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COMMENTARY

What's Your Negotiation Personality?

Learn the nine distinct negotiator archetypes and how they can help or hinder a win.

BY ELDONNA LEWIS-FERNANDEZ

One key to being a master negotiator is employing different approaches based on each situation. To do this, one must first understand negotiator personality archetypes. The following nine aren't all-inclusive, but do represent the primary means by which the majority of people negotiate.

1 The Politician influences or outmaneuvers others. Politicians often seek support by appealing to passions and prejudices through carefully crafted language, campaigning to persuade others.

Why it's helpful: The politician is personality-driven. Using your charisma to get everyone on the same page is a great way to build success.

Why it's a hindrance: Relying only on charisma, rather than facts and figures, can render you vulnerable when it's time to get down to the nitty gritty. Trust may be compromised if you don't have data.

2 The Direct Communicator is someone who gets to the point every time. Direct communicators want to discuss the facts only. Their style is clear, concise and quick to achieve a resolution.

Why it's helpful: You won't waste time in the weeds with details that could delay, and possibly derail, the deal.

Why it's a hindrance: You might offend the other side if they are not receptive to this hard-hitting style. You also may miss something critical by ignoring the details.

3 The Hinderer is the opposite of the direct communicator. Hinderers don't ask for anything directly. It can be done out of fear of rejection or as manipulation.

Why it's helpful: It's a way to test the waters. By leaving your words open to interpretation, you may glean more information than you would have otherwise.

Why it's a hindrance: You may not get

positive traction on what you want or you may appear manipulative. Ambiguity can also make coming to terms more frustrating.

4 The Storyteller wants to tell the entire story. These are the people who, if you ask what time it is, will tell you how to build the watch.

Why it's helpful: You will disclose all details so the other side can fully understand what you want. This approach leaves little room for doubt and can foster trust.

Why it's a hindrance: Many people don't have the time, patience or inclination to hear the whole story. The receiving party may tune you out.

5 The Bully uses aggressive and browbeating behavior to win. It could be by yelling or body posture, threats or harassment, menacing words or other fear-based tactics. The object is to intimidate the other party into agreeing.

Why it's helpful: Exerting your power up front may prevent the other side from taking advantage. If they see your strength, they may change their position.

Why it's a hindrance: The other side may regard you as out of control and generally unpleasant. It's more than likely they'll not want to do business with you again, and that your reputation will precede you.

6 The Non-Negotiator fears negotiation, regarding it as confrontational. Non-negotiators will agree to whatever the other party wants even if it means losing out.

Why it's helpful: The only reason this might be helpful is if the other side interprets this as a shutdown strategy and take pity on you.

Why it's a hindrance: Aside from being perceived as weak, you will likely get a bad deal. If you take the first offer presented, you may end up in a deal that doesn't make sense for you.

Veteran negotiation and contracts expert Eldonna Lewis-Fernandez, author of *Think Like a Negotiator*, has more than 30 years of experience crafting deals around the world. She's currently the CEO of Dynamic Vision International, a specialized consulting and training firm to hone negotiation skills. Reach her online at www.ThinkLikeANegotiator.com.



7 The Victim attempts to parlay hard luck to gain sympathy. The hopeful end game is that the opposing party will be more receptive to their position and terms.

Why it's helpful: Someone may indeed feel sorry for your situation and give you a break. If you use this as an honest way to get a better deal, both sides may feel good about the outcome.

Why it's a hindrance: People often use this as a manipulation tactic to get out of a situation. The other side may call you out, which can be embarrassing and undermine your credibility.

8 The Nutburger is someone you can't negotiate with. There's no reasoning with someone whose behavior is irrational, overly emotional or just plain nutty.

Why it's helpful: Deflection by rant is indeed a negotiation strategy. If you're clearly upset about an injustice, the other side may be more apt to reevaluate.

Why it's a hindrance: You can't negotiate with crazy. You may lose the deal if the other side thinks you're unstable or unreasonable.

9 The My Fair Lady (or Officer and a Gentleman) archetype is what you want to strive for. Characteristics include negotiating with integrity, ethics and considering what's fair and reasonable for both sides. Those most effective use some or all of the characteristics of the other eight archetypes, depending on the situation.

Why it's helpful: You're using a balance of all applicable archetypes. Understanding how you and others negotiate allows you to present your side with a calculated approach.

Why it's a hindrance: You may spend more time analyzing how a person is negotiating than paying attention to the details. Over-analysis is paralysis, as the saying goes.