



Keep the pace

Technological advancements require leaders to develop new soft skills in negotiating teams and hone existing ones.

◆ STEPHEN KOZICKI, GORDIAN BUSINESS

talked to about this disagrees. In a world where job roles are changing rapidly, soft skills will be one of the few constants. - Chris Jones

Machines will, in the future, replace a proportion of most people's working tasks, replacing repeatably, ordered tasks. But machines are weak at understanding people's mood, sensing how a situation is developing and building trusting relationships. Humans excel where machines fail, with soft skills that include empathy, creative thinking, collaboration, persuasion, and negotiation. Becoming skilled in these soft skills is hard.

Most education and job roles include sitting alone for hours at a time, minimising risks, and following rules. Additionally, increased use of technology prevents forming deep relationships as face-to-face contact is limited.

In this new, fast-changing world, transformation and the pursuit of opportunities are not solo efforts; they require teams full of experts in soft skills. Leaders need to focus on continually developing their teams to higher performance in persuasion, innovation, and negotiation while improving skills faster than their best-in-class competitors. How do you know which skills to use in each situation?

When to negotiate and when to persuade?

To decide when you should negotiate and when you should persuade, you must understand the difference between persuasion and negotiation. Persuasion is changing the attitude or behaviour of others. Negotiating is to resolve differences to reach an agreement.

Negotiation: something you use when it's to your advantage and something you don't use when it's not to your advantage. - John Bolton

Start by using persuasion. Persuasion can use logic and emotion. Persuading with logic means getting your point across using facts and arguments. Persuading with emotion is most powerful when you tell stories. A combination of both stories and facts provides the most successful persuasion.

When persuasion is not enough, then use your negotiating skills to resolve your differences.

Every fight ends with a negotiation. Why don't we start with the negotiation?
-Jawaharlal Nehru
Global business in every market is changing and changing fast. Leaders require a different approach to deal with new opportunities and problems arising from this constant change in technology and automation.

Why do we need soft skills?

Some people believe that soft skills aren't that important. However, almost every employer I've



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Being market ready means negotiating teams need to manage uncertainty, turbulence, rapid change, digital disruption, complexity, and hyper-competition.

Negotiation is a necessary skill for leaders

Negotiation is a core capability for leaders to achieve an optimal outcome. As the workforce of today prepares for the future, great leaders need to develop their negotiation teams. All great leaders are great negotiators,

but all great negotiators are not great leaders.

Great leaders need to understand the fast changes in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world. It is critical that leaders enhance the capability of the organisation to be market ready. Being market ready means negotiating teams need to manage uncertainty, turbulence, rapid change, digital disruption, complexity, and hyper-competition.

For negotiating teams to manage so much, leaders need to introduce a proven and practical approach. A practical approach for the greatest challenge in negotiation: how to achieve desired outcomes while maintaining sustainable working relationships. The book, *The Creative Negotiator, 2nd Edition* focuses on how leaders strengthen a team's negotiation skills by helping them focus on preparation, process, people, and post-negotiation analysis to develop creative solutions, stronger relationships, and better deals.

The key is not the will to win. Everybody has that. It is the will to prepare to win that is important. - Bobby Knight

Leaders who are great negotiators will grow their businesses at a faster rate by developing negotiation teams who prepare as a team.

The diversity of the team affects the ability to achieve better outcomes. To achieve better outcomes, each member of your diverse team must play a counterpoint to the others rather than acting individually. You need to ensure you understand the difference in individuals because by understanding these differences, you can use them to your advantage in developing high-performance teams.

Teams must have a leader

High-performance teams are needed as business becomes more complex, such as negotiating in a multi-party, multi-issue scenario with a key account in a B2B environment. Negotiating requires parties to interact and communicate. However, there is a dramatic difference between how parties in a negotiation interact and communicate. Managing these differences is easier when you understand how people use different approaches to negotiations.

Managing the differences in a negotiating team depends on how well a leader leverages the team. Angus Hildreth and Cameron Anderson

When you deeply understand the value you can offer your customers as a business and deeply understand the value your customers can offer you, you can create many packages to deliver winning negotiation outcomes.

wrote in the *Harvard Business Review* article of February 2016: Powerful people underperform when they work together. Their research showed when powerful executives were working alone, power boosted their performance. Researchers assumed that groups

comprising high power-individuals would perform particularly well. What their research found was the opposite: power hampers the ability of leaders to work with other leaders.

Groups of less powerful people settled down and cooperated in tasks assigned to them. However, high-power leaders fought—over status, over who should be in charge, over who would have more influence over the group’s decisions, and over who should get more respect than others. The researchers found that ‘teams with less powerful executives reached consensus far more easily than teams with high-powered executives’.

High-powered teams and complex negotiations have a bigger need for a great leader. For teams to work, in critical B2B negotiations, you must have a great leader, a process, and a handpicked team that can work together. The leader is not there to shine, but to help the team achieve greatness. A e-book on this topic is *The Power of Team Negotiations*.

Creating value in a negotiation

Even with a great team, to achieve greatness in a negotiation, you need to find a way to create value so that each side has a win. As Lawrence Susskind states in his book *Good for You, Great for Me*, the point of win-win negotiations is not to divide value equally but to increase value for everyone.

While some negotiators worry they will be betraying the win-win ideal if they try to do

especially well for themselves. I don’t think they should feel guilty. I think it is possible to adopt a win-win approach and do especially well for yourself. - Lawrence Susskind

Value comes from creatively combining different sources of value to make packages that for both sides create a win.

Some suggested value levers for your business negotiations:

Increase Revenue	Sell more units Increase prices Identify new customers Increase customer retention
Reduce Costs	Reduce: product costs, maintenance costs, wastage costs Eliminate steps in doing business that increase costs Eliminate operational costs that don’t add value
Combination of both	Increase inventory turnover Provide staff training/ education Increase productivity: people, equipment

When you deeply understand the value you can offer your customers as a business and deeply understand the value your customers can offer you, you can create many packages to deliver winning negotiation outcomes.

Technology and automation will transform every level of business, so negotiating teams need to change and fast. These changes mean developing new soft skills and improving existing soft skills. Leaders who develop their team’s soft skills will see technology and automation as positive. **IM**



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