

# **The Scotwork Negotiating Capability Survey**

A Report of Findings

Scotwork International

---

[scotwork.com](http://scotwork.com)



Negotiation happens every day. It transcends most parts of business and has a material impact on an organisation's top and bottom lines. From buying and selling businesses and products, to negotiating the management of property portfolios and exchanging ideas on human resources, businesses all over the world are frequently trading with external parties, and with one another.

During 2015, Scotwork developed a Negotiating Capability Survey to tackle the question: "How well do my people negotiate?". In 2018 in addition to the Negotiating Capability Survey, Scotwork developed a new tool, the individual Negotiating Profile which, through a questionnaire, identifies those areas of negotiating where individuals who are about to attend a Scotwork course consider themselves to be less confident. So now it is possible for us to look at a group of people through the survey and as individuals using the individual profiling tool, and focus the guidance and coaching which we give them on our courses.

5000 people have now undertaken the Capability Survey and around 1600 individuals have completed the Negotiating Profile tool. We are now in a position to be able to say that we have one of the most comprehensive sets of researched data about negotiators and their own views of their capabilities, shortcomings and understanding of the negotiating process. The purpose of this paper is to look at these conclusions from both the Capability Survey and the individual Negotiating Profile tool and draw conclusions.

# PREPARING TO NEGOTIATE



of the respondents indicated that they occasionally have no time for preparation.

POOR PREPARATION

LEADS TO

DEADLOCK

SUBOPTIMAL  
OUTCOMES

FRUSTRATION



Consider what is important to themselves before they start negotiating



Always consider both parties' strengths and weaknesses



Always define their desired outcome and work towards it



Always know what questions they will ask when they meet the other party

## HOW TO PREPARE

- Consider what is important to you and the other party
- Consider both parties' strengths and weaknesses
- Define a desired outcome
- Prepare questions to fill gaps in knowledge



60%

of negotiators will at some time enter negotiation with no intention of making any form of **concession**



“I know what I’m prepared to concede in advance”

21% Always

18% Occasionally

“Those who are victorious plan effectively and change decisively. They are like a great river that maintains its course but adjusts its flow”

- Sun Tzu



## LESSONS TO LEARN

- Do you have clear objectives?
- Are some of your objectives more important than others?
- What objectives is the other party likely to have?
- Have you prepared questions to fill the knowledge gaps you have identified?
- What is the other party likely to ask for from you?
- What concessions do you know you may be able to make?
- What would you want in return for making these concessions?
- Exactly what will you do if you can't get a deal?



Only 12% take time out if their strategy is not working



Only 18% have a fallback plan if they cannot get a deal



# ARGUING

Our survey indicates that many untrained negotiators spend most of their time doing this:



## LESSONS TO LEARN

- Recognise what you don't know (the "known unknowns" as US Secretary of State, Donald Rumsfeld, once called them), be open about it, ask questions which will reduce the gaps in your knowledge
- Listen - not only is it important that you understand the answers but you may also identify some "unknown unknowns" as the same person called them
- Check that you have understood
- Test any assumptions you have made and where they are proved to be incorrect, recognise that any approach, proposal or tactics based on them may have to change – this is not weakness, it's just common sense
- By all means use everything at your disposal to make your point – data, marketing statistics, previous experience all of these and a host of other things can support your position but when they don't work you need to find another way - searching in your own experience will tell you that raising your voice and your finger will not bring about a magically submissive change in behaviour from the other party

---

**ONLY  
15%  
ESTABLISH  
AT THE OUTSET  
OF THE NEGOTIATION  
WHAT THE OTHER  
PARTY WANTS**





# COST VS VALUE

“They want X – that’s easy, we can give them that one”

56%

of the respondents will base their concessions on cost to themselves always or mostly



When you think about making a concession, you should always consider what value it represents to the other party rather than its cost to you

You must always remember that the cost of a concession to you does not necessarily (and in fact will rarely) determine the value which the other party is prepared to place on it



## NEGOTIATORS ARE STUBBORN

Inflexibility is often a feature of negotiating behaviour:

27%

“I work out my proposals before the meeting and ensure I make them”

15%

“Taking a tough uncompromising position helps me to win”

## LESSONS TO LEARN

Key signs of inflexibility:

- Preparing to argue rather than negotiate
- Failing to listen
- Working out everything beforehand and presenting it irrespective of new information
- Repeating our arguments in the forlorn hope that giving them a second airing will prove more persuasive than the first



Negotiation is about managing and facilitating movement towards an agreement.



# NEGOTIATORS DON'T TRADE

14%

Make tactically effective counterproposals

13%

Don't plan to make any concessions

18%

Trade to gain benefit

32%

try to keep lots of issues in play all the time

ONLY  
18%

of untrained negotiators see negotiation as a trading process

ONLY

9%

will concede a demand if it is worth their while

ONLY

18%

make a counter-proposal that meets the other's needs

ONLY

7%

use wish list items creatively at the end of the process

## LESSONS TO LEARN

- Both sides hold important views which they value and will not abandon gratuitously
- Seeking to understand what the other side wants, and how important it is to achieve what they want when we are in a position to grant it gives us power
- All negotiations involve concession making – bargaining is the management of this whereby concessions are traded not gifted
- We must all therefore recognise that resolving conflict by negotiating will always mean that we make concessions to achieve the outcome we want.

“OUR TASK AS NEGOTIATORS IS NOT TO SEE CONCESSIONS AS WEAKNESS, BUT TO PERCEIVE THE **POWER** THAT WE CAN LEVERAGE BY GETTING A **RETURN**”

# NEGOTIATORS THINK THEY COULD DO BETTER

Only **23%** think their negotiating results always create long-term value for the business

**21%**

Think the relationship has been strengthened when they complete a negotiation



Think their negotiations always help to build lasting business relationships

**32%**



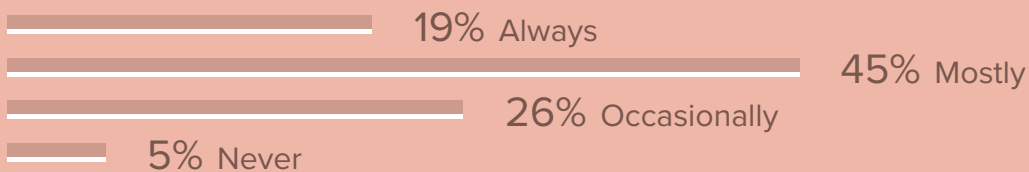
ONLY **38%**

can always identify the benefits of the outcomes they negotiate

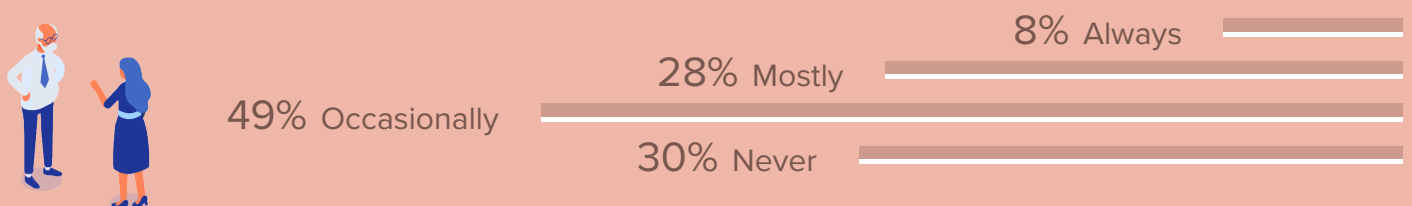


## A WORD ON EMPOWERMENT

“My boss delegates full responsibility for the negotiation to me.”



“I reach a point in the negotiation where I have to seek permission to continue”



**Bosses often send people to meetings as delegates, not as negotiators empowered to make a deal**



# AREAS OF CONFIDENCE

We asked people who were attending our courses about the confidence they could build on, and where they needed more

## PEOPLE SEEM MORE CONFIDENT

- Prioritising objectives based on what can be achieved
- Exploring key issues to understand what is important to the other party
- Establishing a clear sequence of actions for next steps in implementation
- Knowing the scope and limits of my authority to negotiate
- Summarising proposals clearly to avoid any misunderstandings about expectations
- Understanding what others want and how much they want it
- Correcting any misunderstandings quickly and with tact
- Not making compromises to minimise conflict
- Not allowing my impatience to rush the closing elements of a negotiating process



**Our research indicates that participants improve their confidence when they spend time with us**



## PEOPLE SEEM LESS CONFIDENT

- Picking up on the meaning of behaviour
- Being conscientious in finalising all aspects of an agreed deal
- Identifying what I must avoid happening before I begin
- Dealing with demands by making confident trade-offs
- Being resolute when I know my position is weak
- Managing my bargaining to optimise the returns for any concession I may need to make
- Assessing the power balance between me and the other party in my planning
- Taking the time to review a negotiation with others to learn for the future
- Taking too long to provide a simple statement of my position
- Allowing the outcomes of a negotiation to drift rather than coordinate an action plan for implementation
- Assuming that colleagues will pick up the action planning for implementing the agreement deal

# ABOUT SCOTWORK

We have coached over

**300,000**

senior managers

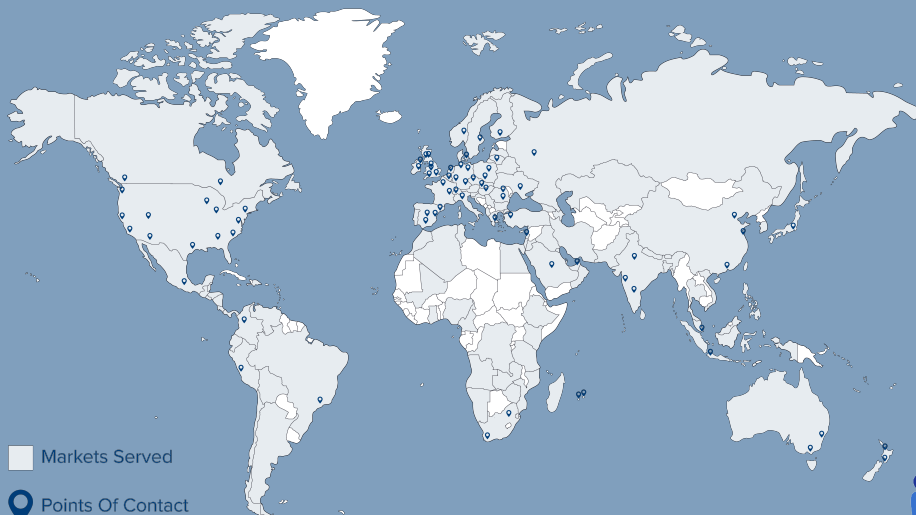


in **25** languages



## TRANSFORMING THE WAY THE WORLD NEGOTIATES

WE HAVE GROWN  
INTO THE WORLD'S  
NUMBER ONE  
INDEPENDENT  
NEGOTIATION  
CONSULTANCY



operating in

**40**  
countries



**OVER 40** YEARS OF  
EXPERIENCE

We work with organisations large and small across all sectors. We give people powerful skills that transform their lives, and hand businesses more successful futures.

**Scotwork**<sup>®</sup> (n) negotiation

Please contact us to find out more

[info@scotwork.com](mailto:info@scotwork.com)

[scotwork.com](https://scotwork.com)