

The most frequent mistakes in negotiations

- **Speaking too quietly.** Do not appear timid. Formulate your arguments clearly and concisely.
- **Only half listening.** If you start thinking about your response as soon as your interlocutor has ended his first sentence, you will miss out on important information and often create misunderstandings.
- **Not looking your interlocutor in the eyes.** This suggests a lack of self-confidence or interest.
- **No agenda.** Unstructured discussions lead to vague results.
- **Failing to provide your interlocutor with sufficient information in advance.** If your interlocutor does not know what the meeting is about, he may feel taken by surprise and may respond by blocking.
- **Showing off.** Do not try to lecture or outdo your interlocutor. Appear as someone wanting to learn rather than as a know-it-all.
- **Allowing your interlocutor too much scope.** Do not let things get out of your control. Take the initiative, and ask specific questions to skilfully keep the conversation oriented towards your objective.
- **Revealing all of your arguments right at the start.** Do not play all your cards at once. Gradually produce your trump cards, and keep the joker up your sleeve for as long as possible.
- **Ignoring objections.** Do not try to paper over doubts. Rather, take up the criticisms made by your interlocutor yourself (“You appear to have some doubts about my forecasts...”) or ask about problems (“What are the objections to my argument?”)
- **Failing to plan for compromises.** Every negotiation needs to have an objective. But if you stick rigidly to this objective, you have to expect your partner to take a hard line too. Consider in advance what compromises you can accept and how far you can go.
- **Using absolutes and killer phrases.** Absolutes like “everyone”, “all”, “always”, “permanently”, “never”, etc. kill negotiations.
- **Losing your temper.** Do not allow yourself be moved to use harsh language if your interlocutor “drives you mad”. If you are angry, count to ten – only vent your feelings after that. By the time they have got to ten, most people can avoid a destructive outburst.