

# 10 Tips for the Negotiator Who Wants Answers



## **1. Prepare questions in advance.**

Make sure you have planned a series of questions that you need answers to, to help you understand the other sides position.

## **2. Garbage in, garbage out.**

Think about how you will phrase and ask your questions. Your language and tone of voice can play a part in the answers you get.

## **3. Be specific.**

If you ask woolly or weak questions they may simply be ignored. Make sure that you give the person you're questioning enough time to respond. This may need to include thinking time before they answer, so don't just interpret a pause as a "No comment" and go on.

## **4. Get an answer.**

Think like Paxman. Very little value is gained from the asking of the question in itself. The value lies in the answer.

## **5. Why are they avoiding answering?.**

Is it because they don't understand the question, they don't want to answer or have they got something to hide.

**6. Don't ask questions that give you answers you don't want to hear.**

“Is that your final offer” creates an answer that in many cases you will not like.

**7. Use probing questions to double check on areas of vagueness.**

This can help avoid any misunderstandings that may creep in later.

**8. You can calm an angry customer by using questions to get more detail about their grievance.**

This can distract them from their emotions, and will help you to identify a small thing that you can do to make them feel that they have “won” something.

**9. Give a choice between two options, both of which you would be happy with.**

“Which would you prefer of A or B”. Most people will be caught up in deciding between your two preferences.

**10. Skilful questioning needs to be matched by careful listening.**

It's crucial to understand what people really mean with their answers.