

Our top tips in negotiating when English is not your first language

Please find the outputs of our reflections on negotiating when English is not your first language. We had some fun negotiations 'street market style'. Before launching into these negotiations, we generated advice in what can help you when negotiating. This advice centres on the countless different types of negotiation we all participate in - in our everyday working life.

Our principles:

- 1) Always stay calm and professional.

- 2) While more difficult online (and certainly on the phone) stay alert and tuned-in to the emotions of the other person (change in the tone of their voice, restless hand gestures, such as tapping the table, eyes rolling/wandering, moving towards or away from the screen etc....)

- 3) Get your body language sorted – don't be too close or too far from your screen.

- 4) Be clear on your baseline, what is not acceptable for you?

- 5) If negotiating with a more senior manager, be clear on what constitutes an acceptable degree of pushback (rejection) (working culture, their personality, the importance of the issue).

- 6) Be assertive without being aggressive in your choice of language.

7) Don't gush and over apologise if renegotiating a deadline. Focus on the issue and the impact. Keep it short and sharp. Don't tell a story and give too much 'air-time' to longwinded (lengthy) excuses.

8) Stay 'light on your feet' – fluid in the conversation. While looking to achieve your objectives, focus on being flexible and responsive.

9) Provide options.

10) If there is an acceptable compromise don't necessarily introduce that at the very start as you might achieve your best-case scenario. Have it ready depending on the flow of the conversation.

11) REALLY ACTIVELY LISTEN and avoid the tendency to interrupt.

12) Use calm, polite, and open questions – starting with 'would' and 'could'

13) Use 'we' to highlight you are on the same team!

14) Play with the conditional structures carefully.

- If we move the deadline to the end of December, will that work for you? (Clear, direct – maybe too direct).
- If we moved the deadline to the end of December, would that be acceptable for you. (More polite, maybe a little less certain).

15) Highlight your commitment to the revised deadlines.

16) Put yourself in the shoes of the person you are negotiating with. This empathy can help you in moving forward.