

Top 5 do's and don'ts of negotiating



DO limit yourself to five statements at a time. If you monopolize the conversation, you might not only reveal too much but also lose your listener's interest. After you've spoken about five sentences, ask a question or just keep quiet and let others talk.

DO pretend not to understand something. That forces the speaker to elaborate—and possibly modify the offer in your favor.

DO give one-sentence answers. You need not respond to a question by revealing everything you know about a subject. Give a general overview or a somewhat vague answer, unless providing more specific data would advance your position.

DO control the timing. Suggest a break or simply excuse yourself if you sense the negotiation is moving along too rapidly.

DO decide when the negotiation ends. Just because the other people start to gather their papers and appear ready to leave, you need not accept that you're done for the day. Only agree to stop negotiating if you think that it's in your best interest.

DON'T apologize. Don't admit guilt or say you're sorry for something you've done. If you must express remorse for your actions or behavior, wait until the deal is done and a few weeks have passed.

DON'T lament the past. By dwelling on events or decisions that already transpired, you waste everyone's time and expose yourself to fruitless arguing.

DON'T speak in absolutes. Avoid "always" and "never." You may think those are effective "fighting words," but in fact they will polarize the two sides.

DON'T defend yourself. Beware of retreating into a defensive corner. Instead, restate your position and support it.

DON'T overreach. If you've won 95% of what you wanted, beware of risking it all to pursue the other 5%.