

## **Must-Do Tips No 49 – Knee..Go..She..What? (Essential Negotiation Pt.1)**

Now it's not that we're saying that many professionals aren't very good at negotiating with clients...well, OK, we are saying it. And it really is quite a curious phenomenon. In fee-earning situations, they can appear quite comfortable with the cut and thrust of bargaining. But place a client in front of them and then mention words like "not happy", "fees", and "discount", and everything changes for the worst. What is perhaps most troubling is that smart clients recognise this failing and exploit it; and if they employ professional buying personnel, it can become a turkey shoot.

This month, MDTs culls three titbits from the professional negotiating canon for those involved to get started. Next month, three more will follow.

### ***Tip 1 - Talk Dirty (and Don't Be Afraid!)***

No, we are not talking about dodgy chat-lines. Just money. Many professionals we come across appear congenitally incapable of broaching the subject of fees, and/or are painfully embarrassed when they have to. In our experience, good negotiators in the professions embrace such dirty talk - and prepare in-depth for it. So get the unkeen acclimatised to dealing with clients and money. Ask them which they prefer - a few initial blushes or losing their (and the firm's) shirt?

### ***Tip 2 - Gather All Our Facts***

Heard the one about the senior professional who negotiated with a client on behalf of colleagues in other departments or parts of the firm without consulting with them? We have. Often. And about the expletive-deleted conversations and bad blood that ensued. Whatever the particular circumstance, understanding in detail about the build-up to a negotiation situation, talking to **all** those concerned, gathering their views and feelings, and agreeing an approach is vital preparation to a successful (and harmonious) resolution.

### ***Tip 3 - Empathy, Empathy***

*"The ability to identify with and understand somebody else's feelings, difficulties, or position"*

As with a number of issues, the professional mind-set can have a tendency to be inward-looking when it is least necessary. The essence of good negotiation is to do the opposite. To get under the skin of your opposite number(s) - understand where they are coming from, what drives them, the way they like (or don't like) to do things etc. And if you don't know much, there may be others in the firm who know more. Hence, Tip 2 above.

People Scope has successful experience of helping professionals to negotiate better. For more information hit 'Reply' and type [Effective Negotiation #1](#).

The incentivisation of professionals to build better client relationships will be part of a forthcoming People Scope CRM Resource Paper entitled "**Motivating professionals to succeed**". To pre-register for your free copy, hit 'Reply' and type **Motivating Professionals**.

Of course you could always:

....go to our website at [www.peoplescope.com](http://www.peoplescope.com).

We welcome feedback on what you think about "Must-Do Tips". If you like it hit 'Reply' and tell us specifically what you have enjoyed. If there is a topic or issue that you would like us to cover what is it? And if there is something that annoys, tell us too! We want to improve.

You can obtain free copies of past issues of "Must-Do Tips". Previous MDTs have covered the issues shown below. If you wish to receive any of these issues, just hit 'Reply' and type 'Past Issues' along with the name of the issue(s) that you require.

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Best regards.

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