

OPPOSE

Making Counterproposals



Making counterproposals is one of the Oppose style behaviors in the Sphere of Influence 360°.

Many people struggle with negotiations, both when proposing and counterproposing. Good preparation and knowledge about what you should or shouldn't do can help you; you'll find best practices and helpful tips on these areas in this exercise.



“ Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate. ”

- John F. Kennedy

Exercise 1: Do your homework 1

Always start with what you want and are comfortable with. Don't wait to find out what the other person comes up with and then react to it. It is best to do your homework in advance. What is realistic? What are you satisfied with? And so forth...

Make sure you have a list of your suggestions and boundaries for yourself. Write down what is essential and what is not - the latter is helpful because you can make concessions on that front during the negotiation. The table below will help you understand where your interests lie.

Indicate what you need to have, what would be nice to have, and what is unnecessary to YOU (note: items in this last category may be necessary to the other!)

Need to have + +	Nice to have + -	Not important to me - -

Exercise 2: Do your homework 2

In this exercise, we ask you to write a proposal that does not consider what the other person brings to the table. Read through the wishes from Exercise 1 and create a proposal that addresses all the things you would like, then write your proposal below.

My (counter)proposal:



Exercise 3: Prepare for counters

When you make a counterproposal, expect a reaction! Using the table below, indicate the reactions you might encounter. Then, think about how you can deal with them. If you find it challenging to think of a response, you can always seek help from someone you trust.

Counterpoint 1 from the opposition:



Your potential response to this counterpoint:



Counterpoint 2 from the opposition:



Your potential response to this counterpoint:



Counterpoint 3 from the opposition:



Your potential response to this counterpoint:



Counterpoint 4 from the opposition:




Your potential response to this counterpoint:



Exercise 4: Practice what you say

If you're nervous about what to say in a negotiation, try practicing for it beforehand. Ask someone you trust to read or listen to your prepared negotiation and give an outside perspective on what works and what can be improved. This way, you can be confident that you're ready to negotiate to the best of your abilities when the time comes. Use the table below to evaluate your practice session and give yourself tips.

What went well?	What could I improve?
Tips to myself	
 An illustration of a woman with dark curly hair, wearing a light blue t-shirt and dark blue pants. She is standing with her arms crossed, and a glowing yellow lightbulb is positioned above her head, symbolizing an idea or tip.	

A final word and tips

This exercise mainly looked at your counterproposal and potential counterarguments. In practice, you will be responding to another person's proposal.

If their proposal is similar to your idea, there is little to negotiate. If your proposal is very different, you will need to utilize all the techniques you can to ensure a clear position during the negotiation. It might help manage expectations if you directly point out that their proposal is essentially the same as yours or very different.

You will find more tips you can use during the negotiation itself on the next page.

Negotiation tips

What should you pay attention to during a negotiation? Read the tips below.

Be willing to challenge the opposing party

You cannot negotiate unless you are willing to challenge the validity of your opponent's position. Remember, you have the right to question other people's proposals.

Be neutral

Ask for what you want in a non-threatening, polite, and respectful way. Try to be assertive without being aggressive, and try not to take what the other person says too personally. You usually don't make the best decisions when you are emotional! If you find that your emotions are taking over, try to move the negotiation to later.

Don't rush

You are more likely to make 'mistakes' if you want to get it over with. If you keep calm, it's also more likely that the other person will think you are not under pressure. This can work to your advantage, so stall when necessary. If you need to take a step back to contemplate your options or decisions, don't be afraid to ask for time to think.

Harness the power of silence

If you talk a lot, you risk giving in to something unnecessary or giving others information that works to their advantage. Ask questions and let the other do the talking.

Empathize

Make sure you know your opponent's pressure points, limitations, worries, and concerns. These are things you can use to strengthen your position. If necessary, bring these up in a non-threatening way during negotiations ("I can imagine that...")

Remember win-win

Negotiating is about getting a good deal, and one-sided negotiations decrease trust and rapport. Both you and the other party should feel assured that you're getting a fair deal.

Evaluation:

How did your attempt to make counterproposals work out?



1



2



3



4



5

What did you learn? What insights did you gain?

What went well? What would you repeat?

What can you do to improve your performance?

What is your next step?