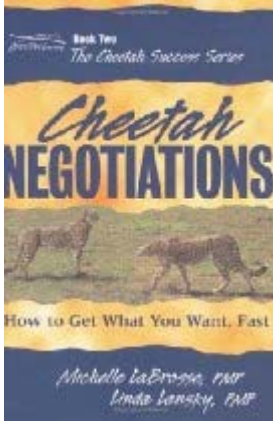


PM World Today Book Review



Book Title: *Cheetah Negotiations: How to Get What You Want, Fast*
Authors: Michelle LaBrosse, PMP Linda Lansky, PMP
Publisher: Maklaf Press LLC
List Price: US\$31.95
Publication Date: 2005
ISBN: 0-9761749-2-8
Reviewer: Donald Gubbins, PMP
Review Date: May 2008

Introduction to the Book

This is book two of the Cheetah Success Series and focuses on techniques for handling negotiations. The text relies heavily on the popular Myers-Briggs personality typing and uses theatrical acting similes to emphasize negotiating roles. This is then extended as the basis for a negotiations approach that is integrated with elements of well known negotiation authorities such as Roger Fisher and William Ury, Robert Cialdini, as well as other experts. So the result is an easily readable book that lays out a simple and practical negotiation approach that is also well rooted in solid expert theory.

Overview of Book's Structure

The book's total length is 198 pages, including an Introduction, Works Cited, a short Appendix, and an Index. The text is divided into four sections of two to three chapters each. These sections are: Cast of Characters, Setting The Stage, The Plot, and Curtains Up!.

The first section, Cast of Characters, focuses on Myers-Briggs personality types and recognizing the type of influence they exert on negotiations. Next, Setting the Stage, helps the negotiator determine the objectives, priorities, relationships, environment, and emotional preparation necessary. Then, The Plot explores human nature, the use of commitment, and how to recognize and appropriately respond to the other party's use of negative tactics. Finally, Curtains Up!, addresses closing considerations like money and contracts, concluding with a final chapter that lays out all of the negotiating templates used.

Highlights: What I liked!

The book is deceptively simple in the best sense. It does a very good job of systematically laying out a methodical approach yet does it in a very fun and easy to understand manner using simple theatrical similes. The templates that are presented are simple and easy to use. The book addresses tactics for dealing with the stress and emotional challenges faced by a negotiator. The emphasis is on fast, efficient, competent, and principled negotiating rather than a winner-take-all mentality.

The book makes good use of expert negotiation concepts such as GUAL (Get Up and Leave), BATNA (Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement), and ZOPA (Zone of Possible Agreement). GUAL is the point for each party at which the negotiation becomes unacceptable. BATNA is the alternative that a party to a negotiation faces if an agreement is not reached. ZOPA is explained as middle area of each side where agreement might be considered.

The book uses a permission based strategy to gain incremental agreements to positively influence negotiations in getting the other side's consent. For example, it suggests setting the negotiating meeting agenda and asking for input from the other party. Thus, this establishes their buy in to the negotiating process that you are planning.

The reviewer particularly liked the chapter on Negotiating Tactics and the table of negative tactics and appropriate responses presented. For example, in response to extreme demands; you respond by repeating their demand, expressing your confusion, asking for their reasons, and concluding by a request to justify their demands. Note that this is typical of the book's suggestion of appropriately and objectively presenting your feelings as a communication tool in the negotiations.

Shortfalls: What was Missing!

The book has a solid theory foundation. However, for a more in depth knowledge of negotiations then some of the authorities and books listed in the Works Cited might be more appropriate depending on the reader's experience.

Who might benefit from the Book

The book is intended as a quick and practical approach to negotiations. The idea is that practice in these techniques will become automatic with their repetition. This book is best suited as either an introduction to the negotiation newcomer or for the professional seeking easy process templates to develop and enhance their negotiation skills.

Conclusion

The book's approach to negotiating is simple, clear, and consistent. In each chapter the authors' present the material, then ask the reader to keep a notebook and Reflect upon it. Then the reader is asked to Act. This approach is a thoughtful and easy way to make the negotiating processes both well understood and eventually reflexive.

The reviewer found the book's expertise and material consistent with that of his graduate studies negotiation class. This confirmed his opinion that the text's material is as authentic as it is charming. Thus the book is an easy and suitable read to develop or enhance negotiation skills.

About the Reviewer:



Donald Gubbins



Donald Gubbins, PMP, is a long time Information Technology manager and consultant and is a member of the Project Management Institute (PMI) Central Ohio chapter. Currently he teaches Project Management Professional (PMP) exam preparation classes for Babbage Simmel, a leading business and technology training and consulting company. He is a top of the class senior in his PMI certified Project Management MBA program at the University of Texas. He can be contacted at dgubbins@columbus.rr.com.