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## Negotiate To Win

By **Jim Thomas**  
Career Advisor - Every fifth Thursday

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*In this excerpt from Negotiate to Win, Jim Thomas outlines the importance of creating win-win negotiations instead of win-lose ones. He states that Americans are some of the worst negotiators in the world and offers trading tips to help Americans make the most of their negotiating strategies.*

Americans are among the worst -- if not the worst -- negotiators on Earth. Interestingly, there seems to be a lot more negotiating outside of Western Europe and North America than inside. Why? Supply and demand. Our very own incredibly efficient economies have made negotiating slackers out of us. We don't bargain at Wal-Mart because there's a Target just down the street. When Target has a lower price, it's good-bye Wal-Mart. Why don't we negotiate in the West? Because we have feet!

Win-win negotiation is mandatory. Why? Because the other side doesn't die when the negotiation ends. They survive the talks. That changes everything. Win-win negotiating isn't a matter of altruism, morality or ethics. I practice it and preach it for one simple reason: It's the only thing that works. It's the only way to pursue, conclude and maintain rewarding agreements.

Any serious discussion of win-lose negotiating is ridiculous nonsense, for at least two reasons. First, the other side won't let it happen. They're not stupid, and they're not likely to sit still and play victim for you. Not for long, anyway. Second, even if you were somehow able to hose them, you wouldn't get away with it. The other side wouldn't rest until they found a way to get even. In the end, both sides would lose.

How do you do win-win? It'll take most of this book to fully answer that question, but here's the abridged answer: You give the other side concessions. You already know that concessions are the way we "buy" agreement when persuasion fails.



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Concessions may be the *sine qua non* of haggling, but how can we make them without giving away the ranch in the process? From here on in, to get what you want, you're going to have to trade for it.

**trading tips:****1. The big "if"**

Negotiation isn't about giving, it's about trading. When the other side asks you for something, get in the habit of saying, "yes, if" instead of "yes" or "no." Spell out exactly what you want in return.

I'll agree to X... if I get Y in return.

I'll agree to X... but then I won't be able to do Z.

**2. Wait for it**

Never waste a concession. If the other side wants something but you can't immediately think of an appropriate "if" to request in exchange, just skip it for the moment and move on to something else. Never force a bad trade -- or worse, give a freebie -- because you can't think of the right thing to ask for in exchange. Before the negotiation is over, you'll almost certainly think of something else you wanted from the other side -- and when you do, you've got your "if."

Read on for more negotiating tips and strategies... [Next >>](#)

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**READER COMMENTS: ( 4 posts )****Susan in Maine says:**

Curious - where did Robert obtain the stats regarding the average AM reader? He wrote about this article being "dumbed" down. With his attitude (perhaps a chip on his shoulder), good thing we're not negotiating for anything. Trust me, you wouldn't stand a chance, Robert. I can hit well below the belt when needed and that can HURT!

Sat, Jan.27th 2007

RATING: ★★★★★

**Robert says:**

Excellent article... well though-out material, but abridged and dumbed down just enough for the average AM reader to not give up reading it.

Thu, Jan.25th 2007

RATING: ★★★★★

**Travis says:**

Also check out two books "Getting Past No" and "Getting to Yes" they are both on negotiation and both are very good reads.

Thu, Jan.25th 2007

RATING: n/a

**Keith Harding says:**

The author knows what he's talking about. I've had formal training in negotiation. The points covered in this article are excellent. I haven't read the book, but I'm inclined to.

Thu, Jan.25th 2007

RATING: ★★★★★

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