

Negotiating with your boss

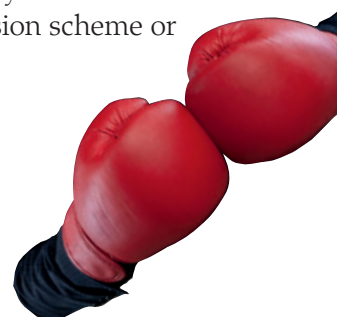
The idea of engaging in a negotiation with a boss is so intimidating that most employees avoid it altogether. Negotiating is a particularly challenging type of communication to reach an agreement with someone whose interests are not perfectly aligned with yours, thus it can potentially lead to conflicts and disputes. A negotiation can be for anything: a salary rise, a request of flexible working hours, a renegotiation of a deadline or just some new office equipment. As for all types of communication, facing a negotiation with a boss needs preparation, clarity and empathy, to ensure that it brings about positive outcomes so:



- get timing right: approach the boss when the time is right for him and when it coincides with a successful project that puts you in a good light;
- keep emotions under control, be as neutral as possible, stick to the issue, listen to any objection or remark from your boss, don't appear upset or walk away from the negotiations if you don't like what you hear. If emotions start to get out of control, slow the conversation down, try to reschedule the negotiation or take a break;
- be prepared and research to support arguments with concrete facts and examples, such as a list of accomplishments, comparative salaries, benefits of adopting a new technology or a cost and profit analysis of a project;
- put yourself in your boss's shoes and try to demonstrate how your requests could be mutually beneficial;
- be clear on your BATNA (Best Alternative to Negotiated Agreement) before negotiating. Keep in mind a fallback position if you fail to reach an agreement. So for example, if your boss refuses the salary increase, your BATNA might be asking for an enhanced commission scheme or a training course;
- keep a record of what is agreed.



1 Read these sentences and discuss in pair which phase of a negotiation they refer to and who could say them.



1 "This issue seems to have raised a lot of strong feeling. I wonder if we could break for five minutes so that I can think more calmly about this issue..."

2 "Obviously you feel very strongly about this issue, tell me what I'm missing or don't understand with practical examples..."

3 "That was information I did not have, I'd like some time to consider the implications of what you've raised ..."

4 "You've raised some really valid points that I'd like to consider; can we continue this meeting after I've had time to reflect on what I've just learned?..."

5 "The project would obviously bring many benefits to this department too, since our annual budget would be significantly reduced..."

6 "This is too important an issue for me not to be clear about all the facts before I give you my opinion. Can I get back to you first thing tomorrow morning?"

7 "I'll ask my secretary to write down all that has been agreed and she'll send you a copy to sign..."

8 "Well, in this case would you mind considering the opportunity of letting me get some more experience in our branch in China?"