
SoSe 2025, IM_ Communication and Language

Date: 17.04.2025

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Mechtild Becker

Speaker: Kristina Udovitchenko

Topic: Harvard Negotiation Concept

1. What is the Harvard Negotiation Concept?

The Harvard concept of negotiation is a method developed by researchers at Harvard University. It focuses on achieving a win-win outcome and maintaining good relations between both parties.

2. The four key principles of the Harvard Concept

- 1) Separate people from the problem
- 2) Focus on interests, not positions
- 3) Invent options for mutual gain
- 4) Use objective criteria

3. BATNA (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement)

- Know your best fallback option if negotiations fail
- The stronger your BATNA, the more power you have in negotiations

Strategies to improve your BATNA to strengthen your positions

- Develop multiple alternatives
- Improve the quality of your alternatives
- Research and gather information
- Build a strong network
- Be prepared to walk away
- Practice negotiation techniques

The importance of knowing your best alternative if negotiations fail...

- Strengthens your negotiating power
- Prevents you from accepting bad deals
- Sets a clear baseline for acceptable terms
- Helps you stay calm and confident

4. Communication in negotiation

- Avoiding miscommunication and emotional responses
- Active listening and questioning techniques

5. Building and Maintaining Relationships

Avoid harmful behaviors:

- being hostile or deceptive
- breaking commitments
- acting with short-term opportunism
- applying a zero-sum mindset Promoting positive relationships

Encourage positive relationships:

- building trust and rapport
- focusing on long-term relationship management
- looking beyond a single negotiation

6. Dealing with Difficult Negotiators Countermeasures for:

6.1 Deliberate deception (false statements, hidden information)

- check everything
- ask probing questions
- get it in writing
- risk-sharing mechanisms

6.2 Psychological warfare (intimidation, time pressure)

- control the atmosphere
- stay emotionally detached
- tactfully challenge
- bring support

6.3 Positional pressure tactics (rigid demands, take-it-or-leave-it threats)

- shift back to interests
- invent options together
- use your BATNA
- tactfully stand your ground

7. Cross-cultural negotiations

7.1 Communication styles:

- direct (e.g. Germany, USA) - clear, explicit to the point
- indirect (e.g. Japan, India) - subtle, high context, rely on non-verbal cues

7.2 Decision making:

- top-down (e.g. Russia, France) – authority decides
- consensus-based (e.g. Japan, Sweden) - group agreement is key

7.3 Attitudes to time:

- monochronic (e.g. USA, Germany) - time is linear, punctuality is important!
- Polychronic (e.g. Latin America, Middle East) - time is flexible, relationships are more important!

7.4 Formality and hierarchy:

- formality and titles are crucial (e.g. South Korea, India)
- informality is normal (e.g. US, Australia)

7.5 Risk tolerance:

- risk-averse and value stability (e.g. Japan)
- open to uncertainty (e.g. US, UK) Key recommendations

Do your cultural homework, listen more than you talk, be flexible and patient. Focus on building trust and clarifying meaning first - don't make assumptions.

Ressources:

Book:

fisher roger/ury william/patton bruce, das harvard-konzept. der klassiker der verhandlungstechnik, campus verlag frankfurt, 24. Auflage 2013

William Ury, Wissen, was ich will, und erfolgreich verhandeln, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt München, 1. Auflage 2015

Internet:

<https://www.pon.harvard.edu/daily/negotiation-skills-daily/what-is-negotiation/> [05.04.2025]

<https://www.pon.harvard.edu/daily/dealing-with-difficult-people-daily/negotiating-with-the-most-difficult-people-of-all-nb/> [03.04.2025]

<https://www.pon.harvard.edu/daily/negotiation-skills-daily/principled-negotiation-focus-interests-create-value/> [05.04.2025]

<https://www.pon.harvard.edu/category/daily/batna/?cid=11408> [05.04.2025]