



# HOW SALES LEADERS CAN LEVERAGE 3 POWERFUL NEGOTIATION CONCEPTS TO CLOSE MORE CLIENTS, HIGHER & FASTER

*A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO CLOSING MORE CLIENTS THROUGH USING  
LEADING PRACTICE BUSINESS NEGOTIATION SKILLS*

**Extract Of Clients Past & Present**



**NOKIA**





## **1. See Negotiation As A Process, Not An Event**

Most salespeople think of negotiation as a chess match between rivals that one will win, and one will lose. They typically think of it as an isolated step in the process of sales or purchasing, and when it does happen, it's seen as an event—infrequent at best— rather than an ongoing process.

This is a serious and costly mistake! Let me explain.

The Latin root of the word negotiation, negotiatus, literally means “to carry on business.”

Even seasoned leaders and executives fall into the trap of thinking that negotiation is something that only takes place when it comes to the time to agree on a price or sign a contract. The opportunities missed to both create and claim value through negotiation in the larger sense are profound.

The modern day development of formal sales methodologies has been largely responsible for relegating negotiation to an event when the truth is that sales is a subset of ‘carrying on business’ (negotiation) rather than negotiation being a subset of sales!

In practical sales terms, this means that the very first time you make contact with a lead or a prospect your negotiation has started! If you do not apply business negotiation best practice throughout the entire sales process then you set yourself up to deal with many objections and you will probably have to resort to a whole lot more discounting and margin sacrifice than is needed.

When each step of the ‘sales process’ is matched with business negotiation best practice it offers the opportunity for you to create an experience for your counterpart that will help you to ultimately close the deal faster, at a higher level and with less objections.

Here are three key negotiation elements that you should include in the early stages of your sales process:



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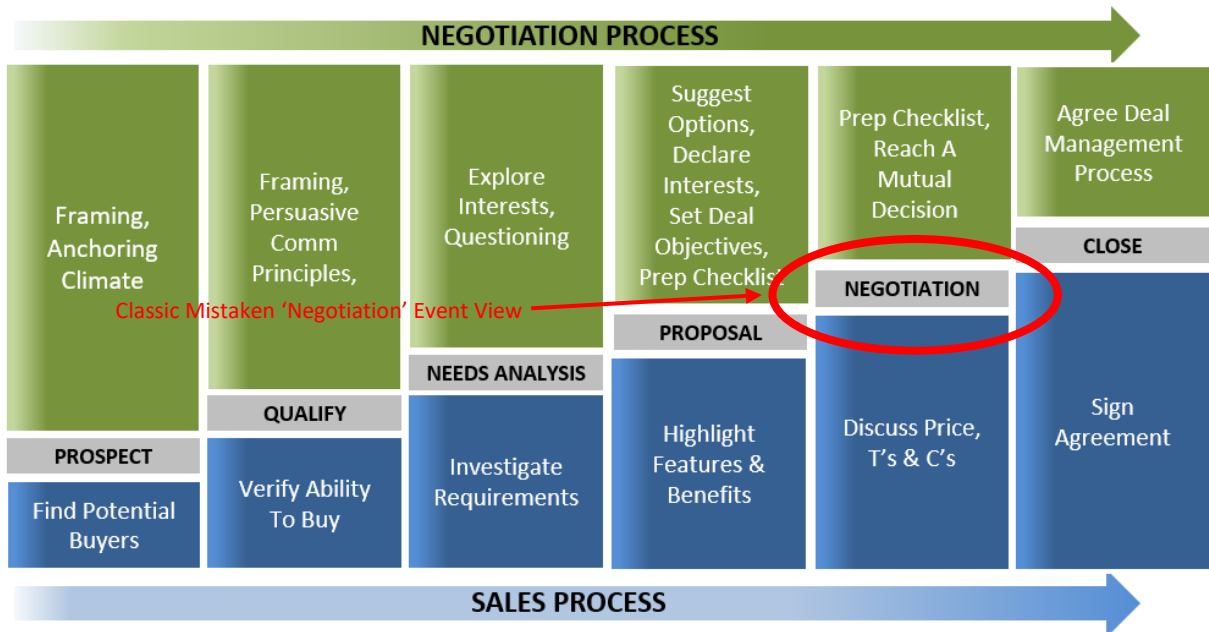
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### I. Anchoring your counterparts' expectations & aspirations through framing.

One of the key ways that you create satisfaction for your counterparts is through making concessions. If you do not present anchors that allow for you to make concessions as you progress through the negotiation process, then it will force you to defend your value proposition rather than create satisfaction for your counterparts. More on this in the next point on reciprocity.



### II. Pro-actively managing the negotiation or business 'climate'.

Never forget that you have to create an experience for your prospective clients. People seldom, if ever, make purely clinical decisions. We are wired emotionally, and we then find the rational reasoning to back up the emotions that we feel when it comes to make decisions. The 'climate' within which sales negotiation takes place is probably one of the most important contributors to whether a deal will be closed or not. So when you don't pro-actively manage the client experience to ensure that it is a positive and enjoyable experience throughout then you are missing a major opportunity!



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### III. Using questioning to 'diagnose' your counterpart's interests & needs.

Most salespeople use questioning only as a means to justify their own value propositions rather than truly pursuing uncovering their counterpart's current and desired positions. In other words, most salespeople will only ask questions that lead their counterpart to their proposed solution. Unless you're prepared to not have the solution that your counterpart might need and you are ok to listen to whatever your counterpart says in response to your questions, you are unlikely to build empathy and movement towards agreement. You have to be prepared to walk away from some deals if you want to establish a peer level connection with your prospects so you can maximize your returns.

## **2. Consistently Harness The Power of Reciprocity**

The Rule of Reciprocity states that we return to others the form of behavior that they exhibit towards us. If I were to approach you in a contentious or combative manner, the Rule of Reciprocity would compel you to respond in kind—contentiously or combatively. Likewise, if I were to lead with the evidence that supports my case (or in sales language, leading with the features & benefits of my solution) then you are most likely to look for the evidence that refutes my case. Conversely, if I were to approach you with a view toward helping you achieve your desired outcome, then you are more likely to respond by helping me get what I want.

My life has become so much easier, both professionally and personally, since I realized that the easiest way to convince people to move in my direction is to advance in their direction first; to focus my energy on satisfying their unique and specific needs, rather than convincing them of the strength of my argument. The only way to uncover your counterpart's unique and particular perspective is by asking them questions.

Not only will you uncover information that is probably very relevant to your sales negotiation, but by demonstrating a genuine desire to support his needs and preferences, he will most likely be moved to be just as accommodating come time for your requests and needs. This is why the poker-faced, self-focused, clinical approach to negotiation seldom works: it restricts opportunities by aggravating relationships.



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Interestingly, negotiation research has confirmed that the number one contributor to deal satisfaction is receiving concessions from your counterpart. That's right, not hitting your target or getting everything you asked for, but getting your counterpart to move in your direction by making concessions to you is what brings satisfaction to all parties.

By being cooperative and moving in your direction, your counterpart is signaling that you and your interests hold significance and importance to them to the extent that they are willing to give up some of their desires to meet yours. Isn't that how coupons and twenty percent-off sales work? You feel like you are getting something extra from the retailer.

So, when you make concessions, you send a strong signal that you recognize and understand your counterpart's interests and that you are prepared to move in their direction to satisfy those interests. In turn, this means that your counterpart will be significantly more likely to reciprocate by making concessions in your direction. Just as evidence will attract objections and counter-evidence, concessions will attract counter-concessions.

This is why the use of ambitious anchoring early on in the sales process is so important – you are creating room for yourself to make concessions during the sales process so that you can avoid ending up in a position where you are unable to make any concessions and you have to defend your value.

### 3. Practice Your Skills Through Sales Negotiation Simulations

The easiest, quickest and most effective way to rapidly improve your sales negotiation skills is through participating in simulations. So many salespeople think that participating in sales negotiation simulations is a waste of time because it is not like real life, not exactly like a real sales call. Can you imagine a professional football player suggesting that they will only turn up for games against real opposition because the practice sessions, drills and simulations don't seem real? If you look at excellence at any level in sports, politics, the arts and business you will see that the players regularly participate in simulations, dry runs and exercises to make sure that they are always on top of the basics, never mind the complicated stuff!

You see, muscle memory is only built against resistance. You can read as many books as you can on playing golf, watch as many videos as possible on great golf technique, but if you don't go out



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to practice hitting golf balls on the driving range then you simply will not achieve great golf results. The exact same thing applies in sales. If you are not regularly practicing your objection handling, framing and closing skills and scripts, then you should lower your expectations!

I know of Fortune 500 companies that include in their sales process a policy which states that before any sales representative is allowed to engage with a client, they have to run through a simulation of that meeting with a colleague in preparation. If they don't participate in a simulation before the sales presentation or meeting they run the risk of becoming subject to disciplinary action! They view it in the same light as a sports team not having their players turn up for practice in between games!

So if you want to drastically and dramatically improve your sales results my suggestion would be to make sure that you simulate your sales phone calls, video calls and face to face meetings. You can easily create great scripts which you can continually refine to help you deal with common objections or to help you set up calls effectively or even to close deals the most effective way. You can then continually refine and practice these scripts & approaches until you have truly mastered them.

In "[So Good They Can't Ignore You](#)," author Cal Newport says that what makes ridiculously successful people so successful is they're experts at *practicing*, they can push themselves to the exact limit of their skillset and thus expand their abilities day after day. If you're not expanding yourself in such a fashion, called *deliberate practice* in the organizational psychology literature, you'll never be ridiculously successful.

So get out there and practice your sales negotiation skills and techniques regularly!



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