

8 Negotiation Lessons From The NFL Lockout



The sports world is abuzz with news of the NFL lockout. Turn on any news station and you will likely hear commentary on the possible elimination of this year's football season. Football is big business and emotions are running high on both sides.

While negotiation is an important topic for a business with \$9 billion in revenue, it's also critical for small ones, too. So how can small business owners learn from the NFL lockout and break through a similar negotiation deadlock?

1. Step back and start treating the other person—whether a client, vendor, distributor or even an employee— as a partner, advises Ed Brodow, author of [Negotiation Boot Camp](#). "The reason for most deadlocks is because people are too busy fighting with each other and treating each other like adversaries."

2. Consider setting a resolution deadline. This can help speed things along and can create a sense of urgency, says Marty Latz, founder and CEO of Latz Negotiation Institute, a consulting and training firm in Scottsdale, Arizona.

3. Sub in a new negotiator. "If you really aren't getting anywhere, you might be talking to the wrong person," Brodow says. "It might be that the person across the table doesn't have the authority to make the decisions. Make sure to talk to the actual decision maker."

Want to read more on negotiation? Check these out:

[Winning Price Negotiation Wars With Customers](#)
[Askers, Guessers And The Art Of Negotiation](#)
[A Few Great Negotiation Tricks You Can Use](#)

4. Change venues. Sometimes the formality of a negotiation is its defeating factor, Brodow notes. He recommends getting away from the conference table and going out to a restaurant or another more relaxed environment.

"There's a reason so many deals are made on the golf course," he says. "People may say things to you off the record that they would never say in a formal setting, and those are the things that may lead you to a resolution."

5. Consider taking a break if none of these tactics work. "Separate and use that time to reevaluate your strategic negotiation plan," says Latz. "Then go back and start anew."

6. Listen. Brodow calls this the "70/30 rule." He advises negotiators to listen 70 percent of the time and only talk the other 30 percent.

"If you give them a chance to talk, more than likely they will tell you everything you need to know in order to make a great deal for yourself," he says. "Understanding the other side is key to success in negotiation."

7. Maximize your leverage. Before walking into a negotiation, do your homework and find out what the other side's plan B is. Then make sure you have a plan B that counters it, advises Latz.

"Let's say you are negotiating with your landlord," he says. "If they are trying to fill a vacant space, they presumably do not have a plan B. But if they are 90 percent occupied, they will be in a better position. The stronger your plan B, the stronger your leverage."

8. Eliminate emotions. Although this can be difficult, try to put your emotions aside when negotiating.

"Remember 'It's not personal, it's just business,'" says Brodow. "You need to stay calm and not get carried away. Always be willing to walk away from a negotiation. Remember: a negotiation will not determine the rest of your life. If it doesn't work out, you will find something else as good or better