

Hochschule Düsseldorf
University of Applied Sciences

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Online Negotiations

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**An Analysis of the Importance and Impact of Different
Negotiation Competencies**

Bachelor's Thesis



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HOCHSCHULE DÜSSELDORF
-Elektro- und Informationstechnik-

Hochschule Düsseldorf
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HSD

Bachelor's Thesis on the Topic of
Online Negotiations: An analysis of the importance and
impact of different negotiation competencies

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1 BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THESIS

Technological development and the shift of business conversations and transactions into the digital space have also had a strong impact on the way negotiations are conducted. More and more negotiations in all sectors are now conducted "online" rather than on-site. The speed and relative novelty of these developments makes it essential to take a closer look at their individual aspects. Both for companies for whom negotiation and online negotiation are a daily occurrence and for those individuals who want to gain a foothold in the fields of purchasing and sales, it is essential to understand what skills are specifically required when negotiating online, how these skills can be applied in practice and how one might expand or improve upon their own skills.

2 OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The central question of this thesis will be: "Which negotiation competences and skills are important to succeed in conventional negotiations and how does their importance transcend to negotiations in the digital space?" Additionally, the question is posed regarding the specific aspects of these skills and how they manifest in practical application. Finally, the exploration will conclude with how these skills can be acquired and developed in practice.

3 METHODOLOGY AND STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The methodology of this thesis will focus exclusively on qualitative research approaches to comprehensively explore the central questions. To begin, a short literature review will be conducted to gather existing knowledge on online negotiations. This review will serve as a foundation for identifying gaps in the current understanding of the subject and will be used to delimitate further research endeavors. Primary data will be collected through empirical research and interviews with professionals experienced in both online and offline negotiations. These interviews will provide valuable insights into the differences between the two types of negotiations and the specific skills necessary for online negotiation success. The collected data will be analyzed using appropriate qualitative techniques, allowing for a comprehensive

understanding of the research. This analysis will then be summarized and subdivided into its different aspects. In the end these materials will be used to draw the final conclusions regarding the research questions.

4 LITERATURE OVERVIEW

4.1 CURRENT RESEARCH ON ONLINE NEGOTIATIONS

For this short overview of the current research on online negotiations, a number of scientific papers and articles were analyzed. The main statements of the papers were extracted and examined in relation to the research questions. The following is not an all-encompassing summary of the current research, but rather an overview of some interesting research findings that indicate the direction in which current research in this domain is headed. Therefore, in the following I will only address the most common and widespread subcategories of contemporary negotiation literature.

4.1.1 Strategies

An important aspect of online negotiations is the strategic dimension. Therefore, it makes sense to start with an often discussed topic in negotiation literature: concessions. It is deemed pivotal to ¹highlight concessions and to assertively convey that such gestures come at a cost. This could evoke the norm of reciprocity, prompting the other side to reciprocate with a concession. It is advised to curtail concessions as one approaches their target offer and to consistently maintain a clear objective, even if the opponent's concessions wane.

²In a study by Real Carbonneau, Rustam Vahidov, and Bo Yu elaborating on the topic of concessions, in the course of negotiation, the phenomenon of "concession crossover" often occurs. This happens when a negotiator transits from making concessions on one issue to making concessions on another issue. The negotiator does this because making further concessions on the first issue would result in a greater loss of utility than conceding on the second issue. This strategy is also most effective when the utility functions concerning the issues being negotiated are nonlinear. To study the dynamics of concessions in negotiations, the researchers have

¹ Deepak Malhotra and Max H. Bazerman, *Negotiation Genius: How to Overcome Obstacles and Achieve Brilliant Results at the Bargaining Table and Beyond*

² Real Carbonneau, Rustam Vahidov and Bo Yu, *Concession crossover in electronic negotiations*

used datasets containing records from over 2000 subjects collected over a span of 10 years. From this extensive data, four main concession prediction models have emerged:

1. Naïve Model: This assumes that the negotiator will make the simplest and most straightforward concessions, usually based on a linear understanding of gains and losses.
2. Anti-Naïve Model: This is the opposite of the Naïve Model. It anticipates complex or unexpected concessions from the negotiator, accounting for strategies that could be used to trick the other party.
3. Random Model: This model assumes that concessions are made randomly and do not follow any discernible pattern.
4. Max-Potential Model: This anticipates that the next concession will be made on the issue with the most significant potential for concession, regardless of the actual gain that may result from it.

For negotiators, it's important to recognize that concession crossovers are likely to occur at some point during the negotiation.

Strategically, understanding these models and expectations can offer an advantage. For instance, if you anticipate a concession crossover from the other party, you could proactively make a concession on a related issue. This could lead the other party to believe that the gap between both parties' expectations is smaller than it actually is, thereby increasing the likelihood of a successful negotiation.

³Studies also suggest that negotiators, when making a counteroffer on a sale price, are likely to secure a more advantageous deal if they accompany their counteroffer with data pertaining to their financial constraints, rather than diminishing the value of what is being sold. It is recommended to emphasize losses over gains, as humans are generally more oriented towards loss aversion than the pursuit of gains. Moreover, it is proposed to consolidate losses and segregate gains, as most individuals prefer incurring a single substantial loss to multiple smaller ones.

³ Alice J. Lee and Daniel R. Ames, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*

Moreover, academic studies emphasize the cardinal importance of the initial offer in a negotiation. ⁴According to psychologists Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, the initial offer sets an anchoring point for the entire negotiation. In online negotiations, this initial offer assumes even greater significance since altering the initial impression one makes on the other party is considerably more challenging. Yet, it is not just one type of offer made during negotiations. According to the researchers there exist three kinds: the anchoring offer is the initial offer that sets a reference point for the negotiation and can heavily influence the final agreement, the reinforcing offer aims to enhance the appeal of an initial proposal by providing additional incentives, the withdrawal offer is a final offer presented with the implication that there will be no further negotiations. ⁵Research by Daniel R. Ames and Malia F. Mason suggests that employing a reinforcing offer in a negotiation can be highly advantageous.

4.1.2 Advantages and disadvantages

⁶Certain research findings accentuate the advantages of online negotiations, such as significant savings in costs and time. However, they also underscore limitations, such as misunderstandings, especially evident in interactions devoid of visual or auditory cues. Even in telephonic interactions, where only the visual element is absent, the absence of visual cues like hand gestures and facial expressions can drastically diminish the emotional and connective facet of the interaction.

A study by Justin Kruger, Nicholas Epley, Justin Parker, and Zhi-Wen Ng further underscores the challenges inherent in online negotiations. They discerned that most participants overestimated the accuracy with which their counterparts would interpret their tone, regardless of whether the other person was a friend or a stranger. A particularly pronounced disparity between intention and reception was observed in non-verbal communication, like emails. This indicates a salient issue in non-verbal online negotiations, as this mode of information exchange can result in far less efficient negotiations, even precipitating the failure of negotiations that might have otherwise been fruitful.

⁴ Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, *Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases*

⁵ Daniel R. Ames and Malia F. Mason, *Tandem Anchoring: Informational and Politeness Effects of Range Offers in Social Exchange*

⁶ Noam Ebner, *The Negotiator's Desk Reference* (DRI Press, 2017)

In summation, challenges of video conferencing encompass limited visibility, technical glitches, data protection and security issues, and a potentially heightened awareness of differences.⁷ An overt factor in video negotiations, not immediately considered when pondering potential drawbacks, is the restricted field of vision. In most scenarios, during a video call, the camera is positioned directly above the monitor. Consequently, when negotiators sit directly in front of their monitors, they are only partially visible to the camera. Thus, hand gestures and other non-verbal cues might go unnoticed by the other party. Background noises and visuals can prove distracting, both for the individual from where they originate and for the receiving party. Technical difficulties and poor video and audio quality can substantially impair the quality of the entire interaction. Negotiating parties may be unable to accurately see or hear one another, leading to potential misinterpretation of visual or auditory expressions. This can adversely affect the efficiency of the negotiation, or even irreparably damage it. An often overlooked aspect of video negotiation is the fact that we not only observe our counterpart's face but also our own, a phenomenon not typically present in face-to-face conversations. This constant self-comparison can intensify the perceived differences between the negotiating parties.

4.1.3 Emotions

Pertaining to the establishment of trust in online negotiations,⁸ research underscores that online mediation introduces unique challenges. It can be particularly arduous to foster the requisite trust for dispute resolution through emails and videoconferencing. Limitations in visual and acoustic fidelity can result in misinterpretations or a fragmented comprehension of the conveyed information. It is suggested that negotiating parties actively solicit questions to ensure that all data has been accurately received.

⁹Moving to another prominent aspect in contemporary online-negotiation-research, Ray Friedman and Liuba Belkin highlight that electronic negotiations, while often more convenient, can compromise the negotiators' ability to express emotions effectively. This emotional detachment can serve as both a benefit and a drawback. On the positive side, it allows negotiators to distance themselves socially from their

⁷ Noah Ebner, *The Negotiator's Desk Reference* (DRI Press, 2017)

⁸ Noam Ebner, *Online Dispute Resolution: Theory and Practice*

⁹ Ray Friedman, Liuba Belkin, *The costs and benefits of electronic negotiations*

counterpart or to bypass social and cultural norms that might otherwise constrain a more aggressive approach. On the downside, this format limits the use of emotional expression as a strategic tool in negotiation, particularly impacting those who usually excel in leveraging emotional control to their advantage. Therefore, Friedman and Belkin strongly recommend that the initial and final meetings of any negotiation process should still be conducted face-to-face, even if it incurs additional costs and effort. They argue that establishing a personal relationship between negotiating parties is crucial for a long-lasting and successful outcome, and that relationship-building is much more effective when conducted in person.

¹⁰Further regarding the display of emotions, many scholars remain undecided. Researchers Hajo Adam and Jeanne M. Brett concluded that expressing emotions, particularly anger, in a negotiation can be both a potent tool and a significant blunder, which can permanently impair the relationship with the counterpart. In online negotiations, there's an inclination to express intensified emotions to ensure they are not overlooked. However, an overt display of emotion can quickly be perceived as aggression by the other party, jeopardizing the entire negotiation process. The reduced cues from the counterpart in online negotiations make it particularly challenging to strike the right balance. Such emotional cues are inextricable from a broader amalgam of elements that contribute to the multifaceted complexities in online negotiations, complexities that extend to ethical paradigms as well.

¹¹Researchers Han-Ying Tng and Al K. C. Au from Singapore conducted experiments to determine the impact of feigned anger on negotiations. They found that an individual displaying anger received more concessions when the anger was perceived as genuine. However, if the anger was perceived as insincere, they received fewer concessions compared to participants who exhibited a more friendly, happier demeanor.

¹²A study by Yvonne van der Toorn, Per van der Wijst, and Debby Damen revealed that a lack of understanding is the most frequent cause of conflicts in negotiations.

¹⁰ Hajo Adam and Jeanne M. Brett, Context matters: The social effects of anger in cooperative, balanced, and competitive negotiation situations

¹¹Han-Ying Tng and Al K. C. Au, Strategic Display of Anger and Happiness in Negotiation: The Moderating Role of Perceived Authenticity

¹² Yvonne van der Toorn, Per van der Wijst, Marije van Amelsvoort and Debby Damen, Trust and Understanding in Face-to-Face and Online Negotiations

Enhanced understanding between parties also leads to increased mutual trust, strengthening the relationship and often resulting in smoother and more efficient negotiations. Various experiments were conducted where participants engaged in both online and face-to-face negotiations, monitoring mutual trust and understanding between the two parties.

¹³A paper by Andreas Engelmann, Ingrid Bauer, Mateusz Dolata, Michael Nadig, and Gerhard Schwabe addressing the altered behavior in online negotiations highlighted that the inability to personally inspect the offered product contributes to the rise of already prevalent distrust in the industry. They noted that negotiators online exhibit counter-normative social behaviors. The apparent security felt by negotiators online results in a greater propensity to bluff or even lie during negotiations, further escalating distrust among negotiators.

4.1.4 Burgeoning technologies

¹⁴The field of research on online negotiations is currently expanding beyond conventional online negotiation practices. Researchers from Facebook are currently utilizing machine learning to train chatbots that mimic human negotiation behaviors. While these bots have often been indistinguishable from humans in tests, their effectiveness has been only moderate. Some performed worse than human negotiators, while others matched the performance of their human counterparts. Currently, they are trained for simple negotiations; however, since Facebook has made the code open-source and available for public enhancement, it may not be long before these bots participate in more complex negotiations.

Last but not least, the evolution of Artificial Intelligence has profoundly impacted negotiation processes, especially sales processes. Research suggests that ¹⁵in the near future, approximately 40% of sales tasks could be entirely controlled by artificial intelligence. However, this transformation will likely focus on routine and predictable tasks in the foreseeable future.

¹³ Andreas Engelmann, Ingrid Bauer, Mateusz Dolata, Michael Nadig, and Gerhard Schwabe, Promoting Less Complex and More Honest Price Negotiations in the Online Used Car Market with Authenticated Data

¹⁴ Mike Lewis, Denis Yarats, Yann N. Dauphin, Devi Parikh, Dhruv Batra, Deal or No Deal? End-to-End Learning for Negotiation Dialogues

¹⁵ Heiko Fischer, Sven Seidenstricker, Thomas Berger, Timo Holopainen, Artificial Intelligence in B2B Sales: Impact on the Sales Process

Even though this is only a brief overview and does not claim to encapsulate the entirety of the contemporary research landscape, it is comprehensive enough to create a clear picture of the direction that the current research is headed.

4.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

To summarize, several observations can be made. In an era dominated by machine learning and increasing automation, the role of a negotiator in managing the more basic aspects of negotiations is diminishing in importance. Concurrently, the significance of conducting negotiations over video calls and similar mediums is on the rise. Moreover, it is noteworthy that current research places considerable emphasis on negotiation techniques and tactics, but often neglects or completely overlooks the essential skills required to conduct and implement these techniques.

The transition from traditional face-to-face negotiations to online platforms requires a shift in how we approach and understand negotiations. Traditional negotiation skills, while still vital, may not entirely cater to the nuances and intricacies that arise when employing online platforms. Elements such as non-verbal cues, screen presence, managing technical glitches and adapting to the virtual environment's tempo become paramount in an online setting. Yet, there is a glaring gap in the literature that addresses these distinct competencies.

Furthermore, with the growing reliance on digital communication tools, there is a potential for miscommunication due to the absence of in-person cues, leading to misunderstandings or misconstrued intentions. This dynamic further underscores the need for specialized skills in online negotiations.

Additionally, as online negotiations become increasingly prevalent, there's a need to understand the digital tools' influence at play. How does the choice of a particular platform or software impact the negotiation outcome? Does it favor one party over the other? These questions remain largely unexplored.

Hence, given the increasing shift towards online negotiations and the unique challenges they present, it becomes imperative to delve deeper into the specific skills and competencies needed for success in this digital realm. Conducting research on this front will not only help in identifying and bridging the skill gap but will also pave the way for more effective and efficient online negotiations in the future.

5 CONDUCT OF EXPERT INTERVIEWS

5.1 OVERVIEW OF THE EXPERTS

For this thesis, eight individuals directly engaged into purchasing and sales were interviewed, for whom negotiations are a crucial part of their daily business and therefore can be regarded as experts in this area.

5.2 CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEWS

Each interview was conducted within a time frame of 30-60 minutes. During this period, experts were asked specific questions related to the topic, allowing them to provide their responses based on their own judgment and past experiences. Depending on their answers, relevant follow-up questions were posed. The questionnaire used for these interviews can be found in the appendix.

5.3 DISCLAIMER FOR THE ASSESSMENT MATRICES

Based on the conducted interviews an assessment matrix was constructed to best extract and structure the statements and information from these interviews. Here the most important points of each expert regarding the individual skills are shortly summarized and then their evaluation regarding the importance of the skill for online negotiations is stated. The evaluation of the skills was not always worded exactly as it is listed in the matrices but was sometimes paraphrased to fit the evaluation levels and to show a more uniform and conclusive general overview, that is easier to compare.

5.4 ASSESSMENT MATRIX XXXXXXXXXX

Skills	Evaluation	Importance in online negotiations
Communication skills	• Direct communication in the native language should be preferred. • Awareness of the difficulties of language barriers is significant.	Very high: Misunderstandings due to language barriers or poor communication can lead to serious

	- Assurance can be achieved by repetition and confirmation of understanding. - Special attention must be given to the interpretation of statements.	mistakes in negotiations.
Preparation and planning	- It is crucial to begin with detailed research about the client (website, history, news articles, LinkedIn account). - The chief negotiator must possess a clear understanding of how their expectations align with the client's expectations. - There should be anticipation of potential business opportunities in advance.	Very high: Thorough preparation allows for effectively addressing the client's requirements and needs and increases the chance of a successful negotiation outcome.
Flexibility and adaptability	- The solving of price and product issues may require creative solutions. - A negotiator should expand the value of offers (service, quality, delivery guarantee, technical support). - Adaptability to different negotiation and product requirements is essential.	Very high: The ability to find creative solutions and respond flexibly to problems is crucial for negotiation success.
Relationship building, empathy and emotional intelligence	- Building a personal relationship with each client is paramount. - It's imperative to show genuine interest in both the client's private life and their company.	Very high: A good relationship with the client, based on understanding and empathy, can strongly positively

	• Making appropriate emotional gestures tailored for each client (promotional gimmicks, personal meetings, etc.) can foster rapport. • One should adapt to the emotional level of the counterpart, ensuring they feel comfortable during negotiations.	influence negotiations.
Strategic thinking	• It's advantageous to present the "big picture" (company strategy, investments, quality policy, etc.). • A negotiator should have a comprehensive understanding of the stakeholders on the client's side and their respective roles in the negotiation.	Very High: A clear vision and understanding of the bigger picture are essential for successful negotiations.
Technological competence	• Mastery over various communication platforms (Webex, Teams, Google, Skype) is essential. • Demonstrating flexibility and adaptability to client preferences can facilitate smoother negotiations.	High: The ability to effectively use various communication technologies is particularly crucial for online negotiations.
Team structure/Team coordination	• Within negotiation teams, there should be a distinct distribution of tasks. • It is crucial to consider the number and position of client representatives during negotiations.	High: Good team coordination and clear task distribution contribute to the professionalism and effectiveness of negotiations.

	Team negotiations are often preferred over individual negotiations.	
Cultural understanding	- Adapting to different cultural nuances and individual personalities is key. - It is vital to avoid relying on stereotypes and prejudices during negotiations. - Even while adapting to the client, it is essential to maintain authenticity.	High: Proper adaptation to various cultures and personalities can help avoid misunderstandings and create a positive negotiation atmosphere.
Goal orientation and result orientation	- Setting clear interim and final objectives can guide the negotiation process effectively. - It's important to continuously assess and steer the direction of the negotiation. - Being aware of the iterative nature of negotiations can provide a strategic advantage.	Very high: Without clear objectives and a consistent focus on the desired outcome, negotiations can easily go off track.
De-escalation and conflict resolution	- A negotiator should develop the skill to read the character and intentions of the counterpart. - Employing mirroring techniques can be useful in refocusing the client on a factual level during conflicts. - There should be a willingness to conclude discussions if faced with unprofessional behavior. - Recognizing the importance of addressing conflicts while	Very high: The ability to resolve conflicts and de-escalate situations can be crucial for maintaining business relationships and achieving a successful negotiation outcome.

	preserving business relationships is essential.	
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Summary

██████████ his professional journey as an Electrical Engineering student at HTWK Leipzig. His initial engagement with ██████████ saw him working as a developer for next-generation smartphones. However, his inherent desire for roles enriched with interpersonal dynamics prompted a transition to the sales domain. During this transformative journey, he climbed the ranks from a Field-Application Manager to overseeing an entire sales team, cultivating practical negotiation skills in the process.

The semiconductor industry, as ██████ observed, has undergone considerable metamorphosis. The prominence of semiconductors among medium-sized companies has led to more frequent negotiations, a significant shift from previous static agreement structures. When engaging new clients, ██████ places an indomitable emphasis on exhaustive pre-meeting research. By thoroughly examining potential clients' backgrounds, news and LinkedIn profiles, he tailors his approaches to resonate effectively.

██████████ elucidates several dynamics of the negotiation process:

- Initial meetings often act as platforms to decipher mutual needs, rather than rushing into negotiations.
- In the realm of international negotiations, the essence of cultural mirroring is paramount. But ██████████ perspective marries this with a word of caution against falling prey to stereotypes, while also underscoring the necessity of authenticity.
- Handling conflicts, especially in emotionally charged negotiations, requires a keen sense of character assessment. He also does not hesitate to adapt to a more aggressive interlocutor in a heated discussion. He posits that it is often easier to steer the conversation back to a more tranquil domain when engaging from a position of emotional parity. While Illies acknowledges the occasional need to terminate discussions, he emphasizes that such steps should only be taken under extreme circumstances and he remains an advocate for revisiting these conversations to seek potential resolutions.

- On the front of disagreements that aren't rooted in human emotions, [REDACTED] recommends a creative approach. Introducing alternative value propositions, be it in the form of quality promises or additional services, often paves the way forward.
- [REDACTED] advocates for a collaborative and well-coordinated approach to negotiation meetings, emphasizing the importance of role delineation among team members. He suggests that the team's composition should be dynamically adjusted to match the customer's profile and needs and insists that a minimum of two representatives from his organization should be present to facilitate effective negotiation, with specialized roles for technical, commercial and managerial aspects. However, he mentions that circumstances sometimes force a negotiator to conduct the negotiation alone.

Beyond the act of negotiation itself, [REDACTED] speaks of nurturing and maintaining business relationships. A blend of personal touches, discerning clients' unique preferences and fostering emotional connections can be the bedrock of enduring associations. Moreover, in a world increasingly defined by its digital nature, [REDACTED] underscores the significance of effective communication in online meetings. While his team predominantly uses Webex, the willingness to adapt to a client's platform choice remains a cornerstone of their approach.

On a strategic note, Illies relies on structured sales strategies, like [REDACTED] "Seven Steps." This methodical approach not only provides clarity on individual sales but also offers invaluable insights into the broader business panorama. Concluding his insights, [REDACTED] advocates for relentless skill development. Whether it is through seeking mentorship, immersing oneself in industry literature, or navigating online resources, he champions a scientific approach, sidelining the allure of mere showmanship.

In its entirety, [REDACTED] narrative offers a nuanced understanding of contemporary sales and negotiation methodologies in the semiconductor arena. It is a testament to the essence of adaptability, relationship-building and the significance of structured strategies.

5.5 ASSESSMENT MATRIX

Skills	Evaluation	Importance in online negotiations
Communication skills	- The interviewee mentioned that customer meetings initially take place online. - Subsequent meetings might involve in-person visits or further online meetings, depending on the need. - He also emphasized the need to consider the differences between hardware and software companies.	Very high: Essential for effective client communication and conducting successful online negotiations.
Preparation and planning	- The expert researches information about potential clients in advance, including their structure and the tools they use. - He shows interest in the individual needs of the customers. - He tries to gather relevant information to create a tailored presentation.	Very high: Crucial for preparing tailored client presentations and gathering relevant information.
Flexibility and adaptability	- The interviewee highlighted the importance of being willing to adapt to new challenges. - He emphasized the importance of continuous self-improvement. - He explained that he spent months and years familiarizing	High: Necessary to continually adapt and learn due to the evolving needs of clients.

	himself with the area and there is still a learning curve. • He displayed an openness to further education and training.	
Relationship building, empathy and emotional intelligence	• Staskewitsch underscored the significance of relationships with clients and influencers. • He mentioned the benefits of open conversations and collaboration to solve problems. • He stressed the importance of understanding the needs and perspectives of the customers. • The goal is always to help the clients as best as one can.	High: Vital for fostering trust, building strong client relationships, and collaborative problem-solving.
Strategic thinking	• The expert defined success in client talks as positive reactions, client interest, questions raised and the arrangement of next steps. • He emphasized creating value for the client and achieving contract ratification.	High: Essential for assessing negotiation success, delivering client value, and securing contracts.
Technological competence	• The interviewee discussed his technical knowledge. • He believes it is necessary to understand how hardware and software function. • He stressed the importance of having a solid technical foundation to answer customer queries and to ensure a smooth software integration.	High: Key to understanding technology, answering client inquiries, and ensuring seamless software integration.

Team structure/Team coordination	• The interviewee emphasized collaboration with various individuals and departments to meet customer needs. • He mentioned involving experts from different fields to develop a comprehensive understanding of client requirements.	High: Central to collaborating across teams and departments to holistically address client needs.
Cultural understanding	• The expert pointed out differences in work methods and communication across countries. • He noted that Germany, compared to Scandinavia, is more conservative. • He adapts to cultural differences and stressed creating value over merely focusing on price.	High: Fundamental for recognizing and adapting to cultural nuances, ensuring effective communication and collaboration.
Goal orientation and result orientation	• The interviewee described a structured process leading to contract ratification. • He mentioned qualifying prospects, demos and follow-up meetings. • He also talked about the potential for pilot phases to convince clients about the software.	High: Imperative for setting objectives, tracking progress, and guiding clients towards a favorable outcome.
De-escalation and conflict resolution	• The interviewee mentioned the necessity of an appropriate budget. • He seeks solutions with clients if the initial budget isn't sufficient.	High: Crucial for spotting potential conflicts, devising solutions, and

	• He stressed the importance of flexibility and suggests scaling models. • He also proposed pilot phases for clients to try the software and evaluate the results.	moving forward in negotiations.
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Summary

████████████████████ professional trajectory is emblematic of the often serendipitous nature of career paths. Despite beginning his academic journey in Sport and Fitness Management, a series of events, including his travels across continents and an unexpected stint in sales at a job-listings-turned-SaaS company, eventually led him to Panopto, a “web-based Video-Content-Management-System”. There he immersed himself in a role, devoid of any prior video-related experience.

A critical aspect of his role at ██████████ which warrants scholarly attention, pertains to the metamorphosis of sales dynamics and negotiations in the digital age. The contemporary shift to virtual interactions, catalyzed by the global pandemic, posed unique challenges and opportunities. For instance, ██████████ elucidated the considerable transition from on-premise operations to more digital-oriented platforms, especially pronounced in economies like Germany and France. This not only redefined client interactions but also mandated a more structured approach to client engagement, with delineated phases such as outreach, demonstration and a trial period.

The dynamics of stakeholder meetings, a cornerstone of B2B engagements, emerged as a significant theme in the discourse with ██████████. While the preference is for lean teams, with ██████████ often spearheading initial meetings solo, larger engagements necessitate a broader representation to tackle multifaceted technical queries. Furthermore, he underscored the pertinence of including cross-functional representatives from prospective clients' organizations, ensuring comprehensive discussions encompassing technical, pedagogical and financial dimensions.

Negotiations, intrinsic to any sales role, are replete with complexities. ██████████ candid exposition revealed budget as an omnipresent challenge, irrespective of scale.

The German market, with its proclivity for on-premise solutions and open-source platforms, poses unique challenges. Competing with industry behemoths, like Microsoft's "Stream", requires a robust value proposition strategy. Addressing challenges posed by individual stakeholders, Staskewitsch advocated for a blended approach of education, hands-on support and budgetary flexibility, addressing potential apprehensions and objections.

Interwoven in [REDACTED] narrative is the intricate tapestry of cultural nuances in business negotiations. From Germany's traditionalism to the intricate dance-like dynamics of price negotiations in regions like Turkey and Greece, the ability to adeptly navigate these cultural waters becomes paramount. A strategic emphasis on product value, backed by comprehensive client research and clear conversational objectives, emerge as [REDACTED] modus operandi. Distinctive tool features, such as [REDACTED] rewind capability during webcasts, further bolster his sales narrative.

Finally, the expert's philosophy of success transcends the narrow confines of deal closures. He envisions success as a confluence of lasting impressions, demonstrable product value and forward movement in client interactions. While some inherent traits might predispose individuals to sales, [REDACTED] philosophy leans heavily towards authenticity, continuous learning and profound product knowledge.

In summation, [REDACTED] reflections offer invaluable insights into the evolving landscapes of sales and negotiations in a digital, globalized age. His emphasis on trust-building, authentic interactions and cultural adaptability underscores the nuanced intricacies inherent in contemporary business engagements.

5.6 ASSESSMENT MATRIX [REDACTED]

Skills	Evaluation	Importance in online negotiations
Communication skills	- Different methods and tactics are effective depending on the situation. - Sometimes a direct approach can be effective, while in other	Very high: The type of communication can strongly influence how negotiations

	situations a step-by-step disclosure ("salami tactics") works better. • Both have their advantages and disadvantages and the best strategy depends on the context.	proceed and how successful they are.
Preparation and planning	• It helps to put oneself in the other's position and to prepare for various possible scenarios. • It is also important to clarify expectations before a meeting and prepare accordingly. • Lack of adequate preparation can lead to falling behind in negotiations.	Very high: Thorough preparation and planning can significantly increase the likelihood of a successful negotiation outcome.
Flexibility and adaptability	• Flexibility is a key factor in negotiations. • Depending on what you want to achieve, you can either adapt or enforce your own method. • However, this also requires a certain balance to avoid being perceived as rude.	High: Flexibility can help achieve a favorable position in negotiation and can make the negotiation process smoother.
Relationship building, empathy and emotional intelligence	• Building relationships is important, even in business contexts. It is a give and take. • Sometimes opening up and making oneself vulnerable can help in building a stronger relationship.	High: Empathy can help in understanding the other's perspective and pave the way for compromises and successful outcomes.

	• Good relationships can lead to the other party being more willing to compromise.	
Strategic thinking	• It is important to think strategically in negotiations, like not showing all your cards immediately. • It is good to always have a plan B or C, in case the initial approach is not successful.	High: Strategic thinking can contribute to effectively achieving negotiation goals and can be helpful in navigating complex negotiation scenarios.
Technological competence	• After two years of a pandemic, most people are familiar with online conference tools like Zoom, Webex and Teams. • However, it is still common practice to adapt to the tools the other party uses and to make sure you know how to use them effectively.	Medium: Mastering the technologies used is important for the success of online negotiations, but it is more of a tool than a deciding factor.
Team structure/Team coordination	• Before major negotiations, it is helpful to clarify the goals of each team member and record them internally. • It is important to have the right people in meetings to ensure adequate representation. • However, the final decision is often made at the working level.	High: Effective team coordination can help achieve negotiation goals effectively and ensure all team members are on the same page.
Cultural understanding	• Cultural differences can influence negotiations and it is	High: Cultural understanding can help avoid

	important to be aware of them and know how to handle them. For example, Americans and Japanese may have different ways of saying "no" and it is important to understand these differences.	misunderstandings and make negotiations smoother, but it is not always crucial for success.
Goal orientation and result orientation	- A clear agenda, for both oneself and the other team, is crucial for the success of negotiations. - It is important to share the agenda, take notes and define tasks. - Clear goal orientation can also help bring negotiations to a successful conclusion faster.	Very high: Clear goal and result orientation is crucial for negotiation success and can help focus and effectively shape the negotiation process.
De-escalation and conflict resolution	- In conflicts, it can be helpful to end a meeting and continue at a later time. - Personal relationships can also help resolve conflicts by enabling a better understanding of the other's position and paving the way for compromises and creative solutions.	High: The ability to de-escalate and resolve conflicts can help in getting stuck negotiations moving again and often leads to a successful outcome.

Summary

In a comprehensive dialogue, [REDACTED] an expert with substantial tenure in sales, elucidated the intricate nuances of the sales domain and the art of negotiation. Contrary to a linear trajectory into sales, [REDACTED] academic foundation was rooted in electrical engineering, obtained from the Hochschule Darmstadt. A serendipitous intersection with the automobile industry and an engagement with [REDACTED]

via the Xing platform veered him towards sales, a path he would subsequently excel in.

Upon reflection of the industry's evolutionary trajectory, ██████ posited a notable metamorphosis in the sales realm. Historically anchored in routine face-to-face engagements, technological advancements, accelerated by the internet's ascendancy and further catalyzed by the COVID-19 pandemic, have ushered in a virtual-centric modality. Nevertheless, ██████ advocated for the irreplaceable gravitas of physical interactions, especially when navigating substantive deliberations, such as annual fiscal negotiations or pivotal project endorsements. The tactile nature of these engagements allows participants to harness non-verbal cues, secure undivided attention and organically cultivate rapport.

Venturing into negotiation strategy, ██████ underscored preparation as the linchpin for efficacious outcomes. Such meticulous groundwork not only shifts meeting dynamics in favor of the negotiator but also establishes a formidable foundation for the discourse. Complementing this, he accentuated the imperative of mutual objective clarity, meticulously crafted agendas and the infusion of empathy to preemptively gauge and anticipate counterparty inclinations.

Delving deeper, ██████ elaborated on the aspect of cultural dynamics within negotiations. Emphasizing the heterogeneity of these interactions, he spotlighted the discernible divisions, exemplified by the contrasts between American business conventions and their global counterparts.

Several other salient themes emanated from the dialogue:

- Navigating Negotiation Stalemates: ██████ advocates for temporal pauses in the face of escalating tensions, postulating that creative propositions can serve as invaluable bridges in polarized discussions.
- Empathy's Imperative: He emphasized the symbiotic interplay between understanding the counterparty's vantage point and forging personal connections.
- Strategic Relationship Cultivation: Intimate knowledge of the counterparty, augmented by focused dialogues, can invariably streamline the negotiation process.

- **Demarcating Business and Personal Engagements:** Plumari drew a clear delineation between the transactional nature of business liaisons and the intrinsic mutualism of personal friendships.
- **Adaptive Negotiation Frameworks:** While championing structured and teleological approaches, he also underscored an unpredictable element inherent in negotiations, necessitating adaptability.
- **Team Negotiation Dynamics:** Respect is manifested through hierarchical and representational parity, with pivotal decisions often crystallizing at the operational echelons.
- **Multilateral Negotiations:** Despite the convolution introduced by multiple stakeholders, clarity and efficacy are attainable with a designated leadership nexus.

In the context of contemporary virtual communications, Plumari's reflections were anchored in the pandemic's transformative effects, underscoring platforms like Zoom, Skype and Webex as paramount. The recurrent theme was adaptability, emphasizing the pivotal role of tool proficiency to cater to diverse client exigencies.

In summation, Plumari posits that a confluence of intrinsic personality traits and experiential acumen forms the foundation for success in sales and negotiations. Core tenets such as openness, efficacious communication and an innate predilection for understanding diverse personas emerge as the quintessential attributes for proficiency in this domain.

5.7 ASSESSMENT MATRIX

Skills	Evaluation	Importance in online negotiations
Communication skills	• Analysis and understanding of the counterpart are central to effective communication. • It is important to understand who one is talking to, the responsibilities the person holds	Very high: Communication is key to successful negotiations.

	and to identify their interests and preferences. • Tools like LinkedIn profiles and CVs can be used for this analysis. • Personal interests can be integrated into the conversation for better rapport.	
Preparation and planning	• Thorough preparation is crucial to setting clear goals. • This includes defining objectives, understanding the counterpart's position and strategic preparation. • Understanding why the negotiation objective interests the counterpart is vital.	Very high: Successful negotiation requires comprehensive preparation.
Flexibility and adaptability	• Every negotiator has individual preferences. • It is crucial to quickly adjust one's strategy to the needs and preferences of the counterpart. • Flexibility and willingness to discuss beyond mere negotiation are necessary.	High: The ability to adapt quickly is crucial.
Relationship building, empathy and emotional intelligence	• It is about understanding the people involved, not just selling a product. • Active listening and catching subtexts are vital skills. • Questioning and provoking thoughts can help in relationship building.	Very high: Building relationships and trust are key.

Strategic thinking	• Strategies should be based on intuition and experience. • It is vital to have a realistic estimation of the time required and the potential for a successful negotiation conclusion. • Feedback and self-assessment play a big role.	High: Strategic thinking allows for realistic assessments.
Technological competence	• Technical expertise can be used in various contexts. • Technology should always be appropriate for the counterpart. • Technical possibilities can range from visualizations to subtitles. • The use of technology should be aligned with the counterpart and the available time.	Medium to high: The importance of technological competence can vary depending on the context.
Team structure/Team coordination	• Good team coordination is beneficial in online negotiations, especially when technical or special expertise is needed. • A good backup team is essential. • Teamwork can also involve receiving pointers from colleagues in real-time.	High: Teamwork is crucial when technical expertise is needed.
Cultural understanding	• Adapting behavior and communication styles to the counterpart's culture is key. • A multicultural background can help in forming connections.	High: Cultural understanding is crucial in the context of international negotiations.

Goal orientation and result orientation	• Clear goal orientation maintains negotiation focus. • Goals should be communicated at the start and consistently pursued.	Very high: Goal orientation is crucial for negotiation success.
De-escalation and conflict resolution	• It is important to remain calm during conflicts or heightened emotions. • Breaks can help to de-escalate situations. • Self-reflection is a key tool.	High: De-escalation skills are crucial in challenging negotiation situations.

Summary

The interview with Hilmar Salac offered an enlightening exploration into the nuances of contemporary negotiations. Salac, an adept negotiator, began his journey rooted in traditional, face-to-face dealings, servicing approximately 40 nations from his base in Munich. This experience endowed him with an expansive cultural and communicative understanding, vital in the realms of sales, marketing and product management.

One pivotal point of discussion centered on the evolution of negotiation modalities in an increasingly digital era. Although digital tools and platforms have significantly permeated the negotiation domain, Salac asserted the undiminished value of the "last mile". He contends that while many transactions have seamlessly transitioned online, particular sectors, especially public service, occasionally necessitate in-person interactions for optimal outcomes.

Salac's methodology in negotiations is predicated upon a combination of meticulous preparation and relationship building. The former entails a thorough grasp of one's objectives, a nuanced understanding of the counterpart's position and a strategic overview of the negotiation's broader context. The latter revolves around establishing trust and rapport, often facilitated by using digital platforms such as LinkedIn, which serve as reservoirs of information. Such platforms allow Salac to delve into the

backgrounds of counterparts, fostering deeper, non-transactional dialogues, especially when engaging with entities emphasizing trust, like universities.

Another noteworthy aspect of the interview was the emphasis on cultural adaptability. Drawing on his rich multicultural engagements, █████ accentuates the imperativeness of understanding and embracing cultural nuances. Recognizing and adapting to diverse communicative styles, preferences and cultural touchpoints can be the cornerstone of effective negotiation.

The role of technology in negotiations, as highlighted by █████ is both multifaceted and intricate. It is a tool that, while indispensable in certain contexts, requires discernment in its application. For █████ the essence of this discernment lies in striking a balance between leveraging advanced technological tools and ensuring the comfort and engagement of the counterpart.

Adaptability emerges as another cardinal theme. █████ prefers a proactive approach, wherein negotiators remain keenly attuned to their counterparts' reactions and are poised to recalibrate their strategies dynamically. This is particularly salient when navigating challenges, be they confrontational partners or institutional constraints. A blend of calm assertiveness and clear boundary-setting is advocated.

The interview further delved into the orchestration of team dynamics in technologically intricate negotiations. Representing a technology conglomerate, █████ candidly discussed the necessity of roping in specialized expertise, such as engineers, or occasionally, higher-level executives to lend gravitas to a negotiation, predicated upon the demands of the scenario.

Concluding reflections centered on the essence of negotiation as an art. █████ opined that, beyond the armory of preparation and strategy, human elements like genuine communication, passion and empathy are paramount. This sentiment is undergirded by his endorsement of real-world experiential learning, such as travel, to enrich one's negotiation repertoire.

In summation, the dialogue with █████ offered invaluable insights into the multifarious dimensions of modern negotiations, championing a harmonious blend of tradition and innovation, strategy and empathy as well as preparation and adaptability.

5.8 ASSESSMENT MATRIX XXXXXXXXXX

Skills	Evaluation	Importance in online negotiations
Communication skills	• Communication skills are important for the exchange of information, clarification of misunderstandings and promoting a shared understanding. • Good communication also allows points of contention to be identified during negotiations and solutions to be found. • Communication techniques such as active listening, questioning techniques and non-verbal communication are essential to gather information, create a positive atmosphere and convey effective messages.	Very high: Effective communication is crucial in negotiations, especially to avoid misunderstandings. This might be even more vital in online negotiations, as body language or other non-verbal signals can be harder to interpret.
Preparation and planning	• Regarding preparation the expert pertained to the creation of a negotiation plan, which includes defining negotiation objectives, evaluating options and identifying negotiation margins. • This also entails researching the other party, their objectives, interests and limits.	Very high: Proper preparation is the key to success in any negotiation. Online negotiations might require even more preparation, as technical aspects and the selection of the appropriate online tools also need planning.

	• Knowledge about one's own goals and worst-case scenarios is also crucial.	
Flexibility and adaptability	• The expert always adapts his negotiation strategies to the changing circumstances and conditions that may arise during negotiation. • He stressed the importance of creating alternative plans. • He uses negotiation styles and techniques depending on the situation.	High: Flexibility is always essential in negotiations. It becomes even more significant in online negotiations because unforeseen issues, like technical difficulties, might arise.
Relationship building, empathy and emotional intelligence	• The ability to detect and interpret emotional cues, both one's own and the negotiating partner's is of at most importance. • Utilizing emotional intelligence can be used to promote constructive dialogue and to prevent or mitigate conflicts. • Emotional intelligence assists in building and maintaining positive relationships. • Long-term relationships can enhance negotiation outcomes and ensure smoother future negotiations. • Building relationships can also make reaching agreements easier, even in challenging situations.	High: Empathy and emotional intelligence are vital, especially in online negotiations where interpreting body language or tone might be more challenging.

Strategic thinking	• Strategic thinking allows for considering the long-term impacts of negotiation decisions and planning the best moves and countermoves. • It also involves the capability to anticipate various scenarios and their consequences as well as identifying long-term goals, priorities and negotiation strategies.	High: Strategic thinking in negotiations is crucial. In online negotiations, strategic thinking is just as important, though the strategy's execution might need to be differently structured.
Technological competence	• Knowledge of technologies used for online negotiations, information gathering and communication is particularly important. • As is the ability to adapt to new technologies.	Very high: As negotiations increasingly take place in digital environments, the ability to utilize various technologies and adapt to new ones is crucial.
Team structure/Team coordination	• The Expert cited the ability to define roles and responsibilities within a team as an important skill, as well as collaborating effectively and coordinating team communication. • This also includes considering feedback and opinions from team members and making collective decisions.	High: The ability to work effectively within a team is crucial, especially in complex negotiations where various individuals might have different roles. Online negotiations can pose a unique challenge, as coordinating among

		team members not in the same room might be more complicated.
Cultural understanding	• The expert stated that cultural differences within Europe are generally not so significant that one would need to adjust their negotiation tactics. • However, this might be necessary in international negotiations with counterparts outside of Europe.	Medium: In international online negotiations, understanding cultures can help to avoid misunderstandings and ensure successful communication. However, within Europe, this might play a secondary role.
Goal orientation and result orientation	• The ability to focus on defined goals, even under pressure and in complex negotiation situations is key to negotiation success. • Beyond that, Burke highlighted the ability to draw conclusions based on negotiation results and to take action accordingly.	Very High: This can be especially important in online negotiations, as the absence of a physical space might require a stronger focus on objectives and outcomes.
De-escalation and conflict resolution	• The expert's techniques to de-escalate conflicts and resolve disputes, include focusing on mutual interests, developing options for mutual satisfaction and finding creative win-win	High: The ability to de-escalate and resolve conflicts is always important in negotiations. This

	solutions by compromising on aspects that are important to the other party but don't greatly restrict oneself.	can be particularly challenging in online negotiations, where communication might be less nuanced and misunderstandings can occur more easily.
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Summary

In a comprehensive interview ██████████ provided an analytical exposition on his professional development in the area of purchasing and negotiations, delineating the differences between his previous employer, a leading international wholesale company and his current employer “Deutsche Glasfaser”. ██████████ characterizes his previous employer as an establishment with a hierarchical organizational structure, where a lot of personnel have maintained their roles for over a decade and a half. In juxtaposition, Deutsche Glasfaser emerges as an organization with embedded entrepreneurial thinking, having proliferated to encompass more than 2000 employees within a relatively short timeframe. Whereas his previous employer’s negotiation prerogatives predominantly resided with its upper echelons, Deutsche Glasfaser’s more egalitarian approach permitted a wider cross-section of its workforce to engage in negotiation procedures, barring instances of acute escalations.

██████████ observed that a significant metamorphosis in negotiation paradigms has taken place over a rather short amount of time. Preceding the pandemic era, his previous employer manifested a predilection for corporeal interactions during negotiation sessions, even when involving geographically disparate entities. The emergence of the pandemic precipitated a transition to digitized negotiation modalities. Nonetheless, the subsequent period witnessed a renaissance of the traditional face-to-face negotiations. The global milieu, punctuated by seminal events such as the Corona pandemic and the geopolitical tensions in Ukraine, engendered a reduction in contract durations, thereby engendering more frequent and exigent price negotiation sessions. These often manifested inherent challenges, notably ultimatums. In response to unforeseen

price augmentations, ██████ modus operandi entailed soliciting transparency through the "Open Book" paradigm. However, suppliers exhibited caution, divulging only selective fragments of their calculations, or in extreme cases, the provision of redacted financial documents.

Traversing the intricate labyrinth of negotiations presented multifarious challenges. Confronted with unrelenting price determinants, the negotiation discourse frequently transitioned to additional domains, such as logistical efficacy or capacity guarantees. Irrespective of these oscillations, ██████ underscored a consistent tenet: the imperative of cultivating longitudinal affiliations with suppliers. This doctrine, however, occasionally encountered interference, predominantly due to depersonalized communication methodologies.

Delving into the mechanics of efficacious negotiations, ██████ proffered several salient strategies. These encompass the initiation of dialogues with colloquial exchanges, expeditious transition to core objectives, the meticulous avoidance of multi-vendor interactions to avoid ambiguities and the judicious inclusion of domain-specific experts. Additionally, he posits that higher managerial involvement should be wisely invoked, particularly during negotiation impasses. From a cultural vantage, ██████ observed a more avid negotiation ethos among Germans, who exhibit a pronounced focus on fiscal considerations, while also emphasizing the indispensability of adaptability in negotiation styles. To ensure unambiguous comprehension, especially amidst linguistic divergences, he underscored the indispensability of crystallizing and corroborating terms in written form.

In his concluding reflections, ██████ contends that the climax of a successful negotiation, while symbolized by contractual agreements, is intrinsically linked to the preceding journey. Metrics of success, he proposed, encompass not only fiscal savings but also the qualitative dimensions of the dialogic process, where candor and lucidity are paramount. He further illuminated that preliminary negotiations often cast their shadow on subsequent dialogues, serving as referential touchstones.

To summarize, ██████ postulated that proficiency in negotiation is a synthesis of repetitious practice, underscored by creativity, cogent communication capabilities, a propinquity for compromise and meticulous preparatory endeavors. The capacity for non-verbal interpretation, persuasive acumen and the potency of articulation emerge as pivotal competencies. Central to his testimony, however, is the quintessence of lucid

communication, an intimate grasp of the multifaceted nuances inherent in each negotiation and the judicious selection of negotiation interlocutors.

5.9 ASSESSMENT MATRIX

Skills	Evaluation	Importance in online negotiations
Communication skills	- The expert emphasized the importance of clear and effective communication techniques, especially in an online environment. - He explained that the lack of body language and non-verbal communication must be compensated for. - He also pointed out the crucial need to overcome potential language barriers.	Very high: Communication skills are crucial for any negotiation, especially in a digital setting
Preparation and planning	- The expert stressed the need for thorough preparation before any negotiation. - This includes understanding the negotiation topics, getting to know the client and having all the necessary resources available.	Very high: Without thorough preparation and planning, negotiations can become chaotic and unproductive.
Flexibility and adaptability	- The expert talked about adapting to different situations and cultural differences. - He also highlighted the need to adapt to changes in the negotiation process.	High: Negotiations often evolve dynamically and negotiation partners expect adaptability.

	• He further mentioned the importance of handling large monetary sums calmly and unfazed, which some people may initially have difficulties with.	
Relationship building, empathy and emotional intelligence	• The expert emphasized the significance of relationships and understanding the client's situation. • He explained that emotional intelligence helps to understand the business from the client's perspective.	High: Empathy and emotional intelligence can strengthen the relationship with negotiation partners.
Strategic thinking	• The expert explained that strategic thinking is closely intertwined with preparation and adaptability. • He elaborated on how adjusting one's negotiation strategies is often necessary to achieve the best results.	Very high: Strategic thinking can aid in achieving negotiation goals and making the process more efficient.
Technological competence	• The expert highlighted the importance of mastering technology, especially for online negotiations. • He also talked about using digital tools to facilitate the negotiation process.	Very high: Technological proficiency is crucial for effective online negotiations.
Team structure/Team coordination	• The expert highlighted the necessity of teamwork and coordination among team members.	Very high: A well-coordinated team can significantly contribute to the

	• He emphasized the importance of a shared understanding and strategy within the team.	success of negotiations.
Cultural understanding	• PirkI stressed the significance of cultural understanding in negotiations, especially when dealing with international partners, due to differences in negotiation styles. • He explained that language barriers should not be underestimated in their ability to cause miscommunication.	High: Cultural understanding can enhance the comprehension of negotiation partners' needs and expectations.
Goal orientation and result orientation	• The expert underscored the importance of goal orientation and outcome focus. • He highlighted that meeting negotiation goals and achieving results should remain the top priority at all times.	Very high: Goal orientation and outcome focus directly determine negotiation success.
De-escalation and conflict resolution	• Although these skills were not directly addressed in this discussion, one can infer from the context of the conversation that they are crucial in a negotiation setting.	High: De-escalation and conflict resolution can help maintain a productive negotiation environment.

Summary

In an in-depth interview ██████████ shared profound insights derived from his extensive experience in sales and negotiations. The discussion primarily centered

around the evolution of negotiation practices, underscoring the transformative role of digital mediums and the importance of cultivating authentic client relationships.

■■■■ elucidated that the ascendancy of online negotiations, which can be attributed to the broader scopes of business globalization and evolving organizational structures, received a substantial impetus from the COVID-19 pandemic. Notably, while strategies employed in online negotiations echo those of traditional face-to-face interactions, they tend to progress at an accelerated pace in the digital realm. A salient challenge, as highlighted by ■■■■ in these online negotiations is the language barrier. For instance, in countries like China, negotiations are predominantly conducted in the native language, often rendering the role of interpreters indispensable. ■■■■ however stresses the restrictive nature of communicating through an interpreter and strongly emphasizes the importance of communicating in a mutually intelligible language.

Another pivotal aspect that emerged from the discussion was the shift from conventional negotiation methodologies towards digital-centric practices, such as E-Bidding and E-Auctions. This digital transition has engendered the establishment of professional procurement centers by numerous businesses, aiming for a more systematic and streamlined negotiation process. Furthermore, ■■■■ articulated that the contemporary negotiation landscape is characterized by a hybrid approach, intertwining preliminary discussions with subsequent face-to-face engagements.

A significant portion of the dialogue was dedicated to the nuances of client relationships. ■■■■ emphasized that while the nature of relationships can vary, often being informal with long-standing clients, it is crucial not to equate trust with a compromise on standards. Additionally, he championed the importance of fostering relationships even before project initiation, aiding clients in domains like investment planning, thus reiterating the importance of anticipatory engagement.

In terms of negotiation documentation and preparation, the emphasis was placed on the significance of recording negotiations to foster clarity and mutual consensus. ■■■■ also highlighted the imperative of coherent team strategies, with a particular preference for smaller, more agile negotiation teams capable of dynamic adaptability.

Reflecting on the indicators of successful negotiations, ■■■■ offered a nuanced perspective. He posited that genuine success transcends the mere conclusion of a deal; it manifests only when an order is meticulously documented in systems such as

SAP. This journey towards success is punctuated by multiple minor victories, ranging from qualifying for specific projects to arriving at a consensus on price points.

Concluding the discussion, PirkI dispensed invaluable advice for individuals aspiring to excel in the realm of sales and negotiations. He underscored the paramount importance of meticulous preparation, recommending a thorough study of stakeholders through platforms like LinkedIn and continuous engagement with internal teams. Furthermore, he advocated for a holistic approach to negotiations, seamlessly merging technical and commercial facets and values a profound understanding of client challenges.

In summation, while certain principles of negotiation may be perceived as rudimentary, PirkI's insights underline their intricate nature and the imperative of rigorous preparation. His perspectives offer a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted landscape of sales and negotiations in our increasingly digitized global business ecosystem.

5.10 ASSESSMENT MATRIX

Skills	Evaluation	Importance in online negotiations
Communication skills	- Communicating important points step-by-step can help to keep focus and to make sure all important aspects of the negotiation are addressed. - Small talk and engaging with the client are important for building and maintaining relationships.	Very high: Communication is crucial in the fields of negotiation and sales and becomes especially essential in the online realm.
Preparation and planning	Successful preparation includes understanding technical details, creating offers and setting objectives.	Very high: Thorough preparation and planning are key

	It also means monitoring the negotiation progress itself, to be prepared for future talks.	aspects of successful negotiations.
Flexibility and adaptability	This skill encompasses the ability to address the client's needs and adjust to changes in the negotiation process.	High: Flexibility is vital in negotiations, but in online negotiations especially.
Relationship building, empathy and emotional intelligence	- Understanding and empathy for the client's situation are critical. - This entails recognizing and considering the emotions and priorities of the negotiation counterpart. - The most important aspect of relationship building is to convince through competence.	High: Both skills are highly necessary in negotiations and even more so in online negotiations, because their implementation here becomes much harder.
Strategic thinking	Strategic thinking is essential to determine the best negotiation trajectory and find effective solutions.	Very high: Strategic thinking can be applied to all aspects of negotiations.
Technological competence	- It is important to adapt to new technologies and to use them efficiently. - A changeup in technology usage can be beneficial. For example, a central camera, for all team members could be used.	Very high: Proficiency in effectively using technologies, especially online tools, is particularly crucial for online negotiations.

Team structure/Team coordination	• The importance of this skill enhances with every additional person in the team. • Every team member must understand their role and contribute to the overall strategy.	Very high: Teamwork and coordination are essential in negotiations.
Cultural understanding	• Recognizing the cultural backgrounds of negotiation partners can help avoid misunderstandings and strengthen the relationship. • No special adjustment of one's own behavior is required. • Respect is key.	High: Cultural understanding is vital in international negotiations.
Goal orientation and result orientation	• Pursuing clearly defined objectives and focusing on results are key to negotiation success.	Very high: Goal orientation and outcome-focused approaches are central in all negotiations.
De-escalation and conflict resolution	• It is essential to effectively handle misunderstandings or disagreements and find solutions acceptable to all parties. • Understanding the other party plays an important role in avoiding conflict.	High: The ability to de-escalate and resolve conflicts can be pivotal in many different negotiation scenarios.

Summary

Recent developments have ushered in a paradigm shift in business negotiations. In an enlightening conversation with [REDACTED] a negotiation expert in the field of industrial installations, significant nuances of this shift were explored.

Foremost, the traditional modality of face-to-face interactions has seen a conspicuous transition to virtual platforms. [REDACTED] specifically referenced the adaption of his company to Microsoft Teams, emphasizing the practical implications of such a change. While tactile discussions, often essential in sectors requiring physical inspection like equipment viewings, still hold a place in negotiations, the digital medium is gaining relevance, especially in the domain of international commerce.

[REDACTED] further delineated the negotiation trajectory in sectors akin to his. The primary phase is defined by technical clarifications, relegating commercial concerns like pricing to the subsequent phase. This structured bifurcation ensures that the technicalities, often the bedrock of such industries, are unambiguously articulated before delving into the commercial dimensions.

An underlying motive in Massing's insights was the quintessence of transparent communication. By leveraging comprehensive offers and documents, the probability of ambiguities is substantially diminished. This is particularly pivotal in commercial negotiations; wherein specific contentious aspects demand meticulous deliberation.

Despite the multi-faceted nature of negotiations, [REDACTED] briefly emphasized the singular overarching objective: the procurement of the contract. However, challenges, particularly those revolving around pricing, are inevitable. Massing's sagacious approach advocates for a profound understanding of one's counterpart, underscored by flexibility and the cultivation of mutual trust.

Delving deeper into the human aspect of negotiations, [REDACTED] illuminated the pivotal role of interpersonal dynamics. Beyond mere technical competence, fostering deeper business relationships necessitates genuine interactions and a concerted effort to understand the client's perspective.

Navigating the complex tapestry of international negotiations, Massing's experiences accentuate the cardinal role of respect and cultural cognizance. While it is imperative to acknowledge cultural nuances, the universality of mutual respect and shared objectives cannot be overemphasized.

Procedural intricacies form the common ground for effective negotiations. [REDACTED] elucidated the meticulous preparatory stages, notably the importance of comprehensive documentation predicated on customer-oriented documents and

offers. The structural dynamics of the negotiation team, often dictated by the project's scope and nature, further substantiate the multifarious nature of the process.

Technology's role in augmenting negotiations was also broached. With Microsoft Teams emerging as a ubiquitous tool, Massing's transition to this platform reflects the broader trend in the business ecosystem. Furthermore, the incorporation of avant-garde technology in meeting setups exemplifies the synergistic interplay between technology and negotiations.

Concluding the discourse, Massing proffered a sagacious counsel for budding negotiators: the embracement of openness and the assiduous accumulation of experience. Confrontations and challenges, when approached as learning opportunities, invariably sculpt one's negotiation acumen.

5.11 ASSESSMENT MATRIX

Skills	Evaluation	Importance in online negotiations
Communication skills	- There are several challenges with communication in the online space, particularly related to language barriers and technical difficulties. - It is also of significant importance to understand non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions and tone of voice.	Very high: Communication is highly important, especially in online negotiations.
Preparation and planning	- It is crucial to gain a deep understanding of the products and services one negotiates for. - Negotiators should regularly collaborate with technical leaders to deepen their knowledge.	Very high: The importance of preparation for both online and offline negotiations is a key factor for

	• The importance of pre-negotiation communication to clarify the scope of negotiation is salient.	negotiation success.
Flexibility and adaptability	• It is often necessary to adapt to challenges, such as communication issues or aggressive counterparts. • Cultural differences in negotiations often also require adaptation.	High: Flexibility and adaptability are beneficial throughout almost all aspects of negotiations.
Relationship building, empathy and emotional intelligence	• The expert emphasized the need to gauge the feelings of the other party. • This is especially important in online negotiations where non-verbal cues might be hard to interpret. • With an already established relationship, introduction into the negotiation becomes much easier.	Very high: Relationship building is of high importance for negotiations, both online and offline. This importance is equal in both selling and purchasing.
Strategic thinking	• Within a negotiation many different negotiation strategies will be employed. • For instance, delaying contentious points to a later stage in the negotiation if there is a stalemate.	High: Strategic thinking is highly important, especially for preparation strategies and the assembling of the negotiation team.
Technological competence	• The expert mentioned using an internal platform for negotiations. • She ensures that suppliers can use the platform effectively.	Medium: A lack in technological competence can lead to challenges associated with

		using technology, such as technical difficulties or communication issues.
Team structure/Team coordination	• When negotiating for technical products a technical leader should always be present. • The team structure is not fixed and changes according to the requirements of the situation. • For example, a legal expert can be vital for some parts of the negotiation process but is not necessary in others.	High: A well-structured team and teamwork is especially important in the preparatory phase.
Cultural understanding	• The expert emphasized understanding cultural differences in negotiations. • Negotiation approaches vary across cultures and adaptation to these differences is beneficial. • Cultural differences are much less pronounced within Europe than beyond it.	High: Deficits in cultural understanding can lead to a less fluent and more hostile negotiation.
Goal orientation and result orientation	• Clear goals should be set before each negotiation and progress towards those goals should be tracked.	Very high: Having clear goals is vital for every stage of the negotiation process.
De-escalation and conflict resolution	• The expert mentioned strategies like delaying contentious points to later stages when negotiations are at a standstill.	High: The effective handling of conflicts can strongly increase

	• She emphasized the importance of having de-escalation techniques to navigate challenging situations.	the effectiveness of the negotiation.
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Summary

A detailed discussion facilitated with [REDACTED] articulated the nuances and challenges associated with online communications and modern negotiation practices. The expert elaborated on the unique operational choice of her company, which relies on an internalized platform for online communications. This choice, distinct from mainstream tools such as Teams, introduces complexities especially for external suppliers. To mitigate potential technological incongruities, the company suggests that new attendees acquaint themselves with the platform in advance. This proactive approach is further bolstered by the company's proficiency in addressing recurrent technological glitches, a noteworthy example being the non-delivery of emails containing pivotal meeting links.

Transitioning to the realm of digital negotiations, [REDACTED] emphasized the nuanced art of interpreting non-verbal cues. The inherent unpredictability introduced by varying technological interfaces, such as inconsistent camera angles or fluctuating audio quality, heighten the importance of accurately discerning subtle facial expressions and vocal inflections. Furthermore, [REDACTED] posited that exhaustive preparatory work, encompassing the anticipation of potential counterarguments and the formulation of strategic responses, is indispensable for successful negotiations. While she abstained from delineating specific skillsets, the intertwined significance of comprehensive preparation, a refined understanding of human behaviors and the acquisition of experiential wisdom was underscored. Regarding difficulties in intercultural negotiations, [REDACTED] emphasized the importance of a shared language in the negotiation process, as miscommunication can quickly lead to uncertainty and even aggressive behavior. To mitigate these issues, [REDACTED] recommended having, whenever possible, at least one team member who is fluent in the native language of the opposing party, even if this individual serves only in a supportive role to clarify potential misunderstandings.

Haselhorst's insights were particularly illuminating for novices in the domains of sales and procurement. She championed the pursuit of profound subject-matter expertise

and endorsed collaborative endeavors with domain specialists. However, she concurrently cautioned against an undue dependence on these experts, advocating for individual empowerment and competence. An additional piece of sage advice was the avoidance of naivety, especially when the counterpart possesses a profound reservoir of expertise.

Concluding her reflections on the negotiation journey, [REDACTED] stated that the culmination of a successful negotiation is symbolized by a formally ratified contract. Yet, this end goal often requires navigation through intricate pathways, characterized by iterative discussions and modifications, especially prevalent in the procurement of services. In contrast to tangible commodities, which might have transparent specifications from the outset, service-oriented contracts emerge as a labyrinth of complexities. As such, even when initial dialogues seem promising, the finalization of an agreement remains an intricate endeavor.

6 EXPERTS' VIEWS ON RECENT CHANGES IN NEGOTIATION PRACTICES

The landscape of negotiation practices within the business realm has undergone a profound transformation in recent years. Supported by several interviews with experts spanning diverse industry sectors, the evolution of negotiation tactics becomes distinctly palpable. Particularly, digital tools and the intensified shift towards online negotiations have exerted a remarkable influence. The roots of these modifications are manifold: technological advancements, market shifts, processes of globalization and, last but not least, the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic as an initial trigger for many companies. In what follows, the salient facets of these shifts are delineated and examined.

Professionalization of Negotiation Practices and Market Dynamics:

The professionalization of negotiation practices within most commodity markets has witnessed a marked surge. The rationale behind this ascent is twofold: On the one hand, many of the corresponding products, such as semiconductors, have burgeoned in importance for medium-sized enterprises. The escalating procurement volume and expanding market dimensions mandate these firms to hone their negotiation processes with ever-increasing professionalism. On the other hand, the escalating

commodification of these markets, meaning the growing interchangeability of products, has rendered negotiations more intricate and demanding. The possibility to effortlessly swap components in modular designs grants businesses novel negotiation leeway. This evolution ushers in modularity and interchangeability in negotiation practices, heralding both fresh opportunities and concomitant risks.

Transition from Offline to Online Negotiations:

Expert testimonials unambiguously indicate a pronounced pivot from offline to online negotiations. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, online negotiations were more the exception than the norm. With the pandemic's onslaught and ensuing social distancing protocols, migrating to exclusively online negotiations emerged as virtually the sole avenue to sustain commerce. This *modus operandi* persisted even beyond the pandemic's zenith. Today, many facets of the negotiation process, especially in global commerce, are orchestrated online. Nevertheless, pivotal negotiations or culminating dialogues often persist in being conducted face-to-face, underscoring the perennial significance of personal interactions and human relations in negotiation endeavors.

Alterations in Negotiation Content and Procedures:

Expert interrogations also spotlight a noteworthy metamorphosis in the substance and mechanics of negotiations. Historically, negotiations frequently revolved around the reciprocation and brokering of arguments until a consensus was attained. However, this paradigm has currently been partially attenuated and formalized. A plethora of enterprises have established dedicated centers to refine and regiment their processes, meticulously documenting each stage to obviate misconceptions. One expert underscores that price negotiations in some sectors are extensively digitalized and regimented, transpiring in multiple phases, often devoid of direct dialogues, with alterations in technology or stipulations being duly considered. However, even though communication in the traditional way has become rarer, this makes the direct negotiations that do happen even more important.

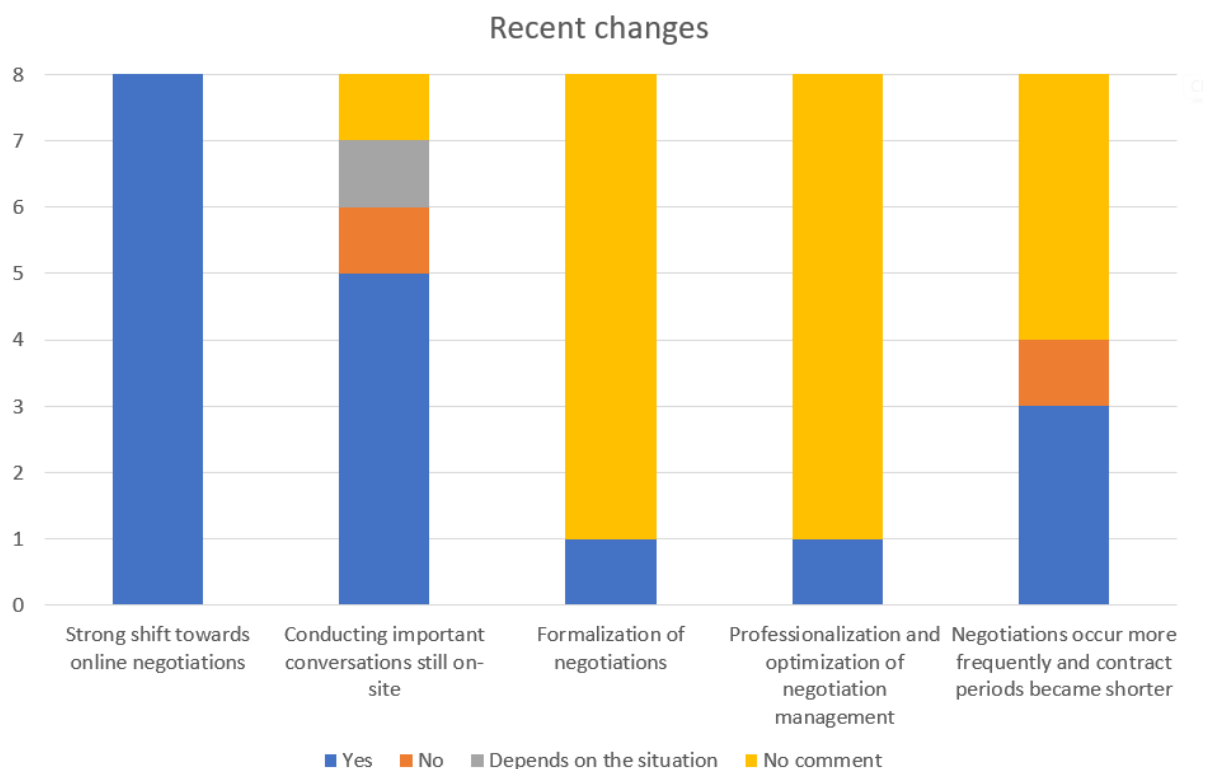
Shifts in Negotiation Culture:

Lastly, expert dialogues intimate modifications in the negotiation culture. It can be observed that the praxis of online negotiations has radically redefined communication dynamics with clients. In times past, salespersons predominantly endeavored to persuade clients of the overarching merits of a digital product; yet such products might

now be more ubiquitously employed than before, e.g., by educational institutions. The discourse predominantly revolves around whether the appropriate tool is being leveraged and how congruently it aligns with the client's specific requirements. Additionally, there's an emergent trend to initiate negotiations online, reserving in-person engagements for pivotal junctures within the process.

To summarize, it is unequivocal that negotiation practices have traversed substantial alterations in recent years. Digitalization, accentuated by the contingencies of the COVID-19 pandemic, has bolstered the prominence of online negotiations. Simultaneously, the content and methodologies of negotiations have been optimized and standardized. Furthermore, negotiation culture has evolved, where personal interactions and human relationships, though challenging, have assumed an even more pivotal role than before.

Disclaimer for the diagrams: The diagrams do not reflect the significance of each aspect of the competencies but rather indicate how many experts have mentioned each particular aspect. As such, they are more representative of the current prominence of this practice in the negotiation sphere and do not make claims regarding their actual relevance in negotiations.



7 NEGOTIATION SKILLS AND THEIR SPECIFIC APPLICATION

7.1 CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The proliferation of online negotiations poses new challenges in terms of conflict resolution strategies. A thorough analysis of the expert interviews has revealed that in online negotiations, two aspects are particularly key: the importance of self-reflection and the incorporation of cooling-off periods. Historically, the negotiation setting was often characterized by an unrelenting rhythm that left little room for breaks. Contemporary practice, however, shows a shift toward an increased inclusion of intermissions. This development is strongly supported by the removal of time-consuming travel for online negotiations. Therefore, scheduling of multiple, shorter meetings is easy, while the ability to be flexible and adapt to the situation fast becomes a more mandatory skill here.

Self-reflection also plays an integral role in the negotiation process, as it allows negotiators to critically assess their actions and strategies, uncover potential missteps and make necessary adjustments. The digital nature of online negotiations provides an appropriate platform for integrating such cooling-off periods. While embedding a pause within a conversation for both parties to retreat and discuss can be more challenging in digital negotiations, because in many cases team members are also geographically dispersed, which would necessitate the creation of a separate video conference, while simultaneously reducing the ability to communicate with the other party, it is much simpler and involves less effort to conclude a negotiation conversation prematurely and reschedule it entirely. These breaks are particularly crucial as they act as outlets to relieve accumulated emotions and provide space for thoughtful reflection on one's behavior and strategy, as well as furnishing space for contemplation and strategy formulation. This grants the negotiating entities an opportunity to re-evaluate their stances, consider alternative viewpoints and innovate new solution pathways.

In dealing with clients and business partners that tend to react rather emotional, especially in challenging situations, the ability to recognize and aptly respond to the counterpart's disposition emerges as a critical factor. This requires adaptability that encompasses both supporting reticent clients in articulating their concerns and the capacity to adjust one's communication behavior to match that of the client. The

objective here is to facilitate effective communication by establishing a type of "communicative resonance" with the client. Nonetheless, it remains imperative to maintain certain boundaries to ensure the dignity and professionalism of the negotiation process. In instances where the boundaries of politeness and respect are breached, it might become necessary to abort the negotiation. This emphasizes the need for de-escalation and conflict resolution strategies that are grounded in empathy, respect and clearly defined boundaries.

One expert emphasizes that the methods of conflict resolution in online negotiations can structurally and executively draw parallels to martial arts, especially regarding setting clear boundaries and transparently communicating intentions. Within a martial arts context, it is vital to comprehend and control one's behavior and its implications, mastering the dynamics of the duel. Similarly, in negotiations, particularly online ones, a strong presence and unequivocal establishment of boundaries can yield very positive outcomes. This is notable in that the willingness to appear clear and firm while simultaneously defining the rules of negotiation not only structures the process but also augments the likelihood of a satisfactory resolution.

The inherent spatial distance in online negotiations often introduces unique challenges, significantly impeding effective communication and interaction between involved parties. Contrasted with in-person meetings, which more easily afford breaks for both parties to discuss the negotiation progress and potential changes in strategy, these opportunities are typically missing in online environments. Consequently, there is a peril that subtle non-verbal cues, potentially captured in physical meetings, might be lost, heightening the risk of misinterpretations. Nevertheless, amidst these challenges, negotiators typically endeavor to identify mutual solutions with their clients. In this endeavor, lucid communication and meticulous preparation is pivotal for success. The significance of leveraging technological tools, scrutinizing pertinent documents and integrating expert knowledge becomes pronounced, aiming to curtail misunderstandings and pave the way for successful conflict resolution.

The surveyed experts emphatically accentuate the paramount role of expertise within the realm of online negotiations. Harnessing and applying expert knowledge not only exemplifies one's competency and fortifies the negotiation stance but also aids in circumventing misinformation and misconceptions that could become potential flashpoints. Furthermore, these professionals underscore the importance of

understanding and exhibiting respect towards the negotiating counterpart. This entails acknowledging the counterpart's interests and needs and equally crucial, fostering an atmosphere imbued with mutual respect, pivotal for conflict resolution. Equally imperative is the cultivation and stewardship of enduring client relationships. Nurturing robust and trustful relations can ameliorate potential tensions and conflicts, establishing a conducive ambiance for future negotiations. Within international business, experts stress the necessity to discern cultural disparities and make corresponding accommodations. Factoring in cultural norms, values and communication mores is instrumental in forestalling misunderstandings and ensuring efficacious intercultural communication. This becomes especially important in online negotiations, where the potential for miscommunication is much higher and it is significantly more difficult to connect with the other party on a more personal level.

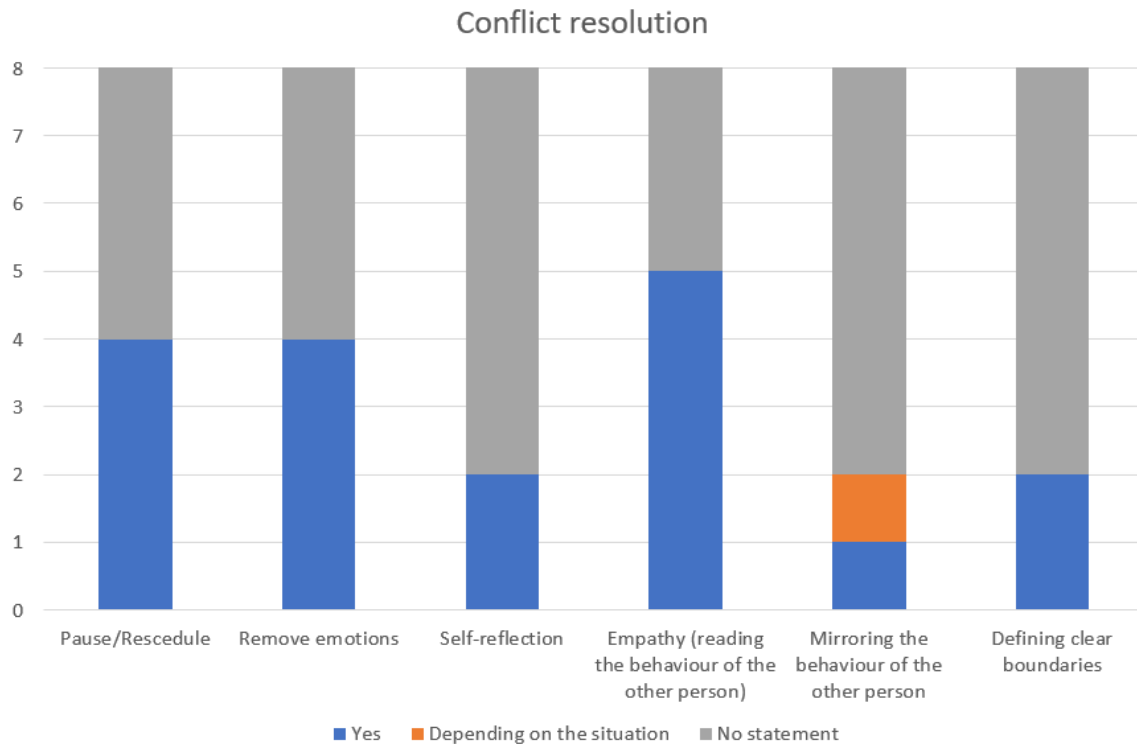
Regarding conflict management during online negotiations, experts emphasize the practical efficacy of deferring contentious issues. Rather than becoming ensnared in disruptive or stymieing discussions, it is often propitious to postpone such points to a later point in time or a distinct meeting. This stratagem empowers negotiating parties to focus on other facets, make headway and in the interim, devise possible solutions or compromises for the disputed subject. Moreover, experts draw attention to the salience of post-negotiation documentation through the formulation of a meeting report. Such documentation provides a lucid and unequivocal record of discussed items, decisions made and unresolved queries. It serves as a vital tool to uncover and rectify misunderstandings, monitor the negotiation trajectory and blueprint subsequent stages.

Linguistic and cultural barriers, in the globalized sphere of digital commerce, often pose significant challenges and can be precursors to conflicts. The capability to communicate in the counterpart's language can mitigate misunderstandings, facilitate discourse and manifest respect for the partner's cultural and traditional nuances. Consequently, in the presence of pronounced linguistic divergences, it becomes imperative to have a team member proficient in the counterpart's language. In an online setting, where limited audio quality is not uncommon, this measure is of particular significance. Additionally, scrupulous and exhaustive preparation for the negotiations is a linchpin to efficaciously resolve potential conflicts. This not only mandates a profound comprehension of the negotiation topic but also a prescience of the

counterpart's interests, priorities and potential apprehensions. Such preparation capacitates the negotiator to adeptly respond to the counterpart's concerns and craft apt conflict resolution strategies.

In conflict scenarios, especially when faced with an adversary's aggressive demeanor, targeted interventions can be mobilized to defuse the situation and unearth constructive resolutions. Under such circumstances, tactical breaks and internal consultations can prove potent in stymieing the escalation of tensions, mollifying heightened emotions. Furthermore, crafting and utilizing a shared document, chronicling the negotiation's progression and consensually agreed points, can be invaluable. This document serves as a shared reference for all stakeholders, fortifying transparency and equity in the negotiation process and aids in circumventing misunderstandings while offering clarity on the present state and forthcoming actions.

To conclude, the proficiency in conflict resolution within online negotiations is of quintessential importance. Through comprehensive understanding of the subject, incorporation of expert insights and relationship cultivation, a plethora of conflicts can either be precluded or adeptly resolved. It becomes evident that triumphant conflict resolution in online negotiations mandates a profound knowledge of the negotiation subject, comprehension of the negotiation counterpart and their cultural milieu, coupled with the capacity for introspection and emotion management. Thus, mastering these dimensions emerges as an indispensable skill in the contemporary online negotiation cosmos.



7.2 PROBLEM-SOLVING

Within the contemporary realm of business, problem-solving in online negotiations presents a series of challenges predicated upon contextual circumstances and the technological constraints within which such negotiations occur. Nevertheless, these challenges can be navigated with adroit management and by employing specific techniques and strategies.

A primary impediment encountered in online negotiations is unforeseen and potent emotional reactions. Such reactions are frequently engendered under intense pressures, notably in scenarios where resource scarcities or delivery complications exert profound impacts on clients. In these situations, the capability to discern and comprehend both the individual personality and the unique needs of the negotiation counterpart becomes an indispensable facet of successful online negotiations. By formulating a strategic approach tailored to the specific profile and requirements of their interlocutor, negotiators can establish a constructive foundation for dialogue. A pertinent tactic in this regard is the mirroring of the client's emotions. This technique engenders an empathic understanding of the client's emotional state, fostering communication on a mutual plane and fortifying a connection. Upon forging such a connection, the negotiator can then endeavor to steer the conversation towards a more

objective dimension, propelling the negotiation constructively forward. In the online space, however, the negotiator has to be especially cautious. The counterpart's ability to also see himself can make the mirroring strategy more obvious and may upset the negotiation counterpart. The subtleties of body language and emotional expression are easier to miss in digital formats, but they can also be scrutinized in real-time or even replayed if the meeting is being recorded. This increases the risk of the mirroring tactic being detected, thereby breaking trust rather than building it. Additionally, the lag or quality degradation in video or audio feeds can make mirroring less effective or even counterproductive. If the negotiator appears to react with a delay or the mirroring feels "off," it may distract from the conversation or create an impression of insincerity.

Unprofessional conduct represents an additional challenge in online negotiations, possessing the potential to significantly hamper their effectiveness and productivity. In circumstances where a negotiating party's behavior manifests as inappropriate or disruptive, more drastic interventions, such as terminating the dialogue or departing the virtual meeting space, may be warranted. Nevertheless, it is imperative to underscore that such actions should not be undertaken capriciously. They are ultimate measures, only to be contemplated when all alternative conflict resolution methods and attempts at restoring a productive negotiation ambiance have faltered. Such severe actions can have substantial repercussions on the relationship between negotiating parties and, hence, should be implemented with caution and deliberation. The overarching focus should persistently remain on perpetuating negotiations in a constructive and respectful manner, facilitating a positive and fruitful outcome.

Price determination remains as another pivotal component in online negotiations, frequently operating as a nerve center. In the event of a deadlock pertaining to pricing, innovative and ingenious solutions are of paramount importance. One potential solution might reside in the amalgamation of offers, which could potentially augment the appeal of the overall proposition while simultaneously meeting customer requirements more equitably. Additionally, the introduction of supplementary services might accentuate the added value of a product or service, encouraging clients to perceive the proposal in a refreshed light. Assurances of quality and guarantees might also be underscored to engender trust and offer clients a sense of security. A robust pricing strategy, complemented by flexibility in price determination, can prove pivotal

in concluding a successful negotiation while concurrently reinforcing and preserving client relationships.

With the unstoppable advance of digitalization, the negotiation landscape has undergone significant metamorphosis. Corporations are inclined to optimize and formalize their processes, aiding in the circumvention of misunderstandings while concurrently augmenting efficiency. In this context, digital instruments such as E-negotiations and E-auctions can proffer significant enhancements by simplifying and structuring the negotiation process. The automation of specific segments of the process allows for a heightened emphasis on the strategic facets of the negotiation, potentially leading to superior outcomes.

However, despite the advantages proffered by digitalization, new challenges also emerge, particularly within the ambit of online negotiations. Often, identifying exits from entrenched situations poses a formidable challenge. In such junctures, a brief interlude might prove beneficial. Such a respite permits negotiating parties to temper their emotions, reflect upon proceedings and thus maintain clarity of thought. This hiatus might pave the way for a reevaluation of the situation, granting space for the exploration of alternative solutions, thereby overcoming the impasse and realigning the negotiation.

In summary, it can be asserted that online negotiations are assuming an increasingly vital role in the contemporary business environment. External influences of recent years have rendered this mode of corporate communication the norm. Although it proffers numerous benefits, such as global operational capability, it also presents specific challenges that can only be surmounted through appropriate strategies and techniques. Flexibility and creativity in addressing price deadlocks are integral to successful online negotiations. Strategies like offer amalgamation, additional services, or quality guarantees can amplify value perception and dissolve barriers. Moreover, harnessing digital advantages is crucial. Digital tools like E-negotiations or E-auctions can simplify processes, enhance efficiency and minimize miscommunication, while fostering a strategic emphasis.

The deployment of these techniques and strategies, coupled with the utilization of digital assets, like software for e-negotiations and e-auctions, document sharing and storage solutions, customer relationship management (CRM) systems or data analytics tools, empowers negotiators to not only achieve successful negotiation

outcomes but also to forge enduring and positive business relationships. In a digitalized business world, it is of paramount importance to adapt to these challenges and craft problem-solving strategies that resonate with the digital milieu.

7.3 PREPARATION

When contemplating the skills and specific facets of online negotiation, it is imperative to delve into the preparatory aspects leading up to such interactions. The preparation phase of negotiations indisputably occupies a pivotal role in achieving successful negotiation outcomes. Throughout most interviews, the significance of meticulous and systematic preparation both to advocate one's interests cogently and to concurrently discern the objectives of the opposing party, was underscored. This section of the thesis is oriented towards unraveling and examining the dynamics of preparing for online negotiations. It seeks to elucidate the blueprint of an efficacious preparation and to appraise the significance of such preparation as a fundamental skill for online negotiation.

In this endeavor, I shall systematically analyze and evaluate the factors that constitute efficient and effective preparation for online negotiations. Furthermore, I shall probe how such preparation can ameliorate communication and contribute to profound negotiation leadership.

1. Meticulous Preparation Prior to Initial Dialogue

Proper groundwork before the initial conversation is paramount in establishing a robust foundation for negotiations. This entails gathering intel about potential clients, encompassing their website, company history, news articles and LinkedIn profiles. Such data facilitates the anticipation of the business opportunity and the trajectory of the negotiation while gearing up for both the client's interest landscape and one's own priorities. This information gathering becomes especially important in the online space because the ability to initiate small talk in this medium is heavily restricted. Therefore, already having a lot of information about the representatives of the other party and their interests can be instrumental in identifying commonalities or engaging topics and can help ease the negotiation partners into a more relaxed and casual conversation.

2. Comprehending Negotiation Aims and Perspective Shifts

A quintessential objective of negotiation preparation is to comprehend the goals of both the opposing party and one's own enterprise. Engaging in a shift of perspective and prepping for varied scenarios allows the identification of potential topics and challenges. A paucity of preparation can engender complications in discourse, whereas rigorous preparation can turn the tide, culminating in propitious negotiation results.

3. Researching the Counterpart and Their Institution

To efficaciously brace oneself for negotiations, it is pivotal to scrutinize the interlocutor and the institution they represent in greater depth. This encompasses reviewing the institution's website and organizational hierarchy and delving into historical records and current news regarding the institution. The online environment allows the negotiator to take full advantage of the gathered data, as a window with the most important information can remain open on a separate screen even during the negotiation.

4. Familiarity with Conversation Participants and Internal Networking

Comprehensive preparation also mandates familiarity with the discussion participants, their roles, areas of responsibility and decision-making purviews. Here again researching on platforms like LinkedIn can prove to be very helpful. It is also paramount to monitor the background and technological equipment of interlocutors operating from a home office, seeking possible clues about personal interests or preferences, such as personal pictures or objects, for example providing information about personal achievements or favorite sports teams. Being attuned to internal networking and staying abreast of company policies and thresholds also comprise integral facets of the preparation process.

5. Integration of Technical and Commercial Facets

Successful negotiation mandates the precise amalgamation of technical and commercial elements. This includes creativity to coalesce technical rationales with commercial considerations or to stipulate reciprocal obligations. A thorough inquiry into individual stakeholders and their associated challenges enables one to proffer substantiated and persuasive arguments. Proficiency in the nature of the proposal, the

purpose of the negotiation and the garnering of intelligence regarding extant projects and divisions are also salient components of the preparatory phase.

6. Drafting of Proposals and Documentation

The crafting of either a technical or comprehensive proposal, complete with detailed technical and commercial segments, demands exhaustive groundwork. It is pivotal to delineate both one's objectives and those of the opposing party in advance. Reviewing customer annotations and modification requests, coupled with consultations with design engineers to resolve issues, emerge as significant steps. Topics emanating from customer documentation and proposals should be revisited, giving due consideration to specific details. However, the process is fraught with challenges when conducted online. Document security is of utmost importance; the risk of data breaches, unauthorized access and phishing attacks must be diligently managed. Employing multi-factor authentication and end-to-end encryption can provide a safeguard against these risks. Similarly, traceability of changes is crucial. The possibility of unauthorized or undocumented changes poses a risk to the integrity of the proposal. Enabling features that track revisions and maintaining strict version control can mitigate this issue. Moreover, compliance with data protection laws across different jurisdictions should not be overlooked, as online sharing could inadvertently violate legal norms. A strong legal framework, perhaps solidified by Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs), can offer an added layer of protection.

7. Preparations for Procurement of Services

Rigorous preparation holds paramount importance for service procurement. It becomes requisite to familiarize oneself with the services to be procured, through previous projects or clients and to contrast and comprehend the requirements and the market scenario. Dialogues with the technical head facilitate an enriched comprehension of one's stance and the pre-emption of potential counterarguments and solutions. The accentuation lies on the significance of meticulous preparation and discernment of human tendencies in negotiations, thereby fostering realistic anticipations and averting naive price haggling.

8. Technical Preparedness

Even prior to entering into negotiations, it is crucial to engage profoundly with the technical platforms which are used during the online negotiation process and attain

mastery over them. Concurrently, ensuring a stable internet connectivity becomes imperative to facilitate seamless presentation and communication. The design of one's virtual or real backdrop too warrants consideration. While a backdrop can be crafted to exude tranquility and professionalism, it could also be judicious to incorporate elements that pique the curiosity of the counterpart and provoke queries. Such elements might encompass photographs, personal artifacts, or even products emblematic of one's enterprise. In such contexts, it becomes vital to be prepared to delve into detailed responses to potential inquiries from the negotiating partner, encompassing technical inquiries. Depending on the composition of icebreakers and personal surroundings online negotiations can in some cases become even more personal than their offline counterparts.

To conclude, it can be asserted that negotiation preparation stands as a pivotal determinant in the success trajectory of online negotiations. Rigorous preparation includes the research into potential clients, the anticipation of business opportunities or focal themes, accommodating the interest profiles of both parties and substantive preparation to address client preferences and to broach one's propositions. Profound understanding of the goals of both parties, perspective shifts, gearing up for a myriad of scenarios and investigating the dialogue participants and their institution are additional paramount facets. The synergy between technical and commercial elements, the drafting of proposals and documentations, as well as preparations in the purview of service procurement, also hold profound significance. Such meticulous preparation ensures the circumvention of potential pitfalls, rendering negotiations efficacious.

7.4 TEAMWORK AND TEAM COORDINATION

Working together as a team and having good coordination in online negotiations is of outstanding importance, as emphasized by the expert interviews. The qualitative analysis of these discussions illustrates that the success of negotiations significantly hinges on constructive dynamics and effective interaction within the negotiating team. Experts delineate team competency and coordination into distinct facets.

They emphatically stress the significance of a harmonious and coordinated negotiating team in ensuring effective negotiation strategies. Such high-performing teams often comprise experienced members with an in-depth awareness of the strengths,

weaknesses and working styles of their peers. Moreover, they possess the ability to adeptly allocate tasks and ensure that each member contributes effectively towards the realization of collective negotiation objectives. In the realm of negotiations, discord or disruptions within the team, attributable to poor alignment or communication, can often be perceived as unprofessional. Such tensions may adversely influence the counterpart's perception of the team's integrity and coherence, ultimately hampering the efficacy of the negotiations.

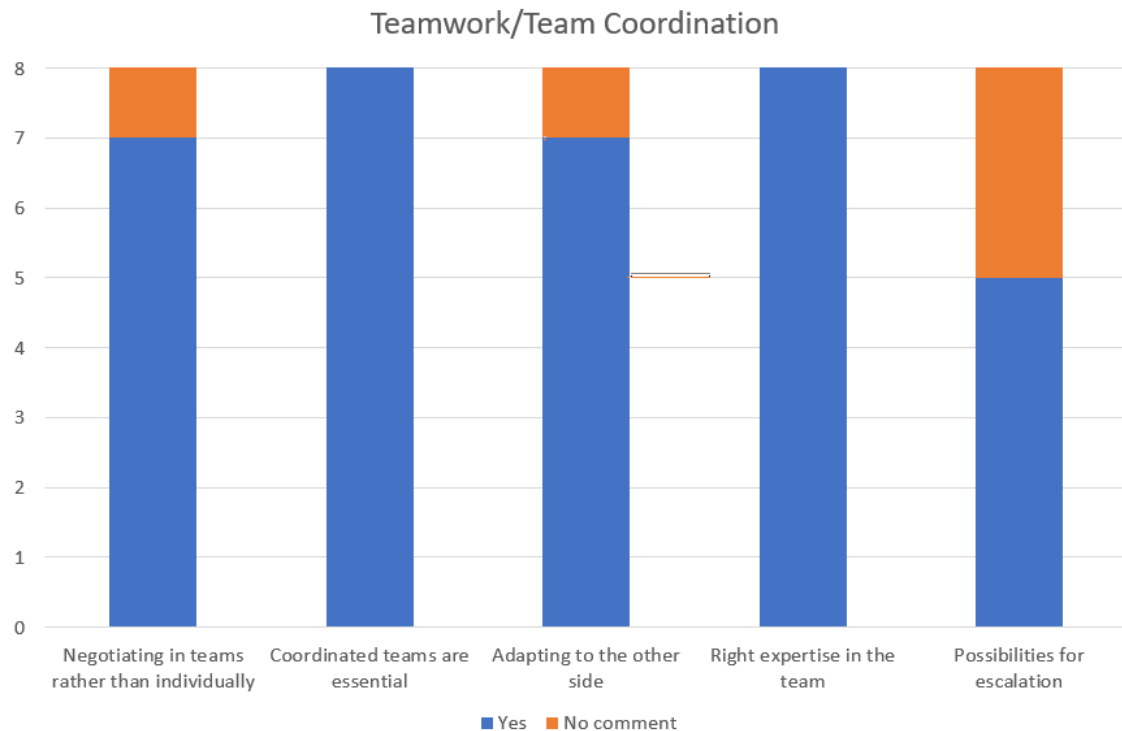
Therefore, it is important to meticulously plan the team composition, tailored to the client's specific requirements and the unique character of the subject matter under negotiation. A well-balanced team endowed with both in-depth technical expertise concerning the product or service in question, as well as leadership acumen and strategic insight, often tends to operate more effectively and achieve superior outcomes. Additionally, experts highlight the significance of including decision-makers within the negotiating team, as it can circumvent escalation levels and bolster the team's credibility. However, that while incorporating senior officials is judicious, it should predominantly be confined to escalation scenarios to preserve and not dilute the authority vested in these leadership roles.

The size of the negotiation team emerges as another important consideration that must be judiciously weighed during every negotiation process. An excessively large team could potentially overwhelm the client, engendering sentiments of imbalance or disproportionality. This can inadvertently exert undue pressure on the client, diminishing the prospects of a favorable agreement. Conversely, an undersized team might convey a perception of the company's lack of requisite resources or specialized knowledge. This can erode the team's credibility, raising doubts regarding the enterprise's professionalism and competency. Adhering to "business etiquette" in negotiations also entails ensuring a balance in hierarchical levels of the negotiation teams on both sides, promoting a sense of mutual respect and parity. Ideally, the number of team members should mirror that of the client. An imbalanced ratio might foster a skewed dynamic, potentially straining negotiations. Ultimately, the selection and number of team members play a central role in determining the outcome of negotiations. An effective team is characterized not just by its size but also by the capabilities and proficiencies of its members. Establishing the right balance is essential to guarantee both the team's efficiency and a conducive negotiation ambiance.

In the backdrop of the profound digital transformation, which has redefined the very concept of negotiation, teamwork and coordination assume a renewed dimension and necessitate additional considerations. Technological advancements have fundamentally altered our modes of communication and interaction, unlocking novel opportunities but also challenges for negotiation teams. In online negotiations, for instance, assembling all team members on a single screen can be advantageous. This not only enhances collaboration but also aids in effectively capturing and interpreting non-verbal communication cues, which can be more elusive in a virtual setting. Concurrently, the digital communication milieu demands stringent discipline and focus. Juggling multiple tasks while concentrating on the negotiation can easily project an impression of distraction or inattentiveness without solid discipline, potentially derailing the negotiation trajectory.

Depending on the specific context and subject of negotiations, incorporating various experts into the team might be requisite. For instance, the technical lead, given their comprehensive understanding and profound knowledge of the product or service under negotiation, can play an indispensable role. In negotiations revolving around project capacities, the project manager, with their holistic perspective and deep comprehension of project requirements and progress, can significantly influence the outcome. Moreover, in complex negotiations involving intricate contract clauses such as liability or warranty, seeking legal expertise might become essential. Legal professionals can provide invaluable insights and counsel, helping to circumvent potential legal pitfalls and negotiate a fair and legally robust contract.

In summary, the success of negotiations is largely contingent upon the ability to operate and coordinate effectively within a team. Especially in an increasingly digitalized business landscape where online negotiations are becoming the norm, these skills are of paramount importance. A thorough understanding of team dynamics and effective coordination can spell the difference between a triumphant and a failed negotiation outcome.



7.5 BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

The digitization process has fundamentally transformed our methods of communication and interaction. However, for online interactions, personal and professional relationships continue to play a pivotal role. In this environment, specifically, these relationships have been identified as a key determinant of negotiation success. This section of the thesis delves into the intricate processes and strategies underpinning relationship-building in online negotiations, based on insights from the interviewed experts. Collectively, this section aims to augment our comprehension of the role and importance of relationship-building in online negotiations. It seeks to offer fresh perspectives on this multifaceted topic and lay a foundation for prospective studies and deliberations.

The expert interviews illuminate several dimensions of relationship-building, encompassing the significance of emotional bonds, the acknowledgment of individual needs and a preference for personal interactions. They also shed light on the challenges imposed by the absence of face-to-face contact in online negotiations and proffer diverse approaches to surmount these challenges.

The role of relationships in varied negotiation contexts is also broached, accentuating the differential importance of relationships between C-Level negotiations (CEO, CFO,

COO, etc.), and other contexts. Additional topics addressed include the paramountcy of trust-building within specific sectors like public services and academia and the imperativeness of nurturing relationships even prior to the actual commencement of a project or negotiation start.

In the initial phase of negotiation, the emphasis is on cultivating and maintaining relationships. The interviews reveal that it is crucial to consider the needs and preferences of each client on an individual basis. Emotional connections, enhanced by gestures like expressing interest in a client's personal life, fortify these ties and pave the way for future business endeavors.

However, it is imperative to recognize that relationships can deteriorate in the absence of personal interaction, especially if negotiations are conducted in a purely formal and detached manner. In such scenarios, it could be beneficial to seek collaborative relationships and present arguments for sustained cooperation. For instance, shared revenue trajectories or corporate objectives can bolster such partnerships, fostering mutual support during negotiations.

Furthermore, as negotiations progress, the existing relationships become instrumental in interpreting the behavior of counterparts. A robust relationship can aid in better gauging an individual's behavior and discerning the feasibility of further negotiations. This could be achieved through candid, open communication and catering to human needs.

Nevertheless, the salience of relationships fluctuates according to the context. In certain instances, especially during C-Level negotiations, relationships might play a diminished role. However, with other stakeholders, such as influencers, they become crucial. In these contexts, a strong relationship facilitates more open communication and collective solution-seeking, even when budgets are constrained and initial plans are unattainable.

Multiple experts specifically touched upon the context of relationship-building within the public sector, including universities and colleges. Here, the focus transcends mere negotiations, encompassing trust-building and value proposition. Active listening and proffering insightful and beneficial ideas become vital to ensure lasting impressions and thereby facilitate successful negotiations. These are however approaches that can also be applied to other markets.

It is paramount to acknowledge that not all relationships are homogeneous. They differ based on duration, trust quotient and the methods employed to initiate and maintain them. While personal meetings outside of negotiations can contribute to relationship development, discussions during negotiations are also pivotal. However, discretion is advised as the demarcation between personal and business interactions can be nebulous. Therefore, it is crucial to differentiate between business relationships and personal friendships, as conflating the two can compromise one's ability to assess the overall situation in a clear and unbiased manner. Such conflation may lead to a loss of control during the negotiation.

The aforementioned aspects apply to both online and offline negotiations. But there are some facets of relationship building that require further specification in the online space:

Digital Communication Nuances: Online negotiations lack the subtle cues like body language and tone that come naturally in face-to-face interactions. Here the importance of clarity and precision in written communication cannot be overstated.

Virtual Rapport Building: While it's easier to connect on a personal level in face-to-face meetings through small gestures or observations about the environment, doing so online requires creative strategies like virtual coffee or lunch chats.

Time Zone Sensitivity: Online negotiations also often occur between parties in different time zones. Being mindful of this and planning meetings accordingly shows consideration and respect, helping to build trust and positive rapport.

Data Security: Ensuring that all communication platforms used for negotiation are secure builds trust. With the increasing instances of data breaches and hacks, the assurance that sensitive information is treated with the utmost security can go a long way in relationship-building.

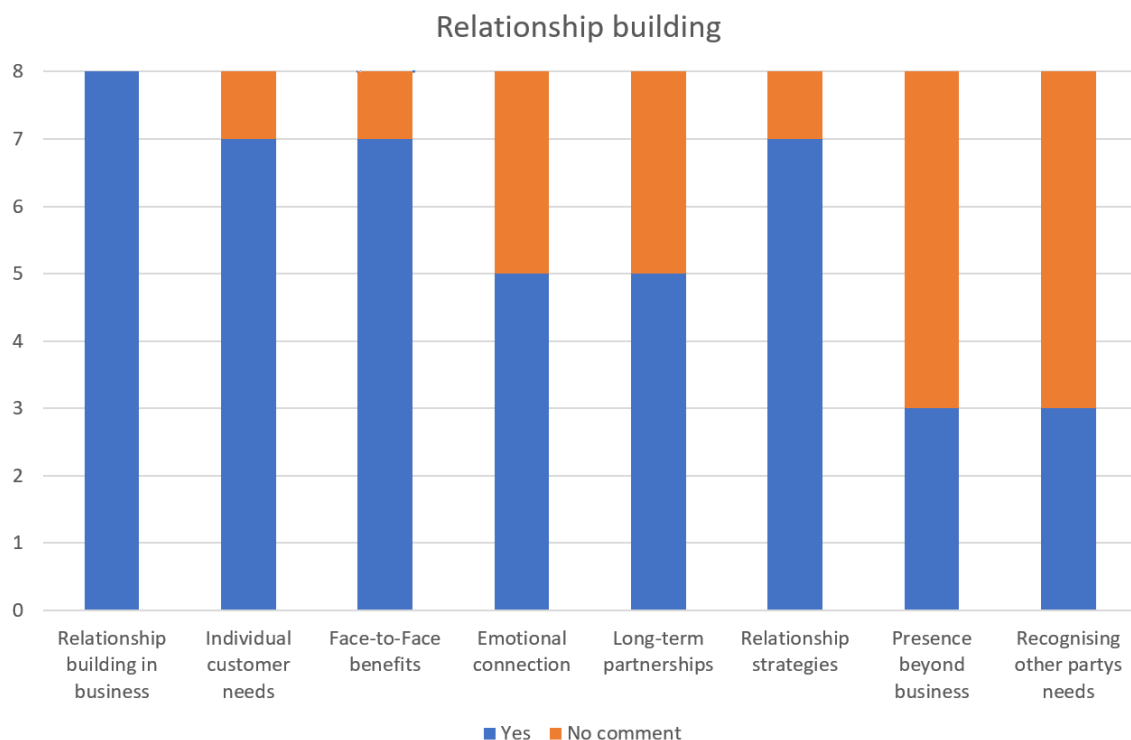
Regular Follow-ups: In the online world, the absence of regular interaction can quickly lead to the other person losing sight of you. Regular but unintrusive follow-ups through emails or messages can keep the relationship active.

These can also be automated but personalized to ensure continuous engagement without being overwhelming.

In conclusion, relationship-building, both online and offline, necessitates time for maturation. It is about convincing with competence on one hand and reaching a personal level through gestures like small talk on the other. In the digital milieu, this can pose challenges, yet it remains essential to establish and strengthen these relationships, facilitating smoother negotiations and ensuring optimal outcomes.

In summary, the formulation and nurturing of relationships in online negotiations emerge as the central components of effective negotiation management. A systematic and judicious approach to relationship-building enables a more profound understanding of negotiation counterparts and fosters more effective interaction. This engenders an environment conducive to more collaborative and productive negotiation behaviors.

In light of this, it becomes evident that establishing and nurturing relationships are integral and indispensable facets of negotiation strategies within online negotiations. Hence, it is paramount for negotiation leaders to assimilate this aspect into their negotiation practices and hone the requisite skills.



7.6 DEALING WITH FOREIGN CULTURES

In negotiations in general and especially in online negotiations, it is indispensable to grapple with intercultural encounters and to consider whether they necessitate a distinct approach. In the following, I will initially elucidate the unique negotiation nuances that can potentially arise in such situations. Subsequently, I will catalog various approaches to interfacing with different cultures, delineating the advantages and disadvantages inherent in these methodologies. Finally, I will underscore the importance of cultural competency and adaptability, placing them within the broader context of negotiation skills.

To commence, it is imperative to clarify that the culture of one's negotiating counterpart is not the sole determinant of their behavior during the negotiation process. The individual's character and their accumulated experiences interplay significantly in shaping their negotiation behavior and preferences, as does their personal background. Nonetheless, particular preferences specific to distinct cultures are indisputable. Although there are some people who do not adapt to these cultural realities, almost everyone is influenced by them in some way.

Each culture possesses inherent characteristics that might influence the negotiation process. These traits span a vast spectrum, encompassing, but not limited to, divergent communication styles, distinct time management expectations and varied conceptions of respect and hierarchy. For instance, U.S. negotiators might tend to circumvent a direct "no," opting instead to maintain dialogue continuity. In contrast, Japanese counterparts may often prioritize decorum and customarily allocate more time for reflection and decision-making. Within Germany and Central Europe, one might observe more forthright communication and a certain equanimity regarding scheduling, while Southern European cultures might favor a more animated communicative style and demonstrate a more fluid perception of time. Recognizing and adapting to these cultural divergences is paramount.

The inaugural communicative mechanism under our purview is again termed "mirroring." Similar to the previously mentioned mirroring of emotions at its most rudimentary level, this involves emulating the behavioral patterns of one's interlocutor, facilitating a more relaxed and familiar ambiance. However, an inherent pitfall of this approach is the inadvertent reinforcement of stereotypes. Embracing the characteristics of an unfamiliar culture, especially without comprehensive engagement,

risks lapsing into stereotyping. This can again be reinforced in online negotiations, therefore, it is vital to cultivate cultural awareness judiciously, steering clear of deriving prejudicial conclusions. Fundamentally, beyond mere cultural considerations, one should exercise caution in overly conforming to their counterpart, lest one's genuine authenticity is compromised. Overlooking this can swiftly lead to a superficial role-playing demeanor. Juggling disparate personas with different clients is not only challenging to sustain but can also precipitate significant dilemmas. Should multiple individuals with distinct perceptions of one converge in a negotiation or mere discourse, maintaining congruity becomes an intricate endeavor, as enacting both "characters" simultaneously proves unfeasible. In summation while mirroring can facilitate rapport to a certain extent, exceeding this threshold risks eroding one's authenticity, potentially leading to discontent and, ultimately, undermining the negotiation outcome.

Beyond mirroring, another *modus operandi*, predicated on situational adaptability, perceives behavioral adjustments to one's counterpart as strategic concessions. Situational adaptation implies aligning with the opposite party predominantly when seeking a favor and when they hold a stronger negotiation stance. In such circumstances, flexibility, bolstered by the technique of mirroring, can be astute, potentially leveling the playing field at least linguistically.

Conversely, when the scales tilt in one's favor, adopting a more assertive and authoritative posture might be fitting, leveraging one's methodological preferences. In such junctures, exuding confidence and, if necessary, vehemently advocating for one's interests can be advantageous. The intensity of this can be varied but should generally be somewhat higher in online negotiations than in conventional negotiations due to the inherent dampening of both emotions and potency of one's statements when communicating over a screen.

Irrespective of the circumstances, it remains imperative to maintain a level of politeness and respect at all times. Even when the need arises to be assertive in negotiations, one must always recognize that a constructive and respectful dialogue forms the foundation for a successful negotiation.

Another salient aspect of negotiating across diverse cultures is language. Ideally, communicating in the native language of the person with whom one is communicating always represents the most straightforward approach to surmount linguistic barriers, ensuring the nuanced subtleties of conversation remain intact. Indeed, such

communication fosters a deeper comprehension of meaning by accommodating the subtle variances in word choice and expression, which are central to clear and effective dialogue. However, this is frequently impractical, necessitating intermediary measures.

As a general principle, the more intermediary stages introduced between negotiating parties, the greater the accompanying challenges become. An instance of such an intermediary stage could manifest when both parties utilize a non-native language that neither has mastered to perfection. Another such instance arises with the inclusion of an interpreter, who acts as a conduit between the negotiating entities. In these situations, it becomes exceedingly challenging to discern the nuanced undertones and the intricate ambiance of the discourse. Linguistic subtleties might dissipate, leading to potential misunderstandings.

To proactively mitigate such misunderstandings and effectively bridge language barriers, the act of reassurance emerges as a pivotal step. Given the potentially devastating ramifications of misconstrued interpretations due to linguistic barriers, such an approach is indispensable to circumvent erroneous assumptions that could misguide the entirety of the negotiation.

This reassurance process comprises three stages:

1. Initially, the communication's objective is precisely defined and elucidated.
2. Subsequently, a targeted discussion concerning this precise topic ensues.
3. Finally, the dialogue is summarized and reiterated to ensure a mutual understanding.

This methodology ensures the accuracy of the comprehended communication. If it is neglected and later it is found that misunderstandings are present, it may convey an impression of negligence toward the other party.

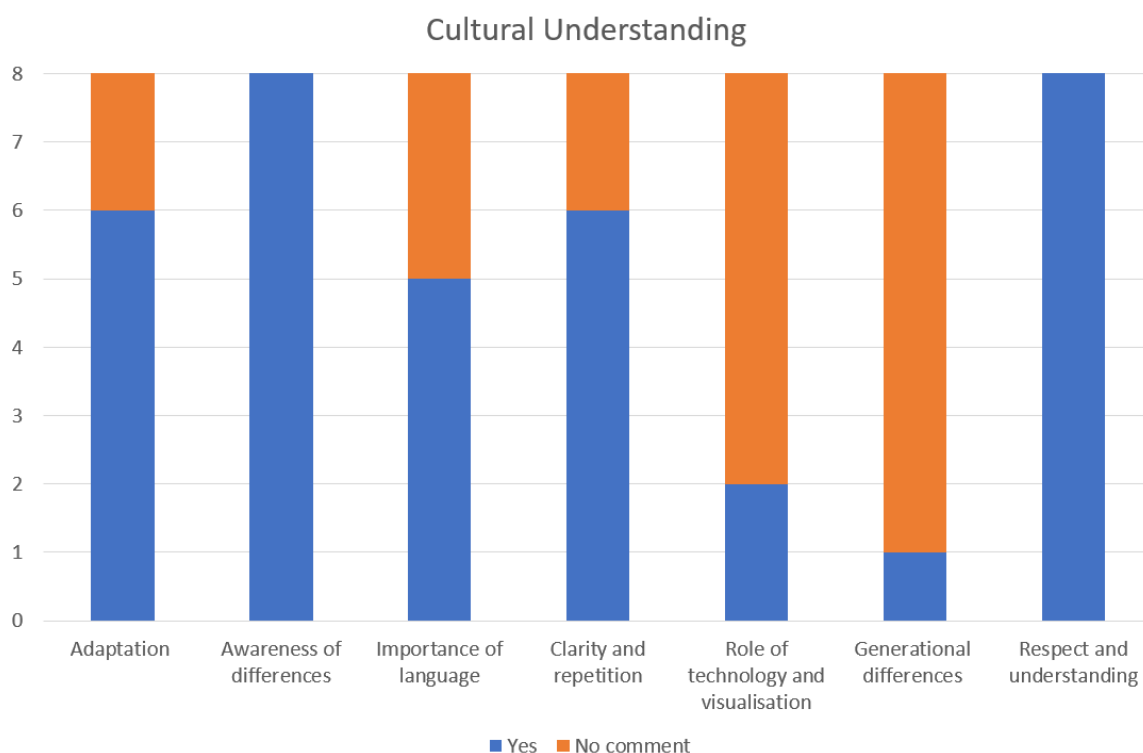
Another crucial component of reassurance involves the written documentation of the discussions, disseminated to all participating entities. This allows each party to contemplate the presented contents at their leisure and promptly rectify any potential miscommunications.

Additionally, it is prudent to exhibit self-critique and reflect on potential communication lapses personally. By assuming responsibility for possible oversights, not only is the risk of the negotiating party feeling misunderstood minimized, but a sincere interest is also conveyed by intermittently seeking clarifications and reiterating what has been

said. This imparts a degree of confidence to both oneself and the interlocutor, fostering a smoother and more harmonious negotiation process.

Overcoming language barriers also mandates openness and intercultural sensitivity. It is paramount to recognize that language is not solely a conduit for information transmission but encompasses cultural nuances and diverse communicative styles. Through cognizance of these variances and a willingness to adapt and comprehend, language barriers can be surmounted and effective communication facilitated.

To conclude, the interaction and negotiation across disparate cultures is an intricate process, necessitating both linguistic and cultural proficiencies. It is fundamentally crucial to be aware of the unique characteristics of different cultures to avert potential misunderstandings and ensure effective communication. Simultaneously, the individual's authenticity must be preserved to avoid subsuming a foreign cultural role that cannot be sustained in the long run. Intercultural negotiations also demand flexibility and adaptability, as it is essential to tailor one's approach according to the specific conditions of the negotiating counterpart and the prevailing situation to achieve optimal outcomes. Thorough preparation, effective communication and the utilization of various tools and strategies can aid in navigating these challenges.



7.7 USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND TOOLS

Amidst the digital transformation and the adjustments necessitated by recent events, technological proficiency has gained considerable significance in online negotiations. This competence encompasses not merely technical knowledge but also an in-depth understanding of the specific dynamics and nuances inherent to online negotiations.

The effectiveness of online negotiations significantly hinges upon the mastery of an array of communication tools. All consulted experts have installed prominent communication platforms such as Teams, Webex, Zoom and Skype on their devices and can effortlessly switch between these platforms as situations dictate. The agility to adapt flexibly to a client's preferred platform and swiftly transitioning to an alternative platform in the face of technical disruptions is a pivotal skill in this milieu.

Beyond a foundational familiarity with the operation of these tools, an extensive acquaintance with their multifarious features and capabilities is paramount. It is not merely essential to grasp basic functionalities like screen sharing or toggling between camera and audio settings, but also more intricate features such as utilizing integrated whiteboards or the ability to rewind during an ongoing webcast.

The dynamics and etiquette associated with online meetings call for a distinct form of discipline and sensitivity. Participants must discern when it is appropriate to activate or deactivate their camera or microphone, signaling their attentiveness and commitment throughout the negotiation. A judicious and meticulous approach to the intricacies of online communication can mitigate misunderstandings and miscommunications.

Another salient dimension of technological competence is the integration and utilization of supplemental technological resources to enhance and enrich negotiations. For instance, specialized devices like interactive boards or visualization tools can be employed for topic visualization, aiding negotiation processes. Visual representations can transcend language barriers, proving particularly invaluable in overcoming linguistic challenges in international and intercultural negotiations.

When deploying technological resources, one must also deliberate on the use of two fundamental tools in every online negotiation: the camera and microphone. The contemporary market presents an array of specialized models, each advantageous in varied situations. Negotiators must contemplate whether to use a wide-angle camera,

capable of capturing the entire team in a single frame, or if team members should be connected individually. Both approaches proffer unique advantages: while appearing collectively on a single camera display projects a more cohesive and unified presence, individually connecting team members affords them the luxury to communicate discreetly without the knowledge of the opposing party. Moreover, especially when presenting during negotiations, it may be judicious to employ multiple cameras from diverse angles, offering the counterpart the most comprehensive view of the proceedings at different stages.

Technology can also be harnessed for recording negotiations and bolstering dialogue. This can facilitate the generation of automatic subtitles in diverse languages or permit revisiting the conversation at a later juncture. Such capabilities can assist in clarifying ambiguities and augment the sustainability of the negotiation outcomes.

Effectual management and documentation of the negotiation process constitutes another pivotal facet of technological proficiency. This could involve the use of internal platforms, like Microsoft SharePoint or Google Docs for meeting coordination, crafting meeting reports, or leveraging shared documents to monitor negotiation progression.

In summary, technological proficiency in online negotiations is of cardinal importance. It mandates not only technical acumen but also a profound comprehension of the dynamics and context intrinsic to online negotiations. Given the incessant evolution of technology, ongoing training and adaptation to novel tools and technologies become increasingly paramount. Drawing from the consensus of expert testimonials, it is evident that such adaptation ultimately fosters more effective and triumphant online negotiations.

8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

8.1 IMPORTANT COMPETENCIES IN ONLINE NEGOTIATIONS AND THEIR IMPROVEMENT

Enhancing one's online negotiation capabilities presents a multifaceted challenge, yet it can be surmounted through a variety of methodologies and approaches. This intricate endeavor can be viewed as a dynamic and perpetually

evolving process that mandates a commitment to continual learning and profound and consistent adaptation of practical experience.

One primary method of augmenting one's online negotiation capabilities involves deeply engaging with the resources available for learning and professional advancement. Numerous interviewed experts emphasized the invaluable significance of self-directed study and perpetual learning as pivotal to enhancing negotiation skills. These resources manifest in myriad forms, including books, online lectures, TED-Talks, professional coaching materials and beyond. These resources proffer a wide spectrum of knowledge and tactics, ranging from foundational to highly specialized negotiation techniques, thus enabling learners to augment their proficiency and competency in this domain.

The utilization of literary resources emerges as a particularly salient aspect. While online negotiations in their current format constitute a relatively novel phenomenon, there already exists a considerable volume of scholarly publications and academic papers addressing this specific area of interest. In addition to this emerging literature, traditional negotiation resources maintain their relevance; many established concepts are either directly applicable or can be slightly adapted for utilization in the digital sphere. Experts advocate leveraging the wisdom and experiences of distinguished negotiators to expand one's skillset. This can be accomplished by delving into works focused on the art of negotiation. For instance, contemporary literature on behavioral economics and related disciplines can illuminate the latest insights and tactics in this realm. However, experts also underscore that venerable and historical texts on the subject, such as Sunzi's "The Art of War", should not be overlooked, given their capacity to impart profound insights into the strategic facets of negotiation.

Nevertheless, it is imperative to underscore that mere familiarity with negotiation strategies and techniques is insufficient. It is of critical import to apply this knowledge within one's professional area. This signifies that the acquired techniques and strategies must be practically implemented and applied. Only through this hands-on application can theoretical understanding be transmuted into actionable skills that can be effectively employed in genuine negotiation scenarios. Consequently, it is indispensable to cohesively merge the theory and practice of negotiation to optimize the efficacy of one's negotiation capabilities. If honing one's abilities within genuine negotiations is deemed unfeasible or overly risky, several experts point to simulated

negotiations as an effective tool for refining one's negotiation skills. Within these simulations negotiations with fictional stances and negotiation subjects are executed. In these scenarios, it is advantageous if at least one party possesses significant experience to engender a realistic negotiation environment. To further enhance the level of realism in training or practice, it is advisable to construct an environment that closely approximates real-world conditions. This could involve simulating a broad range of scenarios, such as varying team compositions and the integration of both online and on-site negotiation participants. Furthermore, it may also be prudent to simulate challenges, such as technological failures, to prepare for appropriate contingency measures and responses under such circumstances.

The compilation and analysis of experiential learning constitute another foundational pillar in the training and enhancement of online negotiation capabilities. Every interviewed expert underscored the salience of this aspect, noting that each negotiation scenario is contextually unique, bringing its distinct challenges. This denotes the absence of a "one-size-fits-all" solution or universally applicable formula for every negotiation. Instead, the negotiator must be perpetually primed to refine and hone their skills and approaches through repeated practice. Experts concur that mastering the art of negotiation is not an overnight endeavor. Rather, it is a long-term undertaking necessitating continual learning, experience and practice. This process encompasses both gathering experiences from diverse negotiation scenarios and learning from them, thereby perpetually refining and adjusting one's strategies and techniques. In this context, particularly after challenging or failed negotiations, a post-analysis can be instrumental in isolating critical problem points and contemplating steps to preclude such pitfalls in the future. In today's rapidly evolving landscape, it is also crucial to consistently monitor potential innovations, such as technological advancements or new software applications and assess their utility, both for the improvement of one's own negotiation processes but also to prevent potential surprises during the negotiations.

In addition to experience, experts emphasize the pivotal role of creativity and problem-solving skills in the art of negotiation. These competencies encompass the readiness and ability to rapidly and flexibly respond to unexpected challenges or obstacles that may emerge during a negotiation. Such responses might, for instance, involve crafting innovative solutions or identifying alternative strategies to navigate impasses. These

competencies become particularly salient in negotiations where unforeseen dilemmas arise that necessitate swift and effective reactions.

Related to this the digital realm presents unique conflict resolution challenges. The restricted communication abilities and more detached manner of online negotiations makes conflict resolution prowess especially important here. Adaptability in communication, utilizing cooling-off periods, and harnessing technology to bridge communication gaps are essential. Even more so than in traditional negotiations, online conflict resolution is about setting boundaries and maintaining control. Respect, cultural awareness, and thorough preparation underscore the essence of successful conflict management in the online realm.

The specialists further highlighted other key proficiencies that one must cultivate or refine. These include effective communication, a predisposition to compromise and thorough, comprehensive preparation ahead of negotiations. Effective communication is paramount for articulating and advocating one's positions and proposals lucidly and persuasively, while a willingness to compromise paves the way for mutual solutions, ensuring negotiation success. Thorough preparation, meanwhile, is vital to ensure clear understanding of one's own objectives and boundaries and an in-depth comprehension of the opposing party's stance and needs. These competencies are interrelated and collectively enhance the overall efficacy and success rate of negotiations.

The ability to discern body language and non-verbal cues is another cornerstone skill in negotiation, especially within a digital environment such as online negotiations. The interviewed experts underscored the importance of this skill, suggesting that gauging an interlocutor's mood and intentions through non-verbal signals is crucial. Such assessments might rely on various indicators, including tone, posture, facial expressions and even pauses in conversation. Within an online context, this can be particularly challenging, as technical constraints, such as video quality or limited field of view, may compromise the quality and precision of available non-verbal signals. However, this emphasizes the importance of one's ability to pick up on even the smallest of these non-verbal cues.

Online negotiations also require a comprehensive understanding of foreign cultures, as each brings distinct negotiation traits, ranging from communication techniques to respect perceptions. While culture shapes behavior, personal experiences and

personal character must not be overlooked. Techniques like cultural "mirroring" can build rapport but may perpetuate stereotypes. It's vital to be adaptable, assertive yet polite, and recognize language's cultural nuances. Clear communication and documentation minimize misunderstandings, especially when using shared non-native languages or interpreters. For successful intercultural online negotiations, a holistic approach combining awareness, authenticity, and flexibility is crucial.

Several experts especially emphasized the indispensability of thoroughly understanding and valuing the product or service one represents. This profound knowledge and appreciation bolster one's credibility, facilitating a compelling and authentic communication of the product or service's benefits and value.

Furthermore, the capacity to foster and maintain positive, productive relationships with negotiation counterparts is integral to successful negotiations. Experts placed significant emphasis on the virtues of openness, affable demeanor and actively involving the negotiation partner in the process. They stressed that triumphant negotiations often hinge on the ability to convey a sense of shared objectives and mutual commitment. Such an approach can transition negotiations from a zero-sum game, where one party's gain signifies the other's loss, to a win-win scenario where both sides reap benefits. This strategy can enhance trust and collaboration between negotiating parties, especially important in the natively less trustful online negotiations, ultimately leading to a successful and satisfactory resolution. Building and nurturing such positive relationships necessitates both interpersonal prowess and a congenial, open attitude towards the negotiations and the parties involved.

Successful online negotiations also heavily depend on effective teamwork and coordination. The team's synergy, task delegation, and tapping into individual strengths strongly influence the negotiation outcome. A well-coordinated team, balanced in size and expertise, aligns with client expectations and navigates digital challenges far easier. Discipline, correct application of technology, and awareness of team dynamics are essential to handle digital negotiations' complexities.

Another salient skill is the proficiency in technology and digital tools which is especially vital for online negotiations. Beyond basic tool understanding, negotiators should master advanced features and maintain digital etiquette, such as camera and microphone usage. Mastery of platforms like Teams, Zoom, and Skype, along with adaptability to client preferences, is crucial. Strategic technology use enhances

communication, especially in cross-cultural scenarios. Platforms like SharePoint facilitate negotiation documentation. As technology advances, continuous learning and adaptability underscore the importance of technological expertise in successful online negotiations.

Last but not least, experts highlighted the significance of handling substantial monetary figures with composure and detachment. Negotiations, particularly in the business realm, often involve significant monetary sums, making it imperative to remain collected. They pointed out the peril, especially for novice negotiators, of being overwhelmed by substantial figures, impairing rational decision-making. Seasoned negotiators tend to view these amounts not in the context of personal wealth but as a resource to be deployed effectively and strategically to attain optimal outcomes. This skill remains of equal importance both online and offline. However, the more detached manner of online negotiations might even help the negotiator in this regard, making it easier to distance oneself from the monetary sums.

In conclusion, enhancing online negotiation skills is a continuous endeavor that extends beyond mere technical proficiencies. This endeavor demands a blend of proactive self-initiative, targeted self-study, extensive practical experience and unwavering commitment to continuous learning and personal evolution.

Each component plays a pivotal role. Self-initiative propels individuals to actively engage with resources such as literature, online videos, or coaching sessions, utilizing them as avenues for learning and refining one's negotiation strategies and techniques. Self-study facilitates the acquisition and comprehension of foundational and advanced negotiation concepts and strategies. Practical experiences provide invaluable opportunities to apply, test and hone knowledge gained through self-study. Moreover, direct interactions with negotiation counterparts foster the evolution and refinement of interpersonal skills, including communication, empathy and relationship-building.

8.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR PRAXIS APPLICATION

The intricate process of honing online negotiation skills, as elucidated, offers profound implications for the field of higher education. By translating the previously gained insights into actionable strategies, academic institutions can optimally prepare students for success in the digital age.

Both online and offline negotiations:

1. Integrating Negotiation Skills into the Curriculum: Given the multifaceted nature of online negotiation capabilities, integrating them as a core competency within relevant academic programs becomes indispensable. Courses designed around negotiation skills should not just focus on theory but emphasize the coalescence of theoretical knowledge with practical application, mirroring the experts' emphasis on merging theory with practice.

2. Resource Augmentation: Universities should actively curate and offer resources for self-directed study. Whether through digital libraries containing seminal works on negotiation, hosting webinars with distinguished negotiators, or offering access to relevant online platforms, students should have ample avenues to expand their negotiation repertoire.

3. Simulated Negotiations: Building upon the experts' recommendation, institutions can set up simulated negotiation environments within their curriculum. Through role-playing exercises and scenarios that mimic real-world negotiations, students can actively practice and refine their skills in a controlled, feedback-rich environment.

4. Feedback and Reflection: Post-negotiation analysis is pivotal for learning and growth. Academic programs can incorporate structured feedback sessions, allowing students to reflect upon their negotiation styles, identify gaps and refine their approaches.

5. Incorporating Soft Skills Training: The highlighted significance of competencies like effective communication, creative problem-solving and relationship-building necessitates their inclusion in curricular and co-curricular activities. Workshops, seminars and even specialized courses can be introduced to equip students with these invaluable soft skills.

6. Technological Preparedness: Given the emphasis on online negotiations, ensuring students are adept at using digital tools becomes paramount. This includes training them to discern non-verbal cues in digital settings, familiarizing them with online negotiation platforms and ensuring they can effectively communicate and negotiate in digital environments.

7. Continuous Learning and Evolution: In alignment with the experts' emphasis on the continuous nature of learning, higher education institutions should foster a culture of lifelong learning. This can be actualized by offering advanced courses, continuous professional development sessions and alumni engagement events focused on the evolving nature of negotiations.

8. Interdisciplinary Approach: Given the diverse array of competencies involved, an interdisciplinary approach to teaching negotiations can be highly beneficial. For instance, insights from behavioral economics, psychology and even history can provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the art of negotiation.

9. Real-World Exposure: Internships, externships, or cooperative programs can offer students real-world platforms to apply their negotiation skills, providing them with invaluable experiential learning that complements their academic training.

Specific for online negotiations:

1. Online Negotiation Platforms and Tools: In addition to general negotiation courses, offer specialized modules that exclusively focus on online negotiations. This could include training in digital negotiation platforms, e-contracts and the use of AI in negotiations.

2. Digital Communication Skills: Train students in understanding how different online channels (email, video conferencing, chats) affect the negotiation process. The mode of communication can profoundly influence the negotiation outcome.

3. Virtual Simulations: In addition to general simulated negotiations, employ virtual environments that replicate online negotiation settings. This would help students understand the nuances of negotiating via a screen, including the limitations in reading body language and other non-verbal cues.

4. Online Cultural Sensitivities: Global negotiations often occur online. Teaching students about online etiquette across cultures can be highly beneficial, including how time zones affect negotiation dynamics.

5. Online Resources and MOOCs: In the self-study component, prioritize resources that focus specifically on online negotiation tactics. Promote MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) from experts in this subfield to augment learning.

6. Security: Given the online context, covering the basics of data security protocols in digital negotiations is crucial.

7. Online Networking: Encourage students to engage with online negotiation communities, LinkedIn groups and forums. The more networked they are, the more exposed they'll be to real-world challenges and solutions in online negotiations.

8. Technological Troubleshooting: Equip students with basic troubleshooting skills for technology hiccups that are common during online negotiations. This can prevent minor technical issues from becoming deal-breakers.

9. Case Studies and Post-Mortems: Include detailed breakdowns of real-world online negotiations gone right or wrong. Allow students to dissect these to understand the intricacies involved in digital negotiation landscapes.

10. Ongoing Updates on Technology Trends: Online tools and platforms are continuously evolving. Make sure that there are periodic updates to the curriculum to incorporate the latest tools and trends in online negotiations.

In essence, the intricate process of enhancing online negotiation skills, as highlighted in this thesis, presents a roadmap for higher education institutions. By taking a holistic, multifaceted approach that blends theory with practice, curricular with co-curricular and academic rigor with real-world application, universities can optimally equip their students for success in the complex world of online negotiations.

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- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
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10(QUESTIONNAIRE/INTERVIEW GUIDE)

1. Brief introduction of the person.
 - a. Where do you work?
 - b. What position do you hold in your company?
2. To what extent and since when have you been involved in the subject matter?
 - a. What motivated you to engage with negotiations and especially online negotiations?
 - b. In your opinion, how has the importance of online negotiations changed in recent years?
3. How do you approach online negotiations? What strategies do you employ?
 - a. Can you give an example of how you start an online negotiation?
 - b. How do you adapt your negotiation strategy when confronted with a different culture or language barriers?
4. How do you assess your negotiation skills?
 - a. What specific skills do you consider particularly important in negotiation?
 - b. How have you improved your negotiation skills?

5. Have you had experiences with difficult negotiation situations online?
 - a. What are the biggest challenges you have encountered in online negotiations?
 - b. How did you overcome the challenges that arose in these difficult online negotiations?
 - c. Can you provide a concrete example of a difficult situation?
 - d. What have you learned from this experience that you can apply to future negotiations?
6. How do you deal with difficult conversation partners who behave aggressively or hostilely online? What strategies do you use to de-escalate these conversations and get the negotiation back on track?
7. How do you deal with deadlocks in online negotiations? What steps do you take to break the deadlock and achieve a successful agreement?
8. How important is it to build a good relationship with the other party, especially in online negotiations? What are some strategies you use to promote trust and cooperation between parties?
9. What role does communication play in online negotiations? How do you handle potential language barriers or cultural differences?
 - a. How do you adapt your communication strategy when speaking with people from different cultural backgrounds?
 - b. How can language barriers in online negotiations be overcome?
 - c. How important are emotions and body language in online negotiations? How can one incorporate these elements into negotiation techniques when only visually and not physically present?
10. How important is it to have clear goals for an online negotiation? How do you define these goals and how do you ensure that both parties understand and accept them?
 - a. How can you track the progress of an online negotiation during the process? What strategies can you use to ensure that you can react to changes or problems in real-time?
 - b. How can you structure an online negotiation so that it runs smoothly from start to finish? What are some best practices to ensure that all participants stay on track?

11. How important is it to carry out thorough preparation before an online negotiation? What steps do you consider part of successful preparation?
 - a. What specific steps do you recommend for preparing for an online negotiation?
 - b. What steps do you take to ensure that you and the other party can effectively and efficiently conduct the negotiation?
 - c. Can you provide an example of how you prepared for a difficult online negotiation?
12. How does the size and composition of the team affect the online negotiation dynamics? How do you deal with the challenge when more than two parties are involved in an online negotiation?
13. How do you utilize technology and tools to support your online negotiations? Which tools are indispensable for you?
 - a. Can you give some examples of technologies and tools that you use in online negotiations?
 - b. How important are these tools for the success of an online negotiation?
14. How do you deal with unforeseen events during an online negotiation, such as connection issues or technical difficulties?
 - a. Can you give an example from your experience of how you dealt with a technical problem in an online negotiation?
 - b. What steps do you recommend to prepare for possible technical difficulties during an online negotiation?
 - c. Do you have specific tools or strategies you employ to minimize or resolve connection problems or technical difficulties during an online negotiation?
15. How do you evaluate the success of an online negotiation? What criteria do you use to measure the success of a negotiation?
16. What tips do you have for people who want to improve their skills in online negotiations?
 - a. How can beginners improve their negotiation skills?
 - b. What resources do you recommend for preparing for online negotiations?

Declaration of Authenticity

I hereby declare that I have completed the present work independently and without unauthorized external assistance and have used only the aids specified in the work. All passages taken literally or in essence from published or unpublished writings have been identified as such.

