

Negotiation Mastery

Course Introduction

Each Module of the course (including this Introduction and the Conclusion) will finish with a short note highlighting key concepts and techniques. Together, these notes will provide a macro view of the course structure and content. In addition, your personalized Workbook will track your own performance, your lessons learned, and the feedback you will receive from fellow students. Together, the Takeaways and the Workbook will be a powerful resource to support negotiation success in the months and years after you finish the course. This first section:

- Gave you an overview of course format and content;
- Let you meet the team of Harvard Business School faculty and expert practitioners who appear through the course; and
- Encouraged you to assess your relative skill at four essential negotiation tasks to benchmark your progress.

Key concepts and techniques

Most of this section was designed to set the table and make you comfortable with the course platform. We'll dig much deeper into negotiation issues in the upcoming Modules—and you'll soon have the chance to negotiate, yourself.

Thanks to the Payoff Game, though, we were able to introduce a fundamental concept that we will return to regularly throughout the course: namely, **the inherent negotiation tension between competition and cooperation**.

The goal of negotiation is to advance your own priorities and to satisfy your responsibilities to your organization. Plain and simple, you want to get a good deal. But the people with whom you negotiate likewise will have their own objectives. Often their perceptions (and even their values) may differ from your own. That's where the competition comes in. On the other hand, reaching agreement requires finding an outcome that works for both sides, at least to some degree. As the Payoff Game illustrates, a central task in negotiation is eliciting cooperative behavior from your counterpart to advance your own interests.

Negotiation requires a delicate balance. Aggressive moves can trigger retaliation. Collaborative gestures may be reciprocated—but can also be misread as weakness to be exploited. As you'll see in the simulations you'll engage in, and the cases we will analyze, the mark of a great negotiator is mastering this dynamic process. It can almost feel like riding two different horses at the same time!