

Role Play

Introduction

Anyone who has travelled in an auto in this city knows the meaning of negotiation. The driver will probably want to know the exact address and generally claim that it is too far, too isolated and that he will not get any passengers on the way back. In this situation, how do you generally respond? Do you negotiate with him, or do you just walk away and look for a driver who'd agree on the price you have decided? Whether you decide to be firm in your approach or you engage with the other party, compromising when necessary-- whichever role you like to play, you are actively negotiating.

These everyday negotiations can give us valuable lessons on how to conduct ourselves, how to make demands and when to let things go. For today's roleplay, we are going to practice some of these techniques in the context of a business enterprise. How many negotiations do companies make before entering a collaboration or merger? There is, for instance, the question of time, the costs and the required manpower among other concerns.

Instructions

For this task, students are asked to choose the required roles and list out a set of demands on the basis of the role. Each discussion will have 3 members. The situation is as follows:

The company, Bingo Technologies that was started by a single, dedicated woman, Manasa, is in the process of entering into a contract with a big player in the software industry, Microsoft. Bingo Technologies is a small but innovative company that builds language applications for tourists. Microsoft, which runs a successful programming application, would like to integrate a language application in its OS that translates speech and can also read out a text in various languages. In this particular situation, Manasa meets the CEO of Microsoft to negotiate over the manpower that such a project would require and to discuss concerns of time and costs.

Character Description

Manasa, CEO, Bingo Technologies.

Manasa is generally very clear about her demands and believes that quality should not be compromised for any reason. She would not change her mind, no matter what situation. In this case, she needs a large number of workers to reconfigure the present hardware to allow for minimal errors in capturing sound. Presently, the Voice Recognition of Microsoft is insufficient and often makes errors, so she may also need a team to help redesign the software and make it more user-friendly. Apart from this, she needs to do a survey to know the frequency of language use in her potential customer base and the uses for such an application. Her demands are primarily about the workforce and the associated costs of developing this application.

Gauri, Business Manager, Bingo Technologies

Manasa has come to this meeting with her personal advisor and business manager, Gauri. Gauri handles many aspects of the business and is willing to compromise, provided it seems reasonable. She has accompanied Manasa on this meeting as she is concerned about the time frame that they have been given.

She feels that a good application cannot be produced in the short span of 6 months and that they should be given more time to produce the application. She adds to Manasa's negotiation by pointing out the amount of time required to gather the manpower, produce the application and do the survey.

Vamshi, CEO, Microsoft

Vamshi has recently been made the CEO of Microsoft and he is eager to develop this application as he feels it will bolster the faltering image of Microsoft after a recent security scam. He finds the process of application-making suggested by Manasa too cumbersome and wants the application to be announced quickly so that the company's reputation can be saved. He is here to negotiate with them on the demands they have made so that the process can be shortened. The company has a significant amount of money so he is flexible on that account.

Task Objective

Students should clearly define their goals and resolve the issues that emerge during the discussion to reach an agreement while maintaining their respective roles.