

## THE ANSWERS TECHNIQUE

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**Abstract.** *The technique of responses takes into account, generally, the technique of the questions. Depending on what you want to obtain directly, indirect on the long term before negotiating or during negotiation. We must keep in mind some rules, some are common sense, and others are predefined for both question and answer. Both questions and answers have to be thought of, who addresses them.*

*We proposed the following rules: avoiding the rush, not necessarily giving a straight answer, it is dangerous to answer all questions, the answer may be delayed due to poor memory or lack of documentation, it is not mandatory to give an honest answer, do not go into details only if it is in own benefit, untrusting answer, ask for information, evidence, facts, answers must be formulated and clearly articulated but in a very low tone, you can give nuanced answers, elusive. When stating the answers, you should avoid the following: frequent and insistent references to your own person, violent critiquing trends of the partner, the tendency to minimize the partner's words, avoid giving advice, warnings or arrogance, know how to make concessions based on the importance of the negotiation. The rule of concessions can go on by echeloned versions: the risk of negotiation failure, if the negotiation takes a different turn, lack of new concessions which can increase the levels of tension and danger of failure, the partner is encouraged to seek concessions, that cannot be granted, the level of hope of the partner may increase and the effect is disastrous, the desire to compromise, a better option that indicates limited room for negotiation. There are dangerous alternatives by the high level of the first installment, so that partner is happy with 70 % but the best option is based on a partner's psychological reaction to the partial withdrawal of the concession and its final restoration, showing good faith and giving partner satisfaction.*

*The answers technique represents the entirety of possible answers to a partner on both technical questions that are used in a negotiation and on short language, to the point, maximum 125 words per minute, needs to know the questions technique so as to know the replies, at the same time, to know how to make concessions to the extent we believe is needed to win a negotiation according to the opponent's or partners personality, who wish to buy or sell. By the clenching of the contract (signing, sealing and then ways regarding the sale, payment methods, shipping methods), everything represents the questions, answers and concessions technique.*

**Key words:** *technique, negociation, strategy, questions*

### INTRODUCTION

Questions are asked, based upon the information made available by the team, confidential information, and answers are expected hopefully without any affront, on the object, by exchange of responses, with small active or passive steps; the set of questions and even some answers could be actually previously learnt responses by the team. The team coordinated by a leader is monogamous.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

When preparing for negotiations, it is not enough to think only about the questions one will address to the partner; one also has to consider one's own answers to the partner's possible questions.

There are several rules to be taken into account when answering the partner's questions:

a. avoid hasty answers - the answer will be given only after making sure that both the question and what lies behind it have been understood correctly

- b. not all the partner's questions need be answered (some are not worth it, others are risky)
- c. the answer can be delayed on the grounds of lacking necessary information on the matter, of lacking documentation, of a poor memory, etc.
- d. avoid always giving straightforward answers that may affect one's own power of negotiation
- e. do not detail an answer, unless it is to one's own advantage
- f. certain answers meant to dispel the partner's doubts should contain additional information, evidence, facts, etc.
- g. in order to catch the partner's attention, the answer should be clearly formulated and uttered, but said in a lower voice
- h. the answer can have several shades of meaning, it can be conditioned or even evasive:

- my answer depends on ...
- I cannot give a 'yes or no' answer; it's all about different shades of meaning
- allow me to divide your question according to several aspects
- the answer to your question is conditioned by...

When uttering an answer, it is advisable to avoid:

- a) making often and insistent references to oneself  
'I had also been through this, and this is what I did...'
- b) criticizing the partner in a rough way  
'You do realize that your question is absurd, don't you?'
- c) diminishing the value of the partner's statements  
'You don't have to see everything in black; it will pass'
- d) making recommendations, giving advice or warnings  
'Beware - the way you're dealing with this issue is quite risky.'

The concession-making technique

Granting concessions implies the alteration of one's own position during negotiations towards the position of the partner. Choosing the domains, setting the deadlines, ordering them, classifying them according to their importance should materialize within the team's own negotiation program.

Rules of applying concessions:

- a. think of some credible reasons for a negotiation margin of 10-20% against the market price
- b. do not accept the first offer the partner puts forward
- c. do not yield first when it comes to a major issue; rather start granting concessions regarding less important domains
- d. the value of the concessions made to the partner increases when they are obtained with difficulty; therefore do not grant concessions 'for free'
- e. keep a clear record of both the number and the value of the mutual concessions and make use of it
- f. it is not necessary to grant a concession equal in value to that of the partner; it can also bear an emotional load
- g. the utterance 'we will consider your proposition in detail' is also a form of concession
- h. if no concession can be secured, one should try to obtain a promise at least
- i. when granting a concession, emphasize the fact that it must remain valid throughout the whole period of negotiations, and it must not be considered separately

j. do not be afraid to turn a concession down

Ways of ordering concessions

Suppose that the negotiation team have set the negotiation margin to 100 points (concessions can be granted regarding both the price and the other aspects that are impossible to quantify). Here are several possible variants of organizing concessions in four stages:

A. 0-0-0-100 the major concession in the last stage increases the partner's hope (the risk of unsuccessful negotiations)

B. 100-0-0-0 the lack of new concessions during negotiations increases tension and the risk of failure

C. 25-25-25-25 the partner is encouraged to demand new concessions, which cannot be granted anymore

D. 15-20-30-35 the hope of the partner keeps increasing and the outcome is disastrous

E. 35-30-20-15 it signals the desire for compromise, as well as getting near to the limits of the negotiation margin

F. 40-35-20-5 it is a better choice; the last concession signals the limit of the negotiation margin

G. 80-19-0-1 it is a risky choice because it increases too much during the first stage; the partner might have been satisfied with only 70%

H. 80-10-(-1)-(+1) it is a tactical choice based on the partner's psychological reaction to the partial withdrawal of the concession and its eventual granting, showing good faith and giving the partner satisfaction

Concluding the negotiations ways of tackling the partner's objections

From a psychological point of view, the specialist should not be afraid that the partner may raise objections. S/He should take into account the fact that objections represent the partner's acknowledgement of his/her interest in the purchase, thus emphasizing his/her position.

Types of possible objections raised by the partner:

- not expressed overtly; they can be 'read' on one's face
- false, which hide the real problems
- prejudiced
- due to the lack of proper information
- well-grounded

Objections will be overridden by presenting solid arguments, based on facts, figures, etc., which should overlap with a respectful, friendly attitude. The arguments should not contradict the statements of the partner in a way that might question their truthfulness.

Certain objections raised by s/he partner can be skillfully used as counter-arguments (e.g. 'the device is small, indeed, but this is precisely its strong point').

'Strong', well-grounded objections will be first rephrased in a more convenient way before being actually overridden.

In order to successfully override the partner's objections, the following points should be taken into account:

- a. try first to locate the objection as accurately as possible and then to find out the reasons that account for it, by using 'why'-questions
- b. keep cool and friendly, and avoid acting surprised
- c. avoid contradicting the partner's statements in an overt manner
- d. show respect for the partner's point of view even if it may seem wrong

- e. give some credit to the partner's objection, but try to reduce its importance by highlighting the gains that counterbalance it
- f. overlook certain minor objections or accept them as a compromise solution
- g. tackle objections in a tactful way, as they represent the partner's wish to display his/her 'personality' and to impose himself/herself
- h. avoid giving advice that could have an opposite effect
- i. avoid giving an answer before thoroughly analyzing it first
- j. check whether the partner has understood and accepted the answer
- k. pass on to another issue after having cleared up the objection, in order to make negotiations progress
- l. analyze the objections later on, in order to find the best arguments to counteract them

#### Ways of overriding objections

- a. Anticipation - when the objections of the partner can be anticipated, one can organize the argumentation in such a way so as to eliminate them - at least partially, thus disorganizing the partner's exposition plan and making him/her improvise a new one on the spot
- b. Indirect negotiation
- c. Conditional acceptance - under certain circumstances
- d. Proving the absurdity of the objection in one of the following ways:
  - showing that the objection lacks grounding, as it is contradicted by facts
  - highlighting the computing errors underlying the objection
  - developing a thesis contrary to the partner's objection and thus turning the latter invalid
- e. The boomerang method - the partner's objections are overridden on the grounds of the insecure situation on the market, of the rise in price, of the lack of raw materials, etc.
- f. The 'paradox-method' - the arguments are rounded by a skillful use of suspense, allusion and reserve
- g. Analogy with past events and situations
- h. The interrogative-method - answer a question by another question
- i. The witness-method - call upon a third person that can bring 'evidence'
- j. Straight denial of the ungrounded objections and attempting to reduce the objection to the entire issue to only one of its aspects
- k. Delaying the answer in order to gain time
- l. Overlooking the objections and trying to change the subject

#### Empathy

Empathy represents the ability of the negotiator to identify himself/herself with his/her opponent and to perceive -as much as possible- the essence of the objectives the latter aims at.

The negotiator must play this part throughout all the negotiation levels. Together with his/her team, s/he will feign to support his/her partner by using arguments and counter-arguments that share the latter's standpoint. The moment s/he gets to perceive the aim of the partner, s/he will be able to master the situation well enough in order to adopt the most appropriate tactics.

Moreover, the negotiator should keep asking himself/herself 'what would I do if I were in my partner's shoes?' and let this question guide his/her thinking and his/her arguments. S/He should also consider which are the attitudes his/her partner is most likely to adopt and what

possible counter-arguments s/he may bring. It is also of utmost importance for the negotiator to always think positively and to believe that there must be a way to reach an agreement.

Even in the tense situations during negotiations it is advisable to use the simulation technique, by inviting the partner to listen to how the negotiator would act if s/he were in his/her place. The focus should be placed on the advantages the former would gain from concluding the deal, as well as on the losses s/he would suffer if s/he drops it.

From a tactical perspective, the negotiator and his/her team should seize any opportunity to stir the interest and the pride of the specialists in the opponent team, to highlight the logic underlying their arguments and to attract them to share the same point of view.

Furthermore, the team leader can even belittle the members of his/her team (with their previous acknowledgement), making them withdraw the propositions that have tensed up the situation, but without falling into the extreme of denigrating them.

Compromise methods during the last negotiation stage

1. The partners should drop their different points of view and come up with a favorable solution that would work to the advantage of both

2. The negotiator should explain that there are still certain issues to be taken into account and therefore advance a compromise solution, based on new facts.

3. The negotiator should diminish the differences between the two teams' points of view and suggest the elimination of these differences to the advantage of both teams.

4. The negotiator should put forward a new point of view, completely different from the previous one, and point out its compromise nature, to the advantage of both parties.

In case negotiations go wrong, the negotiator will:

a. try to avoid making a summary that would highlight the differences between the two teams

b. place the focus on the negotiator of the other team and try to dissociate him/her from the unsuccessful result of negotiations

c. try to reach an agreement for future negotiations, the date to be set by common consent

d. conclude the talks by focusing on another topic than that of the negotiations, so as to end the session on a positive note.

e. bear in mind that 'maintaining long term commercial contacts and relationships is more important than failure in a single negotiation, as it is suggested by the saying <it's only a battle that we've lost, not the war>'

Ways of concluding negotiations

a. the technique of the conditional conclusion - the purchaser offers to buy a larger amount or a product inferior in quality if the price is reduced with a certain percentage, negotiations to be resumed for the old amount at the new price

b. the comparison technique - first, the dealer talks about a similar transaction concluded at X \$, paying attention to the buyer's reaction, and then s/he acts accordingly

c. the technique of the right offer - the dealer figures out the price the partner would offer for the ideal merchandise, then trying to sell the real product at this price

d. the technique of 'the tight budget' - the buyer seems interested in the product but says that s/he cannot afford it beyond a certain sum; thus s/he can easily find out the alternatives to the initial offer advanced by the dealer

e. the technique of 'the chain-concessions' - one of the partners advances a possible concession, which is related to a previous concession of the other partner, and, if both partners agree upon it, negotiations will carry on at a new level

f. the technique of the last, final offer - it sounds like an ultimatum; reconsidering it would affect both the credibility and the reputation of the person using it

g. the technique of 'the straightforward question' - the question 'what are your terms for concluding the deal?' gives specific information about the partner's intentions

According to the terms set by the partner, there are several ways of closing a deal, as follows:

a. the straightforward question - it follows as a logical conclusion to a rational, well-presented argumentation resulting in 'Thus it's a deal; when shall I start the delivery?'

b. implicit approval - it is easier to get than a positive answer; sometimes a nod, a mutter or silence is enough to signify agreement; this method is simple but effective if it is used at the right moment

c. maximum option - it is used when dealing with a hesitant partner who is afraid to take the decision to buy; s/he will be made to choose between two positive aspects, thus diverting his/her attention from the most important choice, which is signing the contract

d. the progressive statement - if the partner seems hesitant about closing the talks, the specialist will make a brief, logical and positive account of the agreements they have reached so far; the partner will obviously acknowledge each point presented by the specialist; eventually, the latter may conclude by saying 'so we can sign the contract'

e. recollection of a similar situation - the partner will be given the example of a situation similar to his/her own, with emphasis on the advantages another partner has gained on another market, or the losses a certain partner has suffered by not buying the product

f. references - the partner will be presented a list (as long as possible) with all the other important partners whose satisfaction with the product can be proved; obviously, the partner will not accept to be overtaken by the competition and s/he will therefore be easily talked into doing the same as his/her rivals

g. balance - the partners who decide to buy a product only after extremely thorough calculations, and who are used to balances, will be presented a detailed exposition, grounded on figures and comparisons, of all the positive effects the purchase will bring about; this method requires good knowledge of the partner's market

h. surprise - certain partners who are extremely tenacious and tough refuse to give in to logical or emotional arguments; they do not raise any objections, but they ask for some 'reflection time', sometimes just because they do not want to give the impression of yielding too easily. In such cases the negotiator will feign breaking off the talks by gathering his/her papers together from the table, which suggests giving up the hope of concluding the talks. The moment the partner shows the first signs of surprise but of ease, as well, the specialist will put forward his/her back-up argument, which s/he omitted on purpose, and which may lead to the conclusion of the deal.

i. stimulation - a skillful partner knows how to dally over the talks until the other team shows signs of fear that the negotiations might not reach any agreement, and until he is granted certain extra concessions. When tension reaches the climax, two points will be brought into discussion in order to stimulate the partner: on the one hand, the wish to win, on the other, the fear of losing.

Types of business partners

Non-verbal communication refers to:

a. stress - an idea can be emphasized by uttering it with particular stress

b. intonation - it is the variation of the voice pitch and it can turn certain statements into questions or vice versa

c. pauses - they divide speech into speech groups and they can acquire a certain meaning according to their length or to the speaker's mood  
d) rhythm - it is the sequencing of stressed and non-stressed syllables

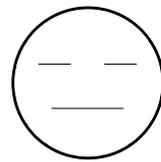
d. facial expression - it modifies the face muscles

e. physiognomy - it indicates someone's mood; one can analyze the way in which a certain mood is transmitted to one person by reducing the human face to three components (eyebrows, eyes, mouth)

f. gestures - it includes hand, arm and body movement

Consider the following illustrations of how gestures can indicate certain moods or attitudes:

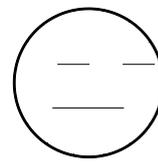
Physiognomy, or the expression on someone's face, can furnish information about that person's feelings and attitudes



-intelligence  
-relaxation  
-honesty  
-interest



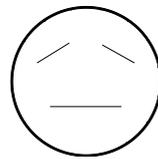
- joy  
- agreement



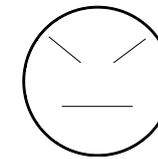
- Waiting  
- in no hurry  
- indifference



- sorrow  
- dissatisfaction  
- worry  
- confusion



- fear  
- skepticism



- anger  
- threat  
- domination  
- out of control

Physiognomies fulfill several functions:

- they adjust verbal communication
- sometimes they can disclose messages contrary to the verbal ones
- they can hide or simulate certain feelings or attitudes

### CONCLUSIONS

- Professional training
- Monogamous coordination of the team
- Solving the problems within the team
- Small steps technique

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