

## Top five mistakes women make in negotiation

If you suffer low confidence in negotiation situations, you're not alone. 74% of professional women feel the same way. Lack of negotiation know-how can make you feel nervous, whether you're negotiating your salary, presenting a case for increased resourcing in your team or making a major purchase. The good news is you can do something about this. There are three steps involved in building your negotiation skills:

- Avoiding 5 key mistakes which reduce your effectiveness as a negotiator
- Structuring your conversation to progress through 5 key stages
- Mastering high impact language patterns – so you can speak the language of influence

In this article, I'll explain the top five mistakes women make during negotiation. My next tip sheets will cover tips for structuring conversation and speaking with influence. So, what are the mistakes which most commonly hold women back during negotiations?



### Top 5 mistakes to avoid

1. Starting without a back-up plan
2. Giving something away without asking for something in return
3. Backing off at the first 'no'
4. Using limiting language patterns
5. Taking a 'battle' position

I've coached and trained thousands of women and these problems come up over and over again. Fortunately, you CAN learn how to overcome them. Here are a few pointers to get you started.

### Mistake 1: Starting without a back-up plan

Negotiating without a back-up plan is like walking on a tight-rope without a safety net. It's risky and triggers anxiety. If you want to feel calm and confident during a negotiation, make sure you have a clear fallback position in mind. Knowing what you will do if the negotiation fails to deliver viable results empowers you to walk away without fear.

### Mistake 2: Giving something away without asking for something in return

At the heart of the negotiation process is the principle of *exchanging concessions*. Concessions are things you give away in order to receive something back. There is one main rule to keep in mind when managing concessions - but many women are unaware of it. The rule is simple: **never give something without asking for something in return**. You can use concession starter phrases to do this. I cover these phrases in my *Negotiation Skills for Women* workshop. [Download](#) the course brochure here.

### **Mistake 3: Backing off at the first 'no'**

Sociologists have shown that women use different 'rules' of conversation to men. The rules you operate from can impact on your success when negotiating at work. Keep in mind that during negotiations, many men operate from an assumption that debate is a game. They perceive 'no' responses as conditional. In other words, when someone says 'no' during a negotiation a male is likely to hear 'not yet' rather than 'not ever'. Female negotiators, on the other hand, interpret 'no' responses differently. They are likely to believe the first 'no' is a final 'no'. This means women are less likely than men to follow up with solution focused questions such as 'what needs to happen to turn your no into a yes?' To be a star negotiator, you need to master the art of questioning.

### **Mistake 4: Using limiting language patterns**

Small linguistic changes can make a huge difference to your success in negotiations. For example, if you ask 'what is the solution to this problem?' you will prime people to look for one, single answer. This is likely to lead to an impasse, as each person will think of one solution and then try to persuade everyone else that their solution is the only viable option. If you ask 'What solutions can we find together?' you will prompt everyone to talk collaboratively. This will lead to better results from the negotiation.

Useful phrases and questions for female negotiators include:

- What options are there for resolving this?
- What are you willing to offer if I offer.....?
- In exchange for .....I can give you.....
- What else can we do?

Find out more about the fascinating discipline of speaking with influence. [Enrol](#) in the *Negotiation Skills for Women* workshop.

### **Mistake 5: Taking a 'battle' position**

Many people think negotiation is an antagonistic process in which people are trying to 'beat' each other. This mindset can trigger strong emotions in female negotiators. These can include fear, defensiveness or anger – all of which block your ability to think clearly and negotiate confidently. To keep your emotions under control, it helps to shift your thinking patterns. Using the Harvard Negotiation Model (which is based on the idea of win-win interactions) is a great way to do this. Keep an eye out for my next update, in which I'll explain how to shift out of win-lose mode and into win-win. I'll also explain how to take other people with you!

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