



SMARTER THAN THE AVERAGE GUIDE

# **HBR Guide to**

# **Negotiating**

**Take the lead**  
**Manage conflict**  
**Get to yes**

**By Jeff Weiss**

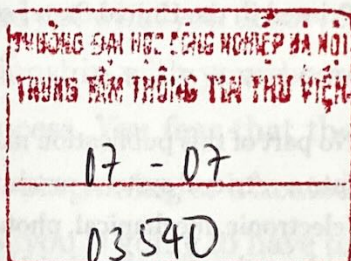


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# HBR Guide to Negotiating

Jeff Weiss



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## What You'll Learn

For many people, negotiating may be scary or unpleasant. You worry that you may not have the right skills to go head-to-head with someone and get what you deserve, or that you'll damage your relationship with your boss, customer, or colleague in the process. You fear that the negotiation will escalate into hard bargaining or a heated debate and that, in the end, one of you is going to have to give up something you want just to reach an agreement.

But negotiations don't need to be stressful. You can work with your counterpart to get what both of you want in a more productive, positive way. In this guide, you'll learn a collaborative and creative approach that results in better outcomes and stronger relationships. It works in any situation in which you and a counterpart need to come to terms despite competing interests—from formal multimillion-dollar sales agreements to informal conversations with colleagues about how you will tackle a quick project.

You'll get better at:

- Identifying the real issues at stake
- Overcoming your assumptions about the other party

## What You'll Learn

- Preparing materials in advance
- Setting the right tone as you begin the conversation
- Coming up with potential solutions that work for both parties
- Narrowing down your options
- Handling emotions in the negotiating room
- Recovering when communications break down
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# Introduction

Negotiation is about creativity,  
not compromise.

Whether you're aware of it or not, you're negotiating all the time. When you ask your boss for more resources, agree with a vendor on a price, deliver a performance evaluation, convince a business partner to join forces with your company, or even decide with your spouse where to go on your next vacation, you're taking a potentially conflict-filled conversation and working toward a joint solution. That's what a negotiation is—a situation in which two parties with potentially competing incentives and goals come together to create a solution that satisfies everyone.

It's not just high-stakes, months-long discussions that warrant a thoughtful approach. Improving your ability to handle all of these situations pays off. This means honing skills such as conflict management (as you'd expect) and creative thinking (which you might not), both of which are critical to reaching mutually beneficial decisions.