

'Start with no'

'Win-win' a loser as negotiating tactic, author says

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There's a popular belief that the best business negotiation results in a "win-win" situation for both parties.

That's a myth, said Jim Camp of Dublin, who coaches corporate executives and others on negotiating and recently wrote a book on the subject.

"Such negotiating is the worst possible way to get the best possible deal," Camp says in his book, *Start With No*.

"In fact, it will get you killed."

Pursuing a "win-win" outcome plays to negotiators' emotions, often forcing them to compromise unnecessarily and allowing more-skilled adversaries to take advantage, Camp said.

On the other hand, effective negotiators have a clear agenda and focus on the goals and process they can control, ignoring the ones they cannot, Camp said.

The ideas are part of a system Camp developed during the past 20 years, drawing on experience in the Air Force and as a water-softener salesman along with books and articles he read on negotiations, he said.

Camp, 55, said he has worked with 150 corporations, including Motorola and IBM.

"His system has transformed the way I operate in the business world," said Dave Ring, president and chief executive of Phi-Evans, which makes specialty microscopes in Eden Prairie, Minn.

At the heart of Camp's system is the need for negotiators to have a clear mission. That helps guide their decision-making instead of their emotions, he said.

Camp also provides tips for dealing with adversaries, including "knowing their pain" -- understanding what the opponent sees as the current or future problem -- and knowing who the real decision-makers are.

In his book, Camp relates a story about serving as a volunteer recruiter for legendary Ohio State University football coach Woody Hayes in the 1970s.

Camp pursued running back Freeman McNeil, who played high-school football in Los Angeles and was considering playing at OSU and the University of California at Los Angeles. When Hayes met McNeil's girlfriend, the coach asked where she was going to college.

Hayes knew the girlfriend would be a key part of McNeil's decision-making, Camp said. The girlfriend said she was going to UCLA to study theater and drama, and McNeil picked UCLA over OSU.

Camp and his Coach2100 Inc. business have developed a Web-based training guide that takes clients through the elements of Camp's system with specific lessons to complete.

A coach interacts with each client and offers feedback during the lessons, and the technology allows clients to set up projects for real-world negotiations.

The technology keeps track of who is involved in the negotiation, preparation done for each session and the results. That provides accountability, said Phil Kabealo, Coach2100's chief operating officer.

Clients who have taken the training often use it to train or coach others in their organizations, Camp said.

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