

Summarized from Negotiation Genius - How to Overcome Obstacles and Achieve Brilliant Results at the Bargaining Table and Beyond, by Deepak Malhotra & Max H. Bazerman - Professors at the Harvard Business School - Published by Bantam Books,

Negotiating from a Position of Weakness

Strategy 1: Don't reveal that you are weak.

Having a weak BATNA is not terribly problematic if the other side does not know that your BATNA is weak. Don't advertise it!

When under pressure and focused on the weakness of your BATNA, you may need to remind yourself to use less revealing language in communications with the other side.

Strategy 2: Overcome your weakness by leveraging their weakness.

Having a weak BATNA is not as problematic if the other side's BATNA is weak as well.

When both sides are in a position of weakness the Zone of Possible Agreement (ZOPA) is large. A lot of value is created when the two sides reach an agreement.

Strategy 3: Identify & Leverage your distinct value proposition (DVP).

Submit multiple proposals - consider the spectrum of possibilities: Low price & low service with incremental increases in both.

Lower your bid just enough to get into the second round. The potential client may just be trying to narrow options first before making a decision. If eliminated, find out why and consider repackaging the bid to meet the client's expressed reservations about the earlier bid.

Send a copy of the proposal to the ultimate customer.

Bypass an agent who's only concern is price:

Negotiate a post-settlement, settlement with the customer. Once the purchasing agent is out of the picture, pitch your proposition to the client. It never hurts to ask, just make sure your initial proposal is something you can live with if need be.

Educate your Clients between deals to keep your DVP fresh in their mind.

Strategy 4: If your Position is very weak, consider relinquishing what little power you do have.

If you can't outmuscle the other side in a negotiation, you may want to stop flexing your muscles and simply ask them to help

When you make it clear that you have no intention of fighting or negotiating aggressively, others may also soften their stance.

Strategy 5: Strategize on the basis of your entire negotiation portfolio.

If you are going to negotiate many deals with many different clients/customers, you may be willing to lose some money in one negotiation in order to win even more money in another negotiation.

When you consider your entire portfolio, it is far easier to imagine taking bigger risks, keeping the clients for whom you can add the most value, and becoming more profitable.