

10 Important Negotiating Rules

In business, you need to influence and persuade clients, suppliers and employees. All of these areas require negotiation skills. You'll find negotiations more rewarding by sticking to these rules. Have fun!



Develop a Negotiation Mindset. Everything is negotiable. Be assertive but not aggressive. Assertiveness means you take care of your interests and respect those of others. If you have no regard for other people's interests, you are being aggressive. And that will negatively impact your reputation in the long run.

Be a Good Listener. Let the other person do most of the talking, and ask questions that cannot be answered with a simple yes or no. Do not assume anything—listen carefully. The other party will tell you everything you need to know.

Be Prepared. Gather as much pertinent information as you need prior to the negotiation. What are the other person's needs? What is the win/win for both of you? If possible, think of more than one way that both can win.

Go For the Most. The higher you aim and expect, the more you will get. As a seller of services, always ask for more than you expect to receive.

Be Patient. Patience is a virtue, and probably the most difficult trait for most of us. It is, however, mandatory in negotiations. By taking your time, you'll have the upper hand. If the other party is in a hurry, they tend to settle for less than they want. Make this your advantage.

Satisfaction. Help the person you are negotiating with feel satisfied. Point out to them that their interests have been met. Don't mistake interests (what they need) for positions (what they want).

Let the Other Party Open With the First Move. By doing so, you may find them opening for more than you expected. On the other hand, if you open first, you may be giving more than the other person expects. You are in a power position if you make the other person open the negotiations.

Don't Accept the Initial Offer. If you do, the other party may think that it was too easy, and leave the negotiation dissatisfied. By rejecting the first offer, and eventually saying yes, the other negotiator will assume that you have reached your limit and nothing more can be gained from you.

Don't Make One-sided Concessions. For everything you give away, demand something in return. Negotiating is a process. Otherwise, you are inviting the other negotiator to ask you for more.

Be Ready To Abandon the Negotiations. Always be prepared to say NO and walk away from the negotiations. Make sure you go into the negotiations with that firmly in mind, or you make yourself vulnerable to a negative outcome.

AVITAN Specialty Workshops

Part 2 of AVITAN Leadership Series

Thanks to everyone who attended our last workshop! Presented by Amos Avitan and Ron Hofman, the "What's Driving Your Decisions?" workshop analyzed what goes into our decision-making process, both in business and personal life.

The participants learned how warped thinking leads to bad, and often costly decisions. Having the right attitude is the best way to avoid it.



What determines your attitude? Amos Avitan in discussion with Adam Wilkie (Wilkie Project Management), Jason Wood (Neo Roofing), and Andrea & Chris Lundy (Westmark Construction) during Vancouver session.

Here is what Andrea Lundy of Westmark Construction had to say after the workshop: "I went to bed with positive thoughts last night and woke up to Mozart! Feeling so great!!! Wanted to let you know, again, how much we enjoyed yesterday...we



Company owners reflect on what's driving their decisions in Edmonton session. Left to right: Erin & Dan Adamski (Rencon Industries), Craig Heide, Richard Plamondon & Aquilino Naccarato (all Ackard Contractors), and Amos Avitan (AVITAN Business Resources).

both reflected on everything you talked about and we are both excited to continue to implement what we learn from you."

Thank you, Andrea, and we already look forward to seeing you and everyone else at our next seminar!

Managing PEOPLE



If you missed our last workshop, make sure to mark your calendar for the next installment of AVITAN Leadership Series, scheduled for the beginning of next year.

This workshop is ideal for owners, bosses, supervisors and foremen. Learn tips on managing crews, turning conflict into resolution, and bringing out the best in others...and yourself.

Edmonton
Jan 26, 2012

Greater Vancouver
Feb 2, 2012

More information coming soon at www.AVITAN.ws.

Keep Your Staff Meetings Productive

A staff meeting is an effective way to deliver and receive information, discuss current projects, and introduce new procedures or equipment. It is also an opportunity for field crews and office staff to meet face to face.



First off, you don't always have to be the facilitator. Encourage your senior employees, such as the Project Manager, to chair the meeting every now and then.

Structure your meetings with an agenda and make sure someone is taking minutes. Note the time, date and attendance. Establish the length of the meeting (shorter is better) and the expected outcome.

Provide a comfortable, informal setting. Some team members may be shy or hesitant to express themselves, so it is essential to create an honest, accepting environment.

Do not dominate the meeting with long speeches or presentations—keep the participants actively involved—or you risk losing their attention and the meeting will be a waste of time. Using open-ended questions is a good way to generate round-table discussion.

Be aware of any communication issues and the workers' needs. Assess whether you can discuss those in an open forum or rather in private.

Before concluding the meeting, make sure that all attendees have understood what was discussed. If an action items list was created, it is crucial that everyone follows through with tasks assigned. Checking the progress well before the established deadline is a good idea—it helps tackle possible roadblocks that may prevent tasks from being accomplished on time.

Backing Up Company Data Off-Site



Last month we stressed the importance of data backup. Today we'll explain why it makes sense to store the backup in a different location. If it's saved on disks in your office, a flood or fire could destroy your main data and your backup data at the same time.

The best way to have your backup data kept off-site is to save it off-site in the first place. There are programs available that can help you with this. One that works especially well is CrashPlan. Using such a program, you can:

- Back up your office files to a server you set up in your home.
- If your office IS your home, you can back up to a dedicated server run by the backup software company.
- Back up in small chunks continually throughout the day, so you are always up to date.
- Keep several computers backed up at once for a reasonable cost.

For little time and a small cost, your back-up can be on-going and off-site. This is the smartest way to keep your important files safe.

Smart Advertising



Think all clients are looking for the cheapest price? Maybe not. A recent posting on craigslist.org in Vancouver has a painter advertising their services for \$400/day.

Now, the fact that it's a female painter, and that she works topless, might have something to do with the price. This post is obviously tongue-in-cheek but the point is that it isn't always about being the cheapest.

If you can figure out something that no one else does, and it is well received by the marketplace, then price point is not the main factor.

Got Unresolved Anger?



Do you have a tendency to hold grudges? If that's the case, you may want to learn to let go.

New research shows that people who have unresolved anger problems face increased risk of a heart attack, especially if already suffering from a cardiovascular disease.

Letting resentment build up inside you not only creates enormous stress but it actually narrows your blood vessels. The best antidote for anger? Laughter. Scientists found that when people laugh, their major blood vessels expand considerably which allows for easier blood flow.

So the next time you have a disagreement with your spouse, employee or a client, don't hold the anger in, however difficult it may be for you. Work out your differences as quickly as possible. It's good for your heart!

"Resentment is like taking poison and waiting for the other person to die."

~ Mark Twain

The Power of Newsletter



This is a true story from the field that recently happened to one of our clients.

One day, on his way from a job site, our client decided to drop by a past customer who lived in the area. This customer had his home renovated by our client's company

22 years ago and was extremely happy with the result.

Our client was shocked to see the home had been completely renovated. "Why didn't you call us? You were so pleased with our past work and we'd have loved to do your whole home remodel." "Well," said the past customer, "We forgot all about you until we started getting your newsletter—we had the work done last year."

As this story shows, keeping in touch with your past customers may mean the difference between getting the job or not getting the job. Don't assume a customer will come back just because they were happy the last time. Regularly sending your customers a newsletter shows your appreciation, and adds value to the job you did for them—long after the date of sale.

Change Ahead for Residential Construction Market



If your business is in the residential construction, you'll be interested to know that by 2030 about 80 per cent of new housing demand will come from baby boomers, according to a new study by Conference Board of Canada.

Aging boomers' demand to downsize will spur a wave of low-maintenance homes, such as condos or seniors' residences. Members of CHBA are already catering to the mature population, and the trend is only expected to pick up as boomers leave their single family homes.

The change will be slow and happen over time, but knowing the direction of the market enables you to strategically plan for the shift.

Did You Know?



If you're hungry, you'll happily splurge on food but turn into Scrooge when it comes to paying for anything else. Why? A hormone produced in your stomach called ghrelin that shouts out to your brain "Feed me! I'm hungry!"

Researchers don't know why, but ghrelin has the exact opposite effect on your willingness to spring for things you can't eat. If you shop for an extravagant suit or a silk tie when you are hungry, you may have a great time doing it, but you'll likely walk out empty handed.

So if you want to spend money—eat before you shop. If you don't—go hungry!

Improve Your Well-being By Mental Subtraction

How many times have you heard the words 'you should be grateful for what you have?' We all know it and yet it is so easy to forget being thankful. A recent study suggests that a different approach to counting your blessings may be more effective. This technique is called mental subtraction.

Instead of thinking of the good things as being present, try to imagine them as absent from your life. The natural human tendency is to adapt easily to the good stuff and to take it for granted. Like clean water, a comfortable home, good health—we consider all these things an obvious part of our everyday lives. Now imagine you wouldn't have them. What would your life be like?

One may argue that thinking of the absence of a positive thing or event is unpleasant. Perhaps, but read this: The participants of the study were first asked to write about the presence of a positive life event. Then they wrote about the absence of that event. When the experiment was over, they were surprised to find out that the latter made them feel better about their lives.

Mentally subtracting the positive events and things in your life can help improve your well-being, if practiced regularly. With Thanksgiving just around the corner, now is a good time to start.





Spotlight on Clients



Exciting things are happening at **Westmark Construction** in Nanaimo, BC. The company, having won multiple awards in the past, is again nominated this year for four Gold CARE Awards!

On top of that, one of Westmark's nominated projects is currently featured in Vancouver Island's glossy Homes & Living magazine. Way to steal the spotlight—congratulations!

Last month we welcomed two new clients into our business and management training programs—**Gunslinger Construction** from Edmonton, AB, and **Neo Roofing** from Burnaby, BC. Jason Woods, the owner of Neo Roofing, tells us about his decision to hire AVITAN Business Resources: "I'm very much looking forward to making some changes and really pushing my company, and I feel very confident that I've made the right choice and found the right people."

It has been a busy end of summer for **Kengary Contracting** in Burnaby, BC! The company is developing its own line of custom cabinetry, preparing a big marketing campaign to start in the fall, and moving into a bigger and better office space! To make things complete, Kengary's new website, created by AVITAN, was launched last month. You can visit it at www.kengarycontracting.com

Being proactive in the marketing department is paying off for Time Line Construction in Edmonton, AB. Just days after mailing out their very first newsletter, Time Line got a call from a past customer ready to do business again. Great job!



Smart Employer

The following is another posting we found on craigslist.org. Here is the uncensored version:

"A company is doing some renovations across the street. Looks like he's got a couple of grunts from a temp. agency.

For morning coffee break he gave them a sandwich, doughnuts and a large coffee. Coffee and sugar buzz.

The grunts are happy as a pig in shit...and work like slaves."

The neighbour watching this from across the street made an excellent observation—Happy workers are good workers. The cost of the food will easily be recovered by the increase in productivity and fewer errors.

Cool Gadgets

Sleep Aid

Having troubles falling asleep? Try this watch-like wristband, worn on your left-hand wrist. The Sleep Inducer reacts on the "sleeping golden triangle" and gently retunes and relaxes your muscles, lowers stress levels, consequently indulging you into sleep. [\\$59.95, amazon.com](http://$59.95, amazon.com)



Morning Workout



How about waking up with an alarm clock that increases your muscle power? The Shape up Alarm Clock Dumbbell is sure to get you out of bed in the

morning—you have to lift the dumbbell 30 times to stop the alarm. Comes with a backlit digital LCD screen so you can easily set the desired time. [\\$28, gadget-fever.com](http://$28, gadget-fever.com)

Your input is always welcome!

Got Good News? Heard a great joke? Know of a topic you'd like to see in our newsletter? Please share with us!

Contact: Hana Bilikova hana@avitan.ws

Office Potluck—BC Style



The police in BC's capital were called to an office building one day in September. Three people were rushed to the hospital with "light-headedness and disorientation," fearing food poisoning. Upon investigation, the police were led to the office refrigerator which contained some brownies loaded with marijuana.

Turns out, one of the employees brought in a batch she had found in her freezer. What she didn't know is that her son baked the brownies a year ago and forgot all about them. (Short-term memory issues?)

Police say no charges will be laid due to lack of criminal intent to deliver or share the brownies. There are some amusing theories as to why no charges were pressed: The police confiscated the brownies...however, by the time they got to the station, all the brownies were gone. Half an hour later, a local donut shop had record sales...