

AF Negotiation Center of Excellence Quick Tip Number Four– Steps in Interest-Based Negotiations

Interest-based negotiation can be a complex process. Following simple steps to include careful planning, deliberate development of interests and options, and movement towards closure set you on the road to success.

From *Steps in Interest-Based Negotiation*, Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service - Human Resources Development Canada.

At http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/fmcs/interest-based_steps.pdf (accessed on 27 June 2011)

Steps in preparation for Interest-Based Negotiation (IBN)

1. Formulation of Joint Opening Statement

Both parties work together before formal negotiations begin to develop a simple and clear opening statement of objectives. The statement sets a positive tone and common understanding.

2. Establishing Ground Rules

Process issues should be settled before the first meeting. Clearly establish the day-to-day procedures; places for meeting, schedule, etc. before sitting down at the table (decide on the type of table also).

3. Developing the List of Issues

For an interest-based negotiation, the list of issues is topics to be discussed. List should be realistic, topical and should not be based on a position – use interrogative questions to expand a topic.

Steps in Negotiation (repeated for each Issue)

4. Identification of interests

Unlike positional bargaining where you dig in your feet, IBN focuses on the interests attached to each issue. Both sides identify and search for common interests. Build an atmosphere of trust and openness.

5. Generation of Options

Don't agree to an early minimal compromise or bargain. Brainstorm all options that fulfill the interests you have already identified. Don't assume you know all the possibilities and hold your judgment.

6. Development of Standards

Try to resolve issues against agreed upon, created, or existing standard criteria. Both parties should agree on the possible criteria or standards and use them to judge all the options that were discovered.

7. Evaluation of Options

Both parties evaluate interest-based options using the agreed upon standards. Use the three-cut method – do they meet interests, are options within resources, and will both constituent groups agree.

8. Closure

Insure all unresolved issues are addressed if possible. Look for group (both sides) support for the agreement even if all solutions are not one side's most preferred solution. Make final decisions.