

# Negotiation and Anticipating the Results

In my experience I've found the following elements are essential to a successful negotiation.

**No. 1: Know your product.** Everyday negotiations take place by salespeople who knowingly or unknowingly misrepresent features of the product or some other element of the transaction. In many respects selling in the veterinary industry is very different from other industries. For example, a car sales rep is generally representing a single manufacturer, and all aspects of the product can be found in the manufacturer's literature. In the veterinary industry, you are generally representing many product lines and each product

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can have unique properties. There is a lot of information to know about each product / product line: indication, dosage / dosage forms, stock status, competition, promotions, etc. Representing thousands of products can be daunting. Add to that the 200 to 250 product promotions that seem to be in play at any given time makes for a very complex sales call.

**No. 2: Understand what you have to offer.** In all negotiations one side always has an advantage. Surprisingly, those with the stronger hand seldom know it. I'm sure you've heard the phrase "Everything is negotiable." Generally speaking, I doubt this is true in your organization, but many elements of the transaction and the services you can provide are negotiable. You need to know what parts are and how much leeway you have to offer them to your customer base. Ultimately, the client is well served with such an approach and

the benefit of having few closing adjustments can add sales to your top line.

**No. 3: Integrity equals credibility.** If your negotiating position has any traction with the client, the client must accept it as fact, at its face value. Honesty is the most important trait which the client looks for in all vendor relationships. The trust you create through being honest in all your dealings permits compromises which the client might never have offered otherwise. I have witnessed honesty save more "deals" than any other factor in negotiations. With mutual trust, negotiations can continue between sales representative and client ensuring benefit to both parties.

**No. 4: Communication with the client.**

Regardless of the situation, the sales rep must use his or her communication skills to ensure fulfillment of the expectations of the client. The negotiating process was once described to me like climbing a flight of stairs. As

each riser is mounted, balance must be regained before the next step is taken and the view, which is slightly different at each height, must be appreciated. Running up the stairs too fast or taking two steps at a time generally results in an off-balance transaction having a high risk of failure. Keep in mind: the essence of a negotiation is the mutual fulfillment of expectations. A successful sales rep is skilled in shaping those expectations based on experience and a broad range of reference points.

**No. 5: Anticipating the result.** As a sales rep, it is important for you to visualize the result you want to attain. In theory, if the sales rep has complete knowledge of the client's situation, understands their product(s) thoroughly and has the ability to communicate, then the negotiation will be successful and the deal will be made.

**For more information on training in this area or other sales training curriculum, visit: [www.ats-solutions.net](http://www.ats-solutions.net) or contact Mike Biggins at [mike.biggins@ats-solutions.net](mailto:mike.biggins@ats-solutions.net)**