

Contract ~~Negotiation~~ Relationship Building

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"Negotiation" is a loaded word. "Negotiation" implies participants are going to give something up and one side is going to "Win." Veterinarians and veterinary employers tend to avoid negotiation, especially transactional negotiation because of the conflict and tension involved.

To effectively negotiate an employment relationship, we should shift away from transactional negotiation, and embrace **relationship** negotiation.

A transactional negotiation style is best used during the sale of a product, where there is no relationship after the transaction. On the contrary, a relationship-based negotiation is characterized by a relationship that continues after the negotiation. Therefore, negotiating employment agreements is the epitome of a relationship-based negotiation.

For both of their successes, the associate and practice must work cooperatively after the negotiation. Framing the negotiation as a relationship building exercise can reduce the tension and adversarial posture before and during the negotiation itself. Most importantly, the parties should seek Win:Win scenarios where both have better positions after the relationship is explored and built.

How do we approach a negotiation from a relationship-building point of view?

Foremost, preparation for the relationship building is essential to success. Associates should first prepare an interest list they need and want in the job, regardless of whether they can or will ask for these things in the negotiation. The interest list is necessary to evaluate the position and the practice, and to determine if your goals can align. The basic function of the interest list is to decide what you want. You can't ask for what you want, if you don't know what that is!

Second in the preparation process, the associate must use their best estimate to create an interest list for the practice. What are the probable things the practice needs? The basic function is to prepare to speak to their needs. It's easier to get someone to say yes, if their needs are met.

Once we have the lists, the next step is to identify shared and complimentary interests. For example, if it's the practice interest to provide high quality care for patients and clients and it's the associate's interest to practice high quality medicine, then we have a shared interest. Another example, if the practice needs a leader, and the associate's interest is to grow into a leadership role, again shared interest. The more the better. Shared and complimentary interest are different from diametrically opposed interests where one party wants more, and the other wants less.

Salary, dates off, hours worked, benefits are examples of diametrically opposed interests. The point of this exercise is to identify and discuss shared and complimentary interest early, and table diametrically opposed interest until later in the conversation, after the relationship is built.

Next in the preparation process is to develop options, known in negotiation vocabulary as BATNA, Best Alternative to Negotiated Agreement. Said another way, if this negotiation didn't work out, what are your options? If you have no other options, then your BATNA and thus your leverage is low. If you have well developed options, or BATNA, then your leverage, your asks and your confidence is all higher, leading to a more effective negotiation. Building BATNA means doing the hard work of interviewing, reviewing offers and doing your homework. But it will make the conversation around diametrically opposed interests much easier.

In summary, shifting the paradigm to a relationship-based negotiation, strengthening your BATNA and preparing the conversation and the order of your asks are the keys to an effective negotiation.

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Objectives

1. Differentiate relationship-based negotiation from transactional negotiation.
2. Prepare interest lists for associate and practice.
3. Understand the concept of BATNA, and build BATNA prior to negotiation.

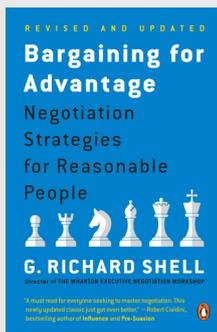
Toolkit

Negotiation for Veterinarians FREE course to GSD attendees.
Enter coupon code 'GSD' for \$150 discount.

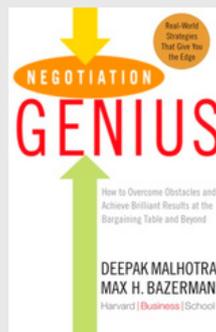


US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment, Veterinarians.

Production and Salary Calculator, Personal Finance Simulator University of Minnesota David Lee, DVM MBA, 2019



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Key Points

1. Shift your paradigm away from Transactional Negotiation to Relationship Building
2. Prepare and link your interest lists
3. Do the hard work of building BATNA

Your Interest List	Their Interest List
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.