

Notes on Negotiating w/ Romans

Article about the sliding scale between completely following one's own culture's style of negotiating (including language) on the one end, and the other culture's style of negotiation at the other.

In case of low familiarity with counterpart's culture:

- If counterpart is also lacks familiarity with one's own culture, employ an agent or adviser
 - Agents: replace the negotiator at the table
 - Advisor: provides info and recommends course of action
- Generally take the form of cultural experts, translators, outside attorneys, financial advisers, or technical experts with high-familiarity
- Drawback: While skilled, reputable agents can interact with effectively with a negotiator's counterpart, their employment may give rise to issues of increased structural complexity, trust, and ownership of the process, not to mention possible cultural tensions between principal and agent

- If counterpart is also lacks familiarity with one's own culture, employ a mediator
 - Important to employ a mediator who is not only culturally skilled, but who will also maintain the respect and trusts of both parties
 - Mediator can educate the negotiator about the counterpart's culture and bring out ideas and behavior from each side that make the interaction coherent
 - Drawbacks:
 - Will mediator use one side's negotiating script at the expense of another?
 - If from a third culture, will mediator use that culture's ways? Would that be acceptable?
 - Principal give up some control of the process

If counterpart is highly familiar with one's own culture, one can deliberately induce the counterpart to negotiate according to one's own culture.

- Can go from either asking other side if this would be ok by them to just acting as if the counterpart will come along
- Pro: Could be perceived by counterpart as though one is simply pursuing an expedient strategy, or is culturally proud but not antagonistic
- Con: Could be perceived that 1) negotiator is deliberately ignorant or cultural differences
- For strategy to work, it must be made clear that it is not being pursued out of a lack of respect for the counterpart's culture

In case of low familiarity with counterpart's culture:

One can adapt to counterpart's script

- Modify customary behavior by not expressing it to its usual degree
- Omit some actions altogether
- Follow some of the counterpart's way
- Major Challenge: to decide what to throw away, what to keep
 - Aspects most seriously in conflict with counterpart may not be easily changed or readily apparent
 - May be difficult for counterpart to distinguish between the "adapt" strategy and a badly implemented "embrace" strategy (explained below)
 - If counterpart is also pursuing "adapt" strategy, modifications may become confusing

One can coordinate with counterpart an adjustment by both parties: negotiate the process of negotiating

- Generally a blend of elements from each party's culture
- Can also take the form of adopting a third party's style of negotiating with which both parties have at least moderate familiarity
 - Example: both parties discover fluency in a second language
- Professional societies, trade groups, educational programs and institutions and various other associations can similarly provide members with third scripts for conduct

In case of high familiarity with counterpart's culture:

If counterpart is unfamiliar with one's own culture, one can adapt an "embrace" strategy, tossing out one's own style in favor of the other's

- Demands a great deal of the negotiator, especially when the cultures differ greatly
- Generally requires bilingual, bi-cultural individuals
- When well-implemented, it is generally greatly appreciated by counterpart

If both parties are highly familiar with each other's culture, they can jointly or unilaterally search for or formulate a negotiation script that focuses more on the individuals and circumstances involved than on the broader cultures

- As a result of counterpart's high-familiarity, it is extremely important to consider the counterpart as an individual, not just as a member of a culture
- Generally used during high-level negotiations
- Is particularly beneficial when dealing with cultures where individual relationships are considered extremely important
- Drawbacks:

- May offend counterpart if he/she thinks that negotiator is trying to appeal to status or authority rather than to recognize cultural issues
- Poses risk of becoming too emotionally involved, failing to delegate and undercutting the status of other representatives
- May be difficult to orchestrate when dealing with a team of negotiators
- Entails high-level of uncertainty

Effect Symphony: improve an approach, create a new script, or follow some approach not typical of participants' home cultures

- Using a third culture, such as a *negotiator subculture*
 - Such as model used at UN or taught in leading international business schools
 - Advantage is that it allows parties to draw on special capabilities that may be accessible only by going outside the full-time use of their home cultures' conventions
 - Can make behavior more predictable, comprehensive, and coherent