



## Influence and Negotiating for HR Practitioners: A Critical Skill

By Liz Tascio  
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Lee Miller once had a client who had offered a huge amount of money to a big name entertainer to promote fast food. The entertainer turned down the initial offer, then a higher offer, then an even higher one – and finally, the company threw its hands up in frustration and asked Miller to find out what the problem was.

It couldn't be the money, Miller thought. The deal was lucrative. So, Miller, the managing director of NegotiationPlus.com and the author of "UP: Influence, Power, and the U Perspective – The Art of Getting What You Want," went to the entertainer's manager, who would get a percentage if the deal was signed, and asked what was holding things up.

The manager told him the entertainer had grown up poor and had worked very hard creating an image for himself that embraced a certain status. At this point, he wouldn't be a fast food spokesman for any price.

Knowing this, Miller came up with another kind of offer.

"I asked him what's his favorite charity," Miller said. The company offered to make donations to that charity part of the deal.

"In a second, he signed on to do this. Because now it's not about the low status of fast food, it's the high status of charity."

Miller calls this finding the "you" perspective, and he says Human Resources professionals can use it as a tool to recruit, negotiate, and generally improve their daily interactions.

"Figure out what motivates someone, and you can make them do anything," Miller said.

### **How to find the 'you' perspective**

Human resources professionals negotiate and influence all day, every day, Miller said. From recruiting new hires to getting people to work well together, an HR professional needs to understand and balance the perspective of the company with the perspectives of employees.

Miller, who held senior positions in the human resources departments of TV Guide Magazine, USA Networks, and R.H. Macy & Co. before starting his own consultancy, presented his theories on effective influencing and negotiating to the Human Resources Roundtable in May.

The cornerstone of his method, finding the "you" perspective, is the opposite of what's taught in typical negotiating classes, Miller said.

"The 'you' perspective is not what you would do if you were in the other person's shoes," Miller said. "It's what are *they* going to do, being who they are and seeing the world the way they see it."

What motivates the person you're negotiating with? Money, fame, power, helping others, family ties, friendship, fear, competition – all of these are powerful motivators. But they don't all apply in every situation, and it's not always easy to tell what's behind someone's behavior.

To find out, ask open-ended questions and listen carefully to the responses, Miller said. You'll learn where they're coming from and what it is they really want.

Sandy Rogan, of Steve Maddens' HR department, asked Miller how she could determine what was making a recruit hesitate over a good job offer. Rogan had asked the woman what was stopping her, but hadn't gotten a clear answer.

"The key, really, frankly, is not to generally be so direct," Miller said. "It's to get them talking. ... Ask her what makes her happy there, what do you like about your job. Just get her talking."

You can even encourage a person to keep talking by acknowledging her initial answer with a smile – and silence.

"I guarantee you that in three seconds, they will tell you more," Miller said. "They will continue to answer that question, because people abhor a vacuum. That's how you discover someone's 'you' perspective."

### **Negotiating with Donald Trump**

Before you sit down at the negotiating table, take a careful look at your understanding of influencing and negotiation, starting with everyday interactions, Miller said.

"One of the things I like to teach people is every meeting you go to, have a goal," Miller said. "What do you want to get out of this meeting? If you go in with a goal, you'll actually have an opportunity to affect the behavior of the people there."

All interactions have two basic dimensions: outcome and relationship, Miller said. Buying a car is an experience purely rooted in outcome. All you care about is paying the least amount possible for the car, and all the salesperson cares about is getting the highest price possible for the car. There's no relationship to develop or maintain. Most interactions require a result that blends outcome and relationship.

How much weight you attach to each dimension, outcome and relationship, determines your natural negotiating style, one of four, Miller said. Someone who's wholly committed to outcome has a competitive style – think Donald Trump. Someone who's only interested in relationship has an accommodating style; they don't tend to become business managers, but instead choose professions such as social work and education.

Someone who doesn't care about outcome or relationship has a negotiating style Miller calls "avoidance;" they simply don't want to talk about it.

The fourth style, collaborative, is what most people should strive for, even if it doesn't come naturally, Miller said.

"Collaborative is problem-solving," Miller said. It involves asking yourself, "how do I actually increase the real value, the objective value for everybody involved? It's how to come up with the best solution."

Miller defines his basic negotiating model in three terms: convince, collaborate, and create.

You can use tools like active listening and creating a sense of legitimacy to convince someone that your proposal or offer has value, Miller said. "Create" refers to how you structure your interactions with other people.

“Don’t be bound by what you think you can do and what’s been done in the past,” Miller said. “My goal whenever I teach or talk about this topic is to get people to think differently about influencing and negotiation.”

### **It’s not always about the money**

One way HR professionals can negotiate more powerfully is by making sure they have the flexibility to offer creative solutions.

“I’ve had problems in my past with bosses who thought the key to everything is just give them more money,” Miller said.

But with the flexibility to move beyond money, you can actually make recruiting easier, Miller said. When he was leading the HR department at USA Networks, he wanted to improve recruiting for the Science Channel.

“Creative people in the Sci Fi channel are a different breed, trust me,” Miller said. “The first thing I did when I got there was I re-did the space. Very weird, but they loved it.”

Then there was the issue of a dress code.

“A dress code! These guys are wearing seven earrings, purple hair, and shorts and sandals. Talk about a ‘you’ perspective!” Miller said. He made a deal. When the Sci Fi employees came up to the executive floor, they wore semi-professional dress. Otherwise, they could wear whatever they wanted.

“Recruiting became a lot easier,” Miller said.

### **Must, trust, now, and how**

There’s an easy way to remember the four aspects that determine whether you can influence someone to do what you want them to do, Miller said: Think of the words must, trust, now, and how.

“Must” is about desire and understanding the “you” perspective, Miller said. “Trust” is about legitimacy, presenting yourself and your offer in such a way that it is clear to the other person that you can deliver on your promise. “Now” refers to creating a sense of immediacy, such as a deadline or a competition, so the person knows he has to decide on your offer one way or the other. “How” means you should find a way to make it easy for the person to say yes.

“Remember, it’s a process,” Miller said. “A lot of that is listening. People will always tell you what their ‘you’ perspective is, what they care about. You just have to hear it.”

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