Strategic Negotiation

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GOWER
No matter how skilled at negotiation you might become, if you are pursuing inappropriate strategies, your negotiation skills won’t pull rabbits out of a hat (like magicians who amaze children); conversely if you have brilliant and appropriate strategies, but do not have the requisite negotiation skills to implement them, you will not succeed unless you have the good luck to choose negotiating partners with even fewer skills than your own. Relying on luck is the antithesis of strategy; if you have poor strategies and poor negotiating skills, you will reap what you sow.

Interest in negotiation strategy follows naturally from interest in the process of negotiation. Teaching negotiation skills to managers soon raises questions about how and why they are pursuing this or that objective for which they wish to deploy their improved negotiation skills. If not clearly separated, arguments about appropriate skills easily become confused with implicit differences in strategic objectives.

*Strategic Negotiation* is different from my other books on negotiation (such as *Kennedy on Negotiation*, Gower, 1998 and (with Florence Kennedy) *Kennedys’ Simulations for Negotiation Trainers*, 3rd Edition, Gower, 2007); it is a step up from introducing negotiators to negotiating skills to introducing them to the different task of preparing them to apply their skills to serve their strategic purposes.

*Strategic Negotiation* is for practitioners and is based on an elective written for postgraduate MSc management courses at Edinburgh Business School (Strategic Negotiation, EBS, 2005). Its focus is on the generation and implementation of negotiation strategy in business and public organizations and is based on many years of practical experience.

Teaching strategic planning effectively is extremely difficult. Strategy is not a series of axioms to be rote learned; it is about the application of thoughtful analysis to real world problems, with the added complication that there is
vast room for error both in the selection of the tools of analysis and in the
identification of the real world problem. *Strategic Negotiation* offers advice in
the implementation phase of strategy. It is organized around case examples that
demonstrate the application of its Process Model to the real world. The cases are
drawn largely from my consultancy work in various industries and business
situations, without any pretence to comprehensive coverage; and I also draw
upon the work of colleagues who have demonstrated competence in this field.
To cover all, or even most, potential applications of negotiation strategy would
produce a multi-volume text, which is neither appropriate nor necessary for
most purposes. The cases illustrate the application of the core concepts and
provide a framework for understanding how the strategic negotiation process
can be applied to general situations.

It is important in *Strategic Negotiation* to remember that you are approaching
fairly generic business situations from the functional point of view of a negotiator
and not that of other professions such as a lawyer, accountant, finance specialist,
marketeer, production engineer, human resource management specialist, or
any other of the many functions with which you may be concerned in your
organization. It is true that you will touch on many of these functions in this
book but you will not, so to speak, be touched by any one of them alone. The
negotiation strategist approaches business problems from a different angle to
those working exclusively in other functions. It is often a question of ‘Which of
my objectives are possible in this situation and how will they be achieved?’

As Chester Karrass puts it, though for a somewhat different purpose: ‘You
get what you negotiate, not what you deserve’, or, as I heard a hard-boiled
streetwise person, experienced in the ways of the world, put it: ‘Sometimes you
get what you want, sometimes you get what you need, and other times you get
what you get.’ Negotiation is about trying to do better than just getting what
you get. Negotiation strategy is about creating the conditions that enable you to
get (closer) to what you want. Anybody who tells you that negotiation is easy
is obviously the kind of person who makes do with what can be got, which is
not quite the same.

You should enjoy reading *Strategic Negotiation*. As a leading salesperson
once put it: ‘Successful selling is the best way to have fun with your clothes on.’
I believe negotiation strategy and process runs successful selling a very close
second.