

The Art of Negotiating

Negotiating is more art than science, and a **subtle** art at that. And there are as many ways to approach a key negotiation as there are ways to paint a picture; being **brusque** and **confrontational**, open and honest, or **aloof** and **secretive**.

Even defining “negotiation” is more of a watercolor than a **paint-by-numbers** experience. For instance, aren’t conversations with **spouses** and children, colleagues or shop assistants also negotiations of a kind?

The one thing most experts will agree on is that it is an art founded on information. Being unaware of your **opposing party’s palette** of strengths and weaknesses, motives and needs, can be **fatal** to the **outcome**.

Most companies will **assume** that their negotiators understand their own business and market sector very well. But how well do they really understand their **counterpart’s** business? Or the businesses of their main **rivals**? And what about you? How well have you researched the alternative vendors or suppliers of your own clients?

There is no doubt that negotiating has become more demanding in recent years – not only are the **stakes** higher than ever, and industries more complex, but globalization means negotiators increasingly need the **gift of the gab**.

For the **faint of heart**, that must make painting pictures for a living sound positively relaxing.

Glossary

aloof	distant, cold, unfriendly
assume	take for granted
brusque	abrupt or blunt in manner
confrontational	characterized by aggressive or hostile encounter;
counterpart	a person who plays a similar part in a different organization
(the) faint of heart	timid people considered as a group
fatal	causing destruction or disaster
(the) gift of the gab	he ability to talk readily, glibly, and convincingly
opposing party	vastapuoli
outcome	result
paint-by-numbers	here: following a set pattern, without any imagination
palette	a range of qualities or elements
rival	competitor
secretive	tending to keep information secret
spouse	husband or wife
stake	investment
subtle	slight and not obvious