these is asking just the right kind of questions — those that will elicit answers that facilitate a win for all parties involved. Here are 7 “must-ask” questions in any negotiation to help ensure that the agreement you reach is not only in your best interest, but also fair and reasonable for all involved.

1 **Would you explain the reasons for your position?**
If you can't clearly understand the other

party's reasoning through simple discussions, the best way to discern the other party's position and motivations on deal points is to directly ask them their rationale for what they're offering or seeking. Once you know the other party's thought process and justifications, rather than just the outcome they desire, you can better adjust your strategy and response to coincide with their position. For example, in a scenario where the other party is requiring some advance payment that doesn't sit well with you, you might find out that they need the funds at this initial juncture to fund required material or other costs in order to put the arrangement in motion. Once you understand the logic behind requests and demands relating to a deal structure, you're better able to control discussions and create agreeable terms.

2 **Is there any reason you can't?**
This is a great question to ask when you know the other party is avoiding or rejecting your offer for no legitimate reason or not having thought it through well enough. Sometimes people make shallow excuses for why they can't do something or