

Sales & Negotiation Checklist

The following is a checklist to review before going into a large sale or negotiation.

These ideas were taken from Chris Voss's book, [Never Split the Difference](#). We highly recommend you buy the book as this is only a small sample of the tactics you will learn.

1. Don't fall for your assumptions of what they want to pay (or offer you to pay). Never make the first offer.
 - a. Always start by asking, "What were you thinking?"
 - b. If they try to push back and get you to make an offer, say, "To be honest, I'm not really sure. I would love to know what you think."
2. When negotiating, LISTEN to hear what they actually want and need. What are their motivations? Write them down before and during the negotiation.
3. Slow down. Don't speak too fast. Speak in a deep, soft, slow, and reassuring voice (the Late-Night FM DJ Voice). Smile, laugh, have warmth, acceptance, empathy. Use silence and long pauses to get them to speak. After making your request, STOP TALKING. Silence is golden here.
4. If you are an assertive negotiator, be conscious of your tone. You will not intend to be overly harsh but you will often come off that way. Intentionally soften your tone and work to make it more pleasant. Use calibrated questions to make you more approachable.
5. If people see you are similar to them, and they trust you, you will gain influence.
6. People respond favorably to requests made in a reasonable tone of voice and followed with a "because" reason. "Excuse me, I have five pages to copy. May I cut in line **because** I have to make copies?"
7. Be willing to walk away. No deal is better than a bad deal. The person across the table is never the problem. The unsolved issue is. If anyone is angry, you need to slow down and take a break. Never create an enemy.
8. Never give a price first, always get their price first. Experienced negotiators delay making offers - they don't want to give up leverage.
9. Before negotiating, write down and have your best case scenario number in your head. Then write down, What do you want? What do they want? Why?
10. When you give a price, anchor by giving an extreme low or high price, OR give a range:

- a. If their price is \$12,000, but you want to pay \$8,000, you can say, "I've been quoted anywhere from \$5,000 to \$8,000" - forcing them to meet you at your perceived highest amount.
 - b. Negotiating a salary: "In my previous role, I was making X" or "Historically I've been paid between \$500-\$750 per hour".
 - c. If they ask you what is a fair price, you can say "If you were to call X Company, they would quote you X for this."
 - d. When you give a range, expect them to meet you at the low end of your range.
11. If they give you a crazy anchored price:
- a. "How am I supposed to accept that?"
 - b. "I don't see how that would ever work."
 - c. "What are we trying to accomplish here?"
 - d. "Let's put price off to the side for a moment and talk about what would make this a good deal."
 - e. "What else would you be able to offer to make that a good price for me?"
 - f. "I'm sorry that just doesn't work for me"
 - g. You can always agree to accept that offer but for a partial service or product in return. For example, "I will accept your offer, and this will buy you 75% of our company."
12. Give them a gift, surprise, or non-monetary benefit. They will feel the need to reciprocate. This is why people offer you cookies or a drink. They gave you something, and now you need to give them something (like a deal).
13. Offer and ask for non-monetary terms:
- a. If they give you a low offer, you can say "That's way below our standard price. What can you offer in return for that price?". You can also ask for things you know you want that might not cost them much. Be persistent on your non-monetary asks - if they don't want to do it, they might give you a higher offer.
 - i. Make a list of noncash items they have that would be valuable to you.
 - ii. Ask yourself: "What could they give that would get us to do it for free?"
 - b. If you want to give them a low offer, "The most we can afford is \$1,428 (odd number), and we can also throw in a free photoshoot (non-monetary) or video testimonial."
14. Your last and final negotiating price should be an exact **odd number** like \$1,428.
15. If something isn't up for discussion, say with a direct voice, "We don't do X".
- 16. Four ways to say "no" to their request, so they continue dropping the price down:**
- a. "How am I supposed to do that?"
 - b. "Your offer is very generous, I'm sorry, that just doesn't work for me"

- c. "I'm sorry but I'm afraid I just can't do that."
- d. "I'm sorry, no"

17. Negotiating the price down:

- a. "I can pay \$30,000," I said. "And I can pay it up front, all cash. I'll write a check today for the full amount. I'm sorry, I'm afraid I just can't pay any more."
- b. "How am I supposed to do that?"
- c. "It's a beautiful truck. Really amazing. I can't tell you how much I'd love to have it. It's worth more than what I'm offering. I'm sorry, this is really embarrassing. I just can't do that price."
- d. "Wow, your offer is very generous and this is the car of my dreams," I said. "I really wish I could do that. I really do. This is so embarrassing. I simply can't."
- e. "I am so grateful. You've been very generous, and I can't thank you enough. The truck is no doubt worth more than my price," I said. "I'm sorry, I just can't do that."

18. The Ackerman Model for negotiating and pretending to meet in the middle:

- a. Set your target price (your goal).
- b. Set your first offer at 65 percent of your target price.
- c. Calculate three raises of decreasing increments (to 85, 95, and 100 percent).
- d. Use lots of empathy and different ways of saying "No" to get the other side to counter before you increase your offer.
 - i. "How am I supposed to do that?" "Your offer is very generous, I'm sorry, that just doesn't work for me"
- e. When calculating the final amount, use precise, non-round numbers like, say, \$37,893 rather than \$38,000. It gives the number credibility and weight.
- f. On your final number, throw in a non-monetary item (that they probably don't want) to show you're at your limit.

19. Email script for rejecting a price and getting them to lower it:

- a. 1st Email - "The price you offered is very fair, and I certainly wish that I could afford it. Bruno has worked very hard for this business, and he deserves to be compensated appropriately. I am very sorry, but wish you the best of luck."
- b. 2nd Email - "Thank you for your offer. You were generous to reduce the price, which I greatly appreciate. I really wish that I could pay you this amount, but I am sincere in that I cannot afford this amount at this time. As you know, I am in the middle of a divorce and I just cannot come up with that type of money. Again, I wish you the best of luck."
- c. 3rd & Final Email - "Thank you again for the generous offer. You have really come down on the price and I have tried very hard to come up with that amount. Unfortunately, no one is willing to lend me the money, not even my mother. I have tried various avenues but cannot come up with the funding. In the end, I can offer you \$23,567, although I can only pay \$15,321.37 up front. I could pay you the remainder over a one-year period, but that is really the most I can do. I

wish you the best in your decision.”

20. **Mirror** them during the convo. Repeat what they say, or say “Yes, OK, mmhmm” while they’re talking so they know you’re listening. When you mirror, aim for them to say “That’s right” instead of “You’re right” because it just means they want you off the phone and you’re probably lecturing them.

21. If it gets nasty, apologize with “I’m sorry”.

22. Translate their emotions into words and repeat it back to them (called Labeling).

- a. “It sounds like you’re upset about X...”
- b. “It all seems so unfair, I can now see why you sound so angry.”
- c. “It seems like you feel X about this...”
- d. “It looks like you don’t want this to drag on...”
- e. “It sounds like you want to do more business in our neighborhood.”
- f. It seems like _____ is valuable to you (or important).
- g. It seems like you are worried that _____.
- h. It seems like you don’t like _____.
- i. It seems like you value _____.
- j. It seems like _____ makes it easier.
- k. It seems like you’re reluctant to _____.
- l. After you use this sentence, be SILENT.

23. **Don’t ask “Why”. Ask “How” and “What”** questions when they offer an unacceptable deal:

- a. “How am I supposed to do that?”
- b. “How would you like me to proceed?”
- c. “How does this look to you?” or “What about this works for you?”
- d. “What about this is important to you?”
- e. “What about this doesn’t work for you?”
- f. “How can we solve this problem?”
- g. “What’s the objective? / What are we trying to accomplish here?”
- h. “What would it take for us to work together?”
- i. “How can I help make this better for us?”
- j. “What is the biggest challenge you face?”
- k. “What is it that brought us into this situation?”
- l. “How will we know we’re on track?”
- m. “How will we address things if we find we’re off track?”
- n. What happens if you do nothing?
- o. What does doing nothing cost you?

24. Don’t use the word “I”. Instead use, “It sounds like” or “I’m hearing that...”

25. If you made a mistake and they're upset, or they will be upset, start with, “**Look, I'm an asshole**”. For example, “Look I'm an asshole. I incorrectly quoted you, and the vendor can't accept that price.”
26. Another tactic is listing every terrible thing they could say about you (called an accusation audit). “I'm an asshole. I forgot to call you back. I didn't make it to the meeting. I haven't sent the invoice yet. I don't deserve your business.” (SILENCE)
27. **If they're ignoring** your texts, emails, calls, send them an email or text saying something like:
- “Have you given up on this project?”
 - “Have you given up on finalizing the deal this year?”
 - “Have you given up on settling this amicably?”
28. Put an urgent **deadline** to when you need to make a decision, so it gets them to put all their cards on the table before the fake deadline.
29. **Fair:** You can say:
- To trust you:** “I want you to feel like you are being treated fairly at all times. So please stop me at any time if you feel I'm being unfair, and we'll address it.”
 - Playing defense:** “We just want what's fair.”
 - Aggressive:** “We've given you a fair offer.”
 - Responding:** If they tell you “We gave you a fair offer” or “You're not being fair”, you can respond “Fair?” in an upward tone to let them elaborate, or “What what you consider to be fair?” or “What don't you think is fair here?” or “It seems like you're ready to provide the evidence that supports that”
30. **Making a lousy offer by lowering the expectations:** “I got a lousy proposition for you,” (PAUSE) “By the time we get off the phone, you're going to think I'm a lousy businessman. You're going to think I can't budget or plan. You're going to think David Bitton is a big talker. He doesn't know how to run an operation. And he might even have lied to me.” And then, play on their loss aversion. “Still, I wanted to bring this opportunity to you before I took it to someone else.”
31. Give them the illusion of control by asking a dumb question where they come up with the solution to what you always wanted (“How do we define success here?” or “How do you think we can both be happy here?”).
32. **Don't only go for a “Yes”.** It's okay, and even better if they say “No”. It makes them feel in control. You can then ask:
- “What about this doesn't work for you?”
 - “What would you need to make it work?”
 - “It seems like there's something here that bothers you.”

33. **Email or phone script** when they question your invoice and don't want to pay you:
- If they aren't answering: "Have you given up on settling this amicably?"
 - "It seems like you don't care what position you are leaving me in"
 - "It seems that you feel my bill is not justified. How does this bill violate our agreement? Are you saying I misled you? Are you saying I didn't do as you asked? Are you saying I reneged on our agreement? Are you saying I failed you? It seems like you feel my work was subpar. How am I supposed to accept that offer? Do you want to be known as someone who doesn't fulfill agreements?"
34. **Bite your tongue.** When you're attacked in a negotiation, pause and avoid angry emotional reactions. Instead, ask your counterpart a calibrated question, or apologize by saying, "I'm sorry, that was a bit harsh."
35. How to find out if there are **other decision makers**:
- "How does this affect the rest of your team?"
 - "How on board are the people not on this call?"
 - "What do your colleagues see as their main challenges in this area?"
36. **Use the 7-38-55 rule:** Only 7 percent of a message is based on the words while 38 percent comes from the tone of voice and 55 percent from the speaker's body language and face. This is why it's better to speak **face to face** or at least by **phone**.
37. If they seem hesitant on the deal, say "I heard you say, 'Yes,' but it seemed like there was hesitation in your voice." then make them re-agree to the deal 3 times by repeating and summarizing/mirroring the deal just to confirm, and put it in writing by email.
38. Use your own name to get a discount. "What's the David discount?"
39. If you are working to lure a client away from a competitor, you might say:
- "Why would you ever do business with me?"
 - "Why would you ever change from your existing supplier?"
 - "What's the reason you're looking for an alternative?"
 - "What's the reason you're leaving them?"
40. Remember, keep your calm. Don't get emotional. Blowing up only makes things worse. Think of this as a fun game.