



Negotiating Public Works: What they don't teach you at University

Emeritus Professor John Martin FLGMA Qld

Overview

- What is negotiation?
- Who decides?
- Understanding the context
- Process versus content
- What motivates the councillor?
- The professional paradox
- Being clear about outcomes
- Build trust through predictability
- Breakthrough negotiations

What is negotiation?

- 'The power of A to get B to do something A wants'
- How often are we negotiating?
- Every time we attempt to influence another

Who decides?

- The budget setting process: when does it start?
- The political management interplay
- Do they know the consequences (your questions: warn, don't threat)?

Understanding the context

- 'Getting on the balcony'
- How does your issue sit within the broader political economy context?
- Who are the other institutional and organisational players?

Effective negotiators distinguish process and content

- PROCESS: HOW we manage the negotiation, versus
- CONTENT: WHAT we are negotiating about

What motivates the councillor?

- Many things
- Recognition
- Re-election
- For a few – the wrong choices (ICAC, CCC, IBAC)

The professional paradox

- Does a question have more influencing potential than a statement?
- How do you frame the challenge in the form of a question?
- How do we achieve X given Y? (X = the outcome; Y = the assumptions we make about X)
- Skillful questioning moves through reflective, open and hypothetical questions
- You are skillful when you are not patronising!

Being clear about outcomes

- The most challenging things to measure in government
- Articulating outcomes is the leadership challenge (for both elected and appointed officials)
- Recognise disruptions (unforeseen impacts)

Build trust through predictability

- Trust is an outcome of a good working relationship
- How do you demonstrate success and competence?
- Predictability is not about being rigid and boring
- Being predictable in the process of consideration using your negotiation skills to frame the technical challenge is what builds your leadership reputation

Breakthrough Negotiations

- Once again; go to the balcony
- Step to their side
- Don't reject.....Reframe
- Build them a golden bridge
- Bring them to their senses not their knees

Source: William Ury: Getting Past No

Creating virtuous circles

- A council's organisational culture creates the context for creative problem solving, innovation and managed risk taking
- The single greatest legacy is a governance culture where these characteristics are evident
- Your leadership reputation will be built on your ability to negotiate, over time.

With thanks.....

- ENS International
- <https://www.negotiate.org/>

john.martin@latrobe.edu.au

0421584313