



## EQUIPPING FOR EXCELLENCE

Negotiation is a process that can, by its very nature strike fear in your heart. Am I going to be ripped off? Is this the best offer? What if they don't take this price? These are all questions that can cause even the most experienced negotiators to tremble at the prospect of trying to reach a deal.

However, solid negotiation should be seen as providing you with an opportunity to work towards an outcome that achieves both a favourable result and a strong relationship. These two do not have to be mutually exclusive and durable agreements are still the ideal. "But what about the current market conditions?", I hear you say. "Surely its all about the bottom line and who can be the most price competitive," you counter.

Well that's where you're wrong. When sales people go straight to price, three things happen:

- (1) The client is given overall control of the sale
- (2) The product/service offering value is not established in the mind of the salesperson, and therefore the client doesn't see value
- (3) The salesperson can only compete on a price basis which ends up becoming a slippery slope to zero competitive advantage.

In the last three keynotes I have given to international corporates the first question I was asked was how do we become more price competitive in a price sensitive market. My response is that before you become price sensitive, you need to become more value sensitive. This does not mean that you shouldn't negotiate, but rather that you need to sell first. You see when it comes to selling a premium product, our clients are much less price conscious than we think, but far more value conscious than we give them credit.

Only when you have qualified your customer, and done a thorough needs analysis, and demonstrated the intrinsic value of what you are offering, and done this in a way that clearly shows your strategic competitive advantage should you get to price.

It's amazing how many companies I work with cannot come to terms with what

**their strategic competitive advantage really is. In simple terms, this simply means being able to answer the question, why should I buy from you as opposed to someone else?**

**Think about this. The degree to which you have to negotiate is inversely proportional to your success at selling. That simply means, the more effectively you sell, the less you have to negotiate.**

**This doesn't mean you wont ever have to make a concession, but rather that when you do come to a discussion on what you will trade in order to reach an agreement, that you are in a stronger position to reach an agreement that lasts. For more information on sales or marketing training visit [www.andrewbrough.com](http://www.andrewbrough.com)**