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**Research Cover Sheet**

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BOOK REVIEW  
**Maj Micah Bell – 8852**

The *Harvard Business Review on Negotiation and Conflict Resolution* is a book in the Harvard Business review series. As the title suggests its focus is on conflict resolution and negotiation. However, the book does not teach these ideas. Its focus is on business managers and how they can best manage conflict and negotiations in their organizations. The book is divided into eight sections. It has several case studies that cover different topics and experts from the fields of negotiation and conflict resolution give their response to a typical scenario that one may face in the business world. Along with the case studies, the book offers advice and ideas on how to create an organization that maximizes negotiations and how to decrease conflict in the workplace.

In this book review I will look at each section of the book separately, as the topics in each section are distinct and separate from the next. I will analyze each section focusing on the information presented and whether it is additive to the material presented in class and if the information can be used by a military leader in a military environment opposed to the business world. I will then look at the book as a whole to comment on the usefulness of this book as a reference guide to negotiations in the future. Of note, I have an operational background in the military; therefore, my discussions on the usefulness of the book in a military environment opposed to the business world will have an operational bias. A leader in the military whose job is more associated with the business world, for example, a leader in acquisitions may find some of the material more useful than I have.

The first section of the book, *Management of Differences*, is useful because it is foundational to negotiations, can be used by mediators, and its concepts are applicable to managers and military leaders. This section of the book starts by outlining the basic nature of

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conflict and the underlying factors associated with it. Then it discusses how to minimize or utilize, that is to say, manage conflict in an organization. Although it does not specifically mention negotiation, the information presented is important to a negotiator because understanding conflict is at the heart of negotiating. To be prepared for a negotiation one needs to understand these concepts.

The material presented in this section is additive to the course readings, but not to the course. The concepts were all more or less presented in class and are the basic foundation for the Negotiation Preferences and Styles Chart (NPSC). When preparing for a negotiation using the NPSC worksheet one must determine what the conflict is over. The ideas expressed in this section of the book, the nature of conflict and the underlying factors, are the tools needed to help answer that question. None of the assigned readings covered the origins of a conflict in such detail. It puts in writing the foundation of a negotiation and how to critically think about the negotiation and the underlying conflict. However, the material is not new. The ideas were pervasive throughout the course discussions and exercises, just not put into writing in a concise manner.

The information in this section is also useful to a mediator. A mediator, being a third party, needs to diagnose and understand the problem between two parties in order to be effective. The material in this section offers the tools to diagnosis a problem, but also breaks a disagreement down into stages. A mediator can then understand the problem and how developed it is, thus, giving the mediator the tools to be effective.

Lastly, the section is very useful to military leadership when read at face value and not with respect to negotiating. The entire section can be used by a military leader or commander to manage conflict in his organization. I believe the ideas presented on how to use conflict to solve

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problems is of great value to any leader in an organization. It gives a leader the understanding needed to actively listen to a conflict, understand his emotions involved, and then develop a way to manage the conflict that best fits the goals of the organization. Whether that be avoiding, repressing, or allowing the conflict to continue and managing it to foster creative solutions.<sup>1</sup>

The second section, *The Team That Wasn't*, has limited value to negotiating and military leaders. This is a case study of a newly formed team where one of the team members, with valued expertise, does not want to participate in the team and views team work as a waste of time and is sabotaging the effectiveness of the team. Seven experts on conflict resolution then discuss how to deal with the unwilling team member and how to get the team back on track and working effectively.

This is of little value to negotiating because it is focused on conflict resolution within a group. The ideas presented are leadership and followership issues, not negotiating problems per se. It is not teaching or offering insights on how to negotiate. It does, however, have value as a negotiation case study. The case study can be analyzed from a negotiating standpoint. The material and ideas learned in class can be applied to the case study. The solutions would be as vast as the seven solutions offered in the book.

The leadership issues in the case study are not of much value to a military leader. The solutions the seven experts give are all different and reflect different viewpoints about leadership. Some of the issues involved are applicable to a military leader, but this seems to be a scenario in the business world that would take a bit of extrapolating to be useful to military leaders. The military chain of command and culture of teamwork typically, although not always, prevents these types of situations.

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The section, *Overcoming Group Warfare*, discusses the benefits of interest based or win-win solutions to problem solving and discusses when and when not to use this method. In my opinion this is an important concept that could be developed a bit more into the class. The class focuses on an interest based win-win strategy and it is arguably the most effective and better methods to negotiate and the book supports this idea. However, as several of the class readings point out the win-win strategy is not always the best course of action. I feel that an exercise structured around the use of the facilitator method could be useful in this area.

I liked the books inclusion of the interpersonal facilitator method, because it points out that it is not always in the best interest or even applicable to focus only on the integrative strategy. The times to use this strategy may be limited, but it offers a holistic approach to negotiations and adds another tool that can be used if circumstances dictate.

Negotiating with someone and getting them to move from an insist strategy to a cooperate strategy can be one of the most difficult things to do in a negotiation especially if you lack power in the negotiation. The section of the book, *Negotiating with a Customer You Can't Afford to Lose*, is of great value in negotiating with someone who uses the insist strategy from the NPSC. The author gives eight suggestions on how to move a hostile customer to a more cooperative strategy. Most of these suggestions are not new to the course material, but the way they are presented illustrates how they can be used to help create value and move the negotiations away from win-lose to a value creation and interest based negotiation.

I find this valuable and a good addition to the course, because it boils down a difficult problem into short and concise explanation of how to use the course material, its applicability in a difficult situation. For example, the eight steps listed in this book are more specific and easier

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to apply than the eight steps of “Dealing with Others Who Have More Power”<sup>2</sup> in the course book *Essentials of Negotiation*.

The ideas presented in the section, *Turning Negotiation into a Corporate Capability*, provide a framework for allowing interest based negotiations to flourish in a business organization. The concepts in this section, from a BATNA to creating trust, are the same as we have learned in class. The difference is the author has applied them and illustrated how to systematically use the concepts to create a synergistic negotiation capability in an organization. This section, therefore, provides a good review of interest based negotiations, but does not really offer anything new. The ideas are useful and recommended to any leader, military or civilian, who wants to combine and coordinate the negotiations of his organization to enhance their overall effectiveness.

The section, *When Consultants and Clients Clash*, is a case study of a merger between two companies and the hiring of a consultant firm to oversee policy integration in the merger. The case study has little utility as far as negotiations are concerned. It is more about conflict resolution and the underlying cause originating solely with one side of the conflict. In the scenario, the consultants cannot accomplish what they were hired to do because the client, the CEO of the company, did not have a clear understanding of the problem that he hired them to do. The section is, however, not without usefulness to military leaders.

There are several takeaways about leadership in the scenario if it is read from a leadership perspective and not a negotiation perspective. The scenario is a case study in what not to do as a leader. Two clear leadership ideas are present. This first is leaders need to understand their limitations. In the scenario, Mr. Kellogg, the CEO, is an expert at the business, but as he admits himself he is not adept at dealing with people. That was left up to his deceased

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partner. This lack of understanding of people created the majority of the problems for his firm during the merger. The lesson learned is to seek expert advice on matters if something seems simple, but you are not experienced in the area. He could have prevented some of the problems if had listened to his employees. This is the second lesson.

A leader needs to be open to suggestions from subordinates. He was sure that the merger process was simple, but the feedback and the strong reaction of his employees to the consultants proved otherwise. His own bias of the situation, the merger should be a simple process, blinded him to the fact that it was not. Therefore, a leader may not be aware of his biases and the effects they have on an organization. If he a leader is open minded and listens to the feedback from his subordinates, some of the effects of these biases can be mitigated.

The section, *Five Ways to Keep Disputes Out of Court*, describes and defines the types of alternative dispute resolution (ADR). The discussion is clear and offers good insights, but the class readings for ADR were more useful and explanatory. Additionally, it is of little use to a military leader as many of the ADR's are not available to the military. If they are, for example mediation, a military leader is better served by discussing these ideas with the EEO office as they are the experts in these matters in the military and when and when not use them.

The last section, *Alternative Dispute Resolution: Why it Doesn't Work and Why it Does*, is a follow on to the discussion on ADR in the previous section. It discusses how ADR can be misused and become non-effective as means to dispute resolution. Its usefulness to military negotiators is limited based on the same reason given in the prior section. It does, however, have one piece of useful information.

The single biggest reason for ADR failure given by the author for the failure of ADR is attitude. If managers, leaders in the military, have a win-lose or distributive attitude toward the

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conflict then ADR is apt to fail. This illustrates the importance of using an interest based method in dispute resolution and the importance that the leadership understands promote it too. Without leadership understanding of the integrative approach then an ADR or interest based negotiation will not be possible. This is an important factor for all leaders to bear in mind.

As far as a recommendation is concerned, I would not recommend this book as a reference book on negotiation. Although there are several good points in the book, it is too broad and lacks specificity to be used as a reference book for negotiations. The lessons and applicability to negotiations are not always clear. I had to critically think about the connections between what was presented and how it can relate and is applicability to negotiations. I feel that I probably would not have the ability to do so in ten years. Many of the connections were made because I am currently studying negotiations. To be a good reference book the concepts and how they relate to negotiations need to be clear and concise.

It has more utility for managers, or leaders in the case of the military, of how to manage negotiators and to create an environment for negotiations that best fits the business world. Some of the ideas are transferable to the military, but the majority of the examples are business oriented. For example, the last two sections of the book focus on (ADR) and their effectiveness. While the book did a good job explaining the differences between litigations and ADR, such as arbitration and a summary jury trial, and their effectiveness or lack thereof, this is irrelevant to a military leader.

In conclusion, the *Harvard Business Review on Negotiation and Conflict Resolution* is a good book about conflict management and negotiations for managers in a business environment. The case studies and information provided offer insights and solutions from multiple sides of the arguments presented. It is easy to read and concise. It gives managers a few ideas for direction

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about difficult problems they face from working with different personalities in their workplace to problems with clients. It is not a book that teaches the basics of negotiating or conflict resolution. It does explain ADR in basic terms, but overall it is not explain the basics. It takes some critical thinking to extrapolate the ideas and relate them to negotiations. It is for this reason I do not recommend the book as a resource on negotiations.

However, I do recommend the book to managers or leaders of organizations that need the ideas and concepts of conflict resolution and negotiation put into real world scenarios that they may encounter. Lastly, I recommend the sections *Management of Differences* and *Negotiating with a Customer You Can't Afford to Lose* be included in the course readings. The information in these sections is either additive to course material or presents the material in clear, concise, and easy to understand manner.

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<sup>1</sup> Warren H. Schmidt and Robert Tannenbaum, *Harvard Business Review*, 11-16

<sup>2</sup> Roy J. Lewicki, Bruce Barry, and David M. Saunders, *Essential of negotiation*, 164-165

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