

# Negotiating skills are vital to do business online

To survive in today's new world, individuals, SMMEs and entrepreneurs are fast realising that they must do business online. There are pitfalls with this though because deals could be lost as quickly as it takes to click on a link.



Jan Potgieter of ImperiumNegotiations

Online negotiating skills are the new 'black' for doing business today and everyone can benefit from this if they are prepared to give up some old habits and learn a few new tricks. In a bid to help small business thrive in the Post-Covid digital age, Imperium Negotiations has made a business negotiator's dream toolbox available to anyone.

"Get fit for business online...or stay at home wondering!", says Jan Potgieter of Imperium Negotiations.

"If a business is not now rethinking and optimising its deal making approach to fit in with the new primary mode of communication and engagement, it will languish in history. The new digital marketplace offers masses of opportunities to draw upon precise data and insights. To be on an equal footing with one's counterparts and competitors, one must use these tools. And don't forget to use the phone now too – because people are getting sick and tired of endless video meetings. The telephone is making a comeback."

Potgieter has trained thousands of people in large multinational corporates and businesses in over 60 countries.

“People think they can just transfer what they know already to the digital space. They need to appreciate that you could have an added advantage to manipulate the deal making environment online because many of the typical interpersonal signals that would be on display in a meeting room are absent. If you are not bringing design to these engagements, then you will become part of your counterpart’s design.

“What many businesses also do not realise is that negotiation does not begin and end with an agonising and stressful deal-bashing, contract signing moment around a boardroom table. Negotiation is at the core and is central to all stages of business engagement – making the deal, managing the deal, and mending the deal. When you truly understand this, apply win-win thinking and then prepare yourself for every outcome and question, you will act with confidence and agree better deals.

“You’ll not only win through, but you’ll also make more money. It’s tragic how much money is lost through a basic ignorance about the power of negotiation.”

Big business has known and brought design to how they use the digital space for negotiating for well over a decade. Across the globe, corporate procurement organisations are now very sophisticated in their use of digital negotiation tools – such as e-sourcing platforms, conference calls and video calls – and use these to great effect to gain the upper hand on sales teams. They consciously moved to negotiate online and then learned the best way to do that. But what does an SMME or a freelancer know about how to deal online, other than fudge their way through it?

Potgieter says if an organisation has always viewed negotiation as a step in the sales or procurement process in the past, then one can be 100% certain that organisation’s approach to negotiation is not optimised.

He adds that people need to approach doing business differently and from a position of power through moving from negotiating by default to negotiating by design.

“Once you do that, you are then powerful in your negotiations and you empower the person you are negotiating with at the same time. It’s compelling; it’s fair; and it’s positive for everyone.

“I know that negotiation is the hottest currency”, Potgieter adds. “Most people sell themselves short, negotiate more with themselves than with their counterparts, give money away and simply don’t realise that you can achieve a win-win situation in almost every single business deal you do. Once you understand that you are dealing in a different currency, and one that earns you a great rate of exchange, you’ll never look back.”

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