The Art of Negotiation

For Leaders of Organ Procurement Organizations

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Advance Reading:

James A. Rice, Ph.D., FACHE
Managing Director & Practice Leader
Governance and Leadership

Integrated Healthcare Strategies
a division of Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc.
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During the 2016 **Global Leadership Symposium**, you will have an opportunity to work in small teams to explore practical lessons about the need for and nature of “negotiation” as an essential skill for the success of your efforts to save and prolong lives through transplantation.

This short paper is to be read before you arrive in California.

This advance “Concept Brief” is designed to help get you thinking about negotiation as an important leadership competency. Beyond clinical knowledge about transplantation, and along with strategic planning, budgeting, delegation, marketing, supervising and team building, the **Art of Negotiation** is now being recognized as an essential skill for you and your organization to secure the resources needed to achieve your mission for high quality and cost effective organ and tissue procurement and allocation, as well as political and financial gains that advance your mission. We all use negotiation every day whether it is negotiating an organ recovery time, contracting for tissue procurement fees or developing shared parameters for donation practice within a hospital.

The paper addresses these three questions:

1. What is negotiation?
2. Why is it important?
3. What are some basic elements of good negotiation?

Additional information and techniques will be developed with you and your team while in California.
What Is Negotiation?

Negotiation is a process by which compromise or agreement is reached while avoiding argument and dispute.

In any disagreement, individuals understandably aim to achieve the best possible outcome for their position (or perhaps an organisation they represent). However, for Organ Procurement Organization leaders, the principles of fairness, seeking mutual benefit, and maintaining relationships are key to a successful outcome. Most importantly, OPO leaders are focused on improving donation outcomes by bringing together stakeholders with frequently divergent and competing objectives.

Specific forms of negotiation are used in many situations: international affairs, the legal system, government, industrial disputes or domestic relationships, as examples. However, general negotiation skills can be learned and applied in a wide range of activities. Negotiation skills can be of great benefit in resolving many differences that arise between you and others.

Why Is Negotiation Important?

Few organizations have all of the resources they need for success. Or you may have the resources, but they are not in the right place or ready at the right time or quality. Resources can be political influence, money, staffing, services, technology, equipment and furnishings, or added reputational influence. They can also be organ and tissue donation service agreements, media messages, and government contracts.

You may have the staff, but not the motivation for them to be fully engaged or able to work at peak performance. Your financial pressures may change and you may need to re-negotiate what you need to meet your objectives.

In short, to succeed, to accomplish your goals and mission, or to advance toward your vision for your organization, you will need to secure essential resources and relationships through the art and science of negotiation.
What Are Basic Elements Of Negotiation?

How do you get what you want while leaving the other party feeling like a winner too?

Negotiating, when done correctly, creates strong *win-win situations* for both parties. Unfortunately, most ambitious professionals are stuck somewhere between emulating the stereotypical Hollywood idea of a hardball business tycoon, and flashbacks to childhood memories of being told to be patient and wait for rewards. As a result, most OPO and clinical professionals fear negotiating and treat it more as a guessing game or complicated poker card game.

**CULTURE MATTERS IN NEGOTIATIONS**

Contract or relationship?

Leaders that have to negotiate agreements for various services and terms, from different organizational cultures or styles, may tend to view the purpose of a negotiation differently. For deal makers from some organizations or cultures, the goal of a business negotiation, first and foremost, is a signed contract between the parties. Leaders from other cultures tend to consider that the goal of a negotiation is not just a signed contract, but rather the creation of a longer range relationship between the two sides that is focused on implementing the agreement.

You cannot, however, advance your career or be a successful organ procurement organization if you avoid asking for precisely what you want or enter into negotiations without having a plan of approach in place before you begin the negotiation process. With that in mind, here are five ways that can help you become a more effective negotiator:

1. **Know exactly what you want**

   Identifying what you want before entering negotiations gives you the ability to both (a) visualize the outcome, and (b) avoid leaving the table with the feeling of selling yourself/your organization short. Have an exact outcome in terms of service needed, quality to be assured, money to be agreed upon, amount, terms, etc. outlined on paper prior to meeting with the other party.
Once you identify your desired meeting goal, be prepared to ask for slightly more, allowing some “give-and-take” for your boss or board to ‘come down’ to your desired results/price. However, don’t be surprised if, using the next four tips, you actually walk away with more than your initial goal.

2. Understand the other party’s position

What are their needs, fears, aspirations, requirements and restrictions? Take the time to research the organization and/or person you’re meeting with and discover their surface needs, past negotiation outcomes, and what would make them look good. Remember that “price or cost” is not always the most important factor, contrary to what a board or boss may say.

See if you can offer what the competition cannot. Here is an example from a hotel sales person. Her primary competition for large corporate conventions were two hotels nearby. Her property had over fifty suites while each of the other hotels had less than fifteen. As a result, she would offer the meeting planners large quantities of complimentary upgrades for all of the company VIPs. Even offering a slightly higher room rate, she almost always got the business simply because the meeting planner jumped at the opportunity to look good by negotiating suites for company influencers. In the end, it wasn’t about negotiating the lowest price, but the best deal/results for the organization.

3. Know your value

What do you and your organization bring to the table? Are you offering unique quality, or convenience, or a revenue-generating service to another organization? If so, how much reputation, patient or payer satisfaction or money will they make as a result of securing your services? If you’re negotiating for a raise, understand if you’ve greatly outperformed past hires, making or saving the organization a significant amount of money. How much would it cost the company to lose you, your services, or your reputational capital if they did not do the alliance, partnership or deal?
4. Never accept less without gaining concessions

While you may not walk away with the exact service, resource or money amount you envisioned, you can ensure that you leave with your desired ‘value.’ If you’re seeking a 7% raise, but your boss informs you that the best the company can offer is 5%, consider requesting the ability to work from home one day a week or an additional five paid vacation days per year. Figure out an alternative option that is worth that 2% for you. Accepting less without gaining something in return is the equivalent of stating that you are worth less than your initial ask.

5. Be willing to walk away

Know your bottom-line and always be willing to walk away. While this can be difficult when dealing with mission critical OPO services or partnerships, or large pieces of potential business or even a dream job, it is imperative that you never enter negotiations without the option to walk away. This reduces the likelihood of the other party being able to use hard-ball tactics to back you into a corner. Also, there will be times when you will need to state that their offer is not sufficient, and you don’t think you’ll be able to do a transaction/agreement/deal. You may be surprised how often negotiations that seem to have broken down completely can be revived when the other party understands that you are not desperate, and that you have options.

In the Global Leadership Symposium, we will explore these strategies and others in small team exercises that we hope will be fun and informative.

See you soon in California!
Thank you for all you do to save and prolong lives in your countries and communities.

James Rice, Ph.D.
Managing Director & Practice Leader
Governance and Leadership
Jim.rice@ihstrategies.com

PH: 1-612-703-4687