

THE EMARTICON NEGOTIATION MODEL

How do you master your moment of truth?



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Negotiations are the moment of truth in business – and a decisive success factor for companies.

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Looking back on more than 25 years of negotiation experience, I do not first think of especially tough negotiations or spectacular deals. I think of the moments when a new possibility suddenly opened up – because someone asked the crucial question, introduced an unconventional idea or viewed a deadlocked situation from a different perspective. Those experiences have shaped my understanding of how negotiations should be conducted.

In my view, successful procurement negotiations are not won through pressure or by having the better argument. They are built on clarity, careful preparation, trust and a willingness to explore new approaches. The **Emarticon Negotiation Model** grew out of these experiences. It is not a theoretical concept or rigid method, but a framework for thinking that brings together the principles that have proven effective over many years of project work.



1. Create Clarity

I have repeatedly seen procurement negotiations fail for reasons that had nothing to do with price or the quality of the arguments. They failed because, from the outset, there was no clarity about what the negotiation was really about.

This happens more often than one might think. Terms and conditions are often discussed even though the real issue is time, security of supply or long-term risk. Until these questions are clarified, both sides may be negotiating the same topic – but not pursuing the same objective.

Clarity is not created at the negotiating table – it is created long before.

For me, every successful procurement negotiation therefore begins long before the first meeting. I want answers to five key questions:

- Which objectives are we pursuing – and what are their priorities?
- What interests lie behind our own objectives and demands?
- Where do we have room to negotiate?
- What realistic alternatives do we have if no agreement is reached?
- Which assumptions underpin our assessments – and which of them are robust?

Alternatives in particular are often underestimated. Anyone who enters a negotiation without an alternative course of action is negotiating from a position of dependency. Those who know their options gain confidence and make better decisions.

For me, clarity therefore means far more than good preparation. It means identifying the real objective behind the demands and structuring the negotiation mentally before it even begins. Only on this basis can negotiation strategy, communication and tactics achieve their full effect.

2. Understand People

In many negotiations, enormous amounts of time are invested in figures, contracts and arguments. It is easy to lose sight of who ultimately makes the decision: people negotiate with people ...

Everyone at the negotiating table brings their own objectives, interests and constraints. Some are under considerable time pressure; others must comply with internal requirements or justify decisions to their superiors. Anyone who does not understand these circumstances will misinterpret many reactions.

People do not make decisions on a purely rational basis – above all, they decide emotionally.

For me, every good negotiation therefore begins with understanding the person behind the position. Five questions are crucial:

- What interests and objectives really drive the other side?
- What constraints or circumstances influence their decisions?
- What expectations and concerns play a role?
- Who actually makes the decision – and who influences it?
- How can I build trust instead of creating unnecessary resistance?

The better I understand the other side, the easier it is to identify shared interests and possible solutions. Often, a simple change of perspective transforms the entire course of a negotiation.

Understanding people does not mean seeing through them or manipulating them. It means taking their motives seriously. Successful negotiations do not arise when positions collide, but when interests are understood.

3. Prepare Strategically

I have never seen a successful procurement negotiation won through improvisation. The best negotiators often appear spontaneous – in reality, they are usually exceptionally well prepared.

For me, preparation begins where sound analysis is translated into a concrete negotiation strategy. The focus is no longer on the “what”, but on the “how”. What levers are available to me? Which demands truly matter? Where am I willing to compromise, and which scenarios must I allow for?

Good preparation provides answers to five key questions:

- Which arguments and levers can move the negotiation forward?
- Which demands are non-negotiable – and where is there room to manoeuvre?
- Which objections and reactions from the other side are likely?
- What roles and authorities do the members of our negotiation team have?
- How can I prepare the negotiation so that I remain able to act even under pressure?

Mental preparation is particularly important to me.

Those who have considered different scenarios before the negotiation react more calmly, flexibly and confidently in critical situations. This is often where the difference between a spontaneous reaction and a conscious decision emerges. Preparation does not mean trying to plan every detail. It provides the confidence to focus on what matters most at the decisive moment.



4. Build Trust

Over the past 25 years, I have seen excellently prepared negotiations that nevertheless failed to achieve the desired result. Not because the negotiation strategy was wrong, but because the necessary trust was missing.

For me, trust is not a “soft” factor. It is the foundation of every successful procurement negotiation. People do not make decisions based on figures or arguments alone. They also decide according to whether they trust the other side to honour agreements and act fairly.

Trust does not arise by chance. It is created through behaviour.

That is why I focus on five points in every negotiation:

- Show genuine interest in the other party.
- Listen first, then make your case.
- Address difficult issues openly and respectfully.
- Keep commitments and act predictably.

- Seek joint solutions – not winners and losers.

Trust does not mean giving in on everything or avoiding conflict. On the contrary, those who address critical issues openly while remaining respectful often create the basis for sound, sustainable decisions.

For me, trust is therefore not the result of a successful negotiation. It is one of its most important prerequisites.

5. Steer the Negotiation

Careful preparation is a prerequisite for successful negotiations. On its own, however, it does not achieve the objective. What matters is whether you succeed in actively shaping the course of the discussion. Anyone who merely reacts to demands, arguments and objections allows the other side to set the pace.

Steering a negotiation does not mean dominating the discussion. It means providing structure, listening attentively and actively moving the process forward.

Negotiation leadership comes from clarity – not volume.

During the negotiation, I therefore focus particularly on five points:

- Keep the agenda and time frame in view.
- Use targeted questions to gain information and clarify motives.
- Summarise what has been said to avoid misunderstandings.
- Set demands and anchors deliberately instead of conceding too quickly.
- Develop new options and trade concessions rather than giving them away.

Listening, in particular, is often underestimated. Those who talk too much themselves learn little about the other side's actual room for manoeuvre. Questions, pauses and precise summaries, by contrast, help refocus the negotiation on what matters and reveal areas for joint solutions.

For me, steering therefore means knowing at all times where the negotiation stands, which points remain open and what the next sensible step is. In this way, even a difficult discussion becomes a structured process – even when positions are far apart or emotions are rising.



6. Recognise the Turning Point

In difficult negotiations, there is often a moment when the dynamic changes. New information emerges, priorities shift or the other side signals movement for the first time.

Anyone who misses this turning point often misses the best opportunity for a solution.

The right moment cannot be forced – but you can prepare for it. For me, this means remaining alert throughout the procurement negotiation and not adhering rigidly to my own script. I pay particular attention to the following signals:

- The other side asks new questions or changes its line of argument.
- A previously firm position is expressed more cautiously.

- Time pressure, internal constraints or new decision-making paths become visible.
- After a pause, different options suddenly emerge.
- A deadlock forces both sides to reassess their previous positions.

In negotiation practice, such a window is referred to as a “window of opportunity”. The key is not to confuse it with premature concession. Anyone seeking to use the moment must know which solution is viable, which concessions are possible and what they expect in return.

It often helps to deliberately slow the pace: ask follow-up questions, allow a pause, summarise interim results and develop options before evaluating them. Sometimes the turning point emerges precisely when there is no immediate reaction.

For me, recognising the right moment is therefore not merely a matter of instinct. It is the result of preparation, close observation and a willingness to adapt one’s negotiation strategy to a changed situation.

7. Secure Sustainable Results

Throughout my career, I have seen many negotiations that were successful on paper – and nevertheless failed. Not during the discussion, but afterwards.

A genuinely good negotiation does not end with a signature.

It ends only when the agreements reached work in day-to-day practice and are reliably implemented by both sides. For me, a sustainable negotiation result means far more than good terms and conditions. What matters is that the agreements provide a sound basis for continued collaboration.

After every important negotiation, I therefore ask myself five questions:

- Are the agreements clear and practicable for both sides?
- Have we adequately taken both sides’ interests into account?
- Are the next steps and responsibilities clearly defined?
- Is the relationship robust enough to withstand future challenges?
- What can we learn from this negotiation for the next one?

The final point in particular is often underestimated. Every negotiation provides valuable insights – into the market, the negotiating partner and one’s own approach. Those who use these experiences systematically improve continuously.

For me, a negotiation is therefore truly successful only when it not only achieves a good result, but also secures its implementation and creates a robust basis for continued collaboration.



We have the experience to support you – my offer of a complimentary strategy session

Would you be interested in an initial discussion?

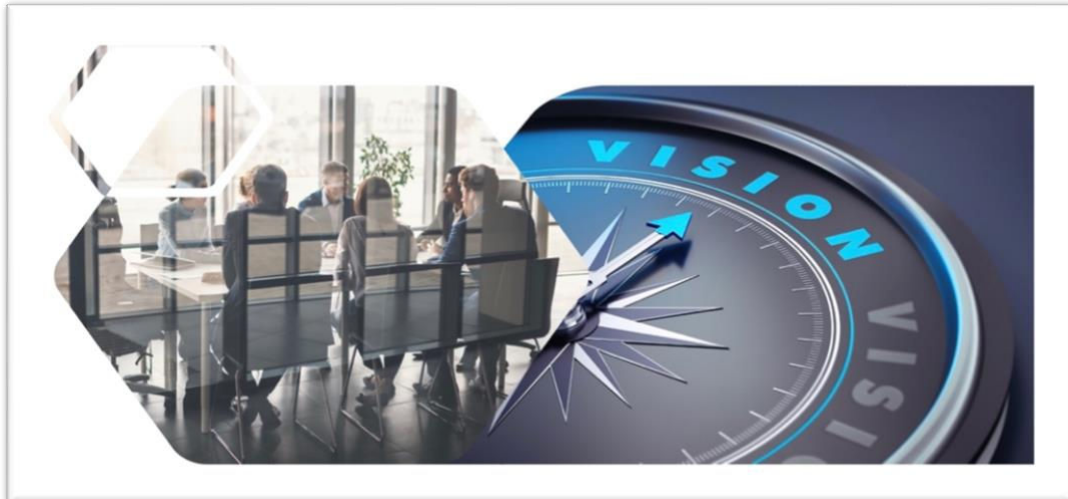
I would be pleased to discuss your specific situation with you in a strategy session. The purpose of the discussion is to jointly determine whether *you* or *your company* needs to take action to **optimise negotiation methods or improve negotiation results**.

How we support you:

- Develop and sharpen negotiation strategies
- Prepare critical procurement negotiations professionally
- Provide sparring support in demanding negotiation situations
- Actively support or fully lead negotiations
- Develop the team's negotiation capabilities sustainably
- Embed negotiation processes in the organisation for the long term

Let's start a conversation. We help reduce risks and costs.

To learn more about this topic and Emarticon's procurement and supply management services, **please call me** on **0151-1083-7000** or email me at clemens.rinnebach@emarticon.de.



**About us – Emarticon: Consulting and interim management specialising in
Strategic Procurement & Supply Management**

Emarticon GmbH is a consulting and interim management company **specialising in Strategic Procurement & Supply Management**. Emarticon has a pool of more than 30 highly qualified consultants. What sets us apart is that **all our consultants have at least 10 years of consulting experience in their specialist field** as well as many years of line-management experience.

Emarticon – Our passion is enabling people and companies to work together efficiently.