

Complete this assessment and bring a (soft) copy to the workshop.

Introduction

You may be the exception to the rule but likely today you had or are going to have one or more arguments or have probably negotiated or will negotiate at some point. We are not referring to a fight or a heated dispute (although this may also be the case!) but to an interaction with other people who have different positions to yours concerning a matter that affects both of you.

Beyond any doubt, our professional and personal success substantially depends on our negotiation skills.

Negotiation refers to a process of human interaction through which people try to solve their differences, i.e., a situation in which two or more parties feel they are in opposition to each other. This opposition may involve conflicting needs, points of view, incompatible objectives, different priorities, a dispute about scarce resources, etc.

Instructions

Below you will find 5 different ways (styles) in which people tend to behave when they are confronted with differences that involve other people. For each style there's a list of corresponding items.

First, read them carefully, and then complete the self-assessment.

Style 1: Avoiding

Characteristics of this style:

- Knows when a negotiation is not the best way to solve a problem/conflict.
- Tends to physically disappear from the conflict scene.
- Tries to change the debate to another topic.
- Remains silent, does not participate in the discussion.
- Clearly avoids potential lose/lose situations.
- Feels uncomfortable or nervous when there is a fierce discussion within a team.
- Tries to avoid the negotiation meeting when he/she thinks someone wants to negotiate an issue with him/her.
- Prefers avoiding confrontation, knows how to choose his /her battles.
- Steps back from the action in order to gain a clearer understanding of the possible gains in the negotiation.
- Leaves the initiative to people with a strong personality.
- Does not expose his/her concerns or objections.
- Avoid expressing own points of view for fear of causing controversy.

Style 2: Accommodating

Characteristics of this style:

- Gives in to the wishes or pressures of the other party.
- Accepts the other's point of view even when he/she disagrees.
- Adopts a long-term perspective.
- Assumes that all parties in a negotiation tend to be generous and reciprocal.
- Displays generosity, humility, submission.
- Sacrifices own viewpoints to maintain the good relationship.
- Makes concessions to please the other party.
- Listens to and then follows other people's ideas.
- Is adaptive and flexible.
- Adapts him/herself to the expectations that the other party has about him/her.

Style 3: Competing

Characteristics of this style:

- Once adopted a position, tends to stick to it.
- Strongly enjoys bargaining situations.
- Strongly defends own ideas.
- Stands firm to achieve his/her goals.
- Fights hard until others support their own point of view or proposal.
- Does not care to have a fierce debate.
- Uses persuasion or manipulation tactics to 'win'.
- Openly challenges others with the weaknesses in their arguments.
- Maintains direct eye-contact.
- Does not shy away from taking unpopular action.
- Holds strongly to own views and is difficult to convince that it is right to change or adapt.

Style 4: Compromising

- Guesses that all negotiations can end with a 50/50 solution.
- Looks for a quick solution even if the agreement is not perfect.
- Does not mind making concessions if the other party also reciprocates.
- If possible, finds the midpoint between the opposing poses.
- When the issue is complex, focuses on achieving a temporary settlement that allows the parties to move on.
- Looks for quick and balanced solutions to avoid time consuming negotiation.
- Proposes intermediate solutions that are acceptable to all parties.
- Proposes solutions in which both parties give in and receive in return.
- Looks for quick solutions in which both sides win and lose something.
- Wants a process of give and take.
- Shows a high sense of urgency in the pursuit of an acceptable solution.

Style 5: Collaborating

- Assumes that all negotiations can have a win/win result.
- Spends time on inquiring into everyone's needs and strives to elaborate a solution that satisfies all of them.
- Is willing to invest a lot of time and energy in working out an agreement that optimally satisfies all parties.
- Is highly creative in finding a novel and inconspicuous solution.
- Asks many questions to better understand the other party's views and motivations.
- Strives to get a deal that covers the most important needs of all parties involved.
- In his/her proposals, integrates the views and ideas of all the people involved.
- Strives to turn a conflict situation into a collaborative problem-solving process.
- Assumes that all parties involved in a negotiation have good intentions and tend to collaborate.
- In case of divergences, tries to clarify from the beginning what are our points in common.
- When arguing his/her ideas, considers the other party's wants and needs without forgetting his/her own.
- In a conflict situation, works hard to find the best possible solution for all involved.

Self-assessment (to be completed by you)

1. Although often we might recognize distinctive styles in our behaviour, most of us have a dominant style. Which of the five styles described above (avoiding, accommodating, competing, compromising, collaborating) do you recognize most in your own behaviour? Choose only one.

2. Can you remember an experience (from professional or personal life) in which you have used this style in an effective way? Briefly describe the situation and the impact of your behaviour (on yourself, the other party and the negotiation process).

3. Remember another situation (from professional or personal life) in which you have used this style in a less effective way. Briefly describe the situation and the impact of your behaviour (on yourself, the other party and the negotiation process).