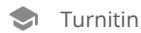


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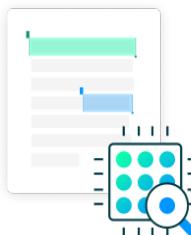
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## Department of International Qualifications

BTEC Higher National Diploma

### Assignment Front Sheet

Qualification	Unit number and title	
Pearson BTEC Level 4	Unit 37: Pitching and Negotiation Skills	
Student name	Assessor name	
Abdul-Wahab Anwar		
Date issued	Completion date	Submitted on

Assignment title	Pitching and Negotiation Skills
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## Introduction

This report discusses the most important skills and tactics to be used in pitching and negotiation in a small business setting. It deals with a new coffee business, DoubleShot, in Lahore, Pakistan to use in a Response to Proposal (RFP) prepared by Habib Bank Limited (HBL) to run the in house coffee shop of the bank.

This guide is intended to demonstrate the planning, preparation, and management of the entire process of small businesses. Pitching, and negotiation procedure to get valuable contracts. Every section is related to the learning. Results of Unit 37: Pitching and Negotiation Skills and offers practical information on how Organised communication and strategic can help DoubleShot reach sustainable growth and decision-making.

## Business Overview: DoubleShot

A small independent coffee brand, DoubleShot was initiated in 2024, in Lahore. The company had started in Gulberg with a single cafe but rapidly built a local reputation of interest in freshly roasted beans, ethically sourced products, and quality services. During its first year of operation, DoubleShot opened two branches, which had earned it a loyal customer base of students, professionals, and coffee lovers.

The company places itself as a modern and community-based cafe with a premium quality at reasonable prices. It has the aim of being a household name in the coffee culture that is developing in Lahore through adhering to the standards and establishing strategic alliances.

Here, DoubleShot would like to spread its wings into the corporate arena, and it would start with a proposal to run the in-house coffee shop with HBL. The opportunity will be a significant milestone towards the business growth in the long term and market presence.

## LO1 - Evaluate the Context of a Negotiation and Identify the Information Required to Prepare for a Negotiation

### P1 - Understanding Negotiation in Business

Negotiation is an art of seeking a middle ground where there is a need to have a common solution but the parties involved desire different things. It is not about the debating or demonstrating the correctness of one party it is about communication, priorities, and creating an agreement that respects both parties. In a business environment, negotiation finds its way all over in purchasing supplies to contract signing or associate partner management.

It is a mere fact that negotiation occurs when individuals share differences in interest but a goal to achieve mutually acceptable outcome. It is a game of give and take, and the success is not only about winning the deal but to make the value that would continue to exist after the deal is made.

In the case of DoubleShot, a small cafe start up, in Lahore, when it starts negotiating with Habib Bank Limited (HBL) to operate the in-house coffee shop, and have them as a partner, it becomes part of the process, which involves negotiation. To uphold quality, DoubleShot could prefer to use premium pricing whereas HBL could be cost conscious. The trick here lies in the way each party to the communication conducts itself with the view of benefiting each other instead of competition.

### Why Negotiation Happens

Negotiation is present because business is established on exchange money in exchange goods, services in exchange contracts, and promises in exchange performance. All the parties attempt to safeguard their self-interests but successful negotiation is a middle ground.

Some causes of negotiations in business may include:

- **Coming to the consensus:** be it the price, the timeframes or the roles.
- **Problem solving:** solving conflicts or misunderstandings.
- **Development of long-term relationships:** trust formed in the course of negotiations results in the repeat business.
- **Value addition:** good negotiators do not just see the deal itself, but they should also be able to see potential growth.

Separating the people and problem is the effective way of negotiating so as described by Fisher and Ury (1981) in their book, Getting to Yes, and concentrating on common interests and not hard-line positions. The strategy creates knowledge and cooperation rather than confrontation (Beyond Intractability, 2020).

## Who's Involved - The Key Stakeholders

A negotiating process is never two people there are a host of decision-makers in any given talk. The key individuals may be the following in the case of DoubleShot:

- **The Business Owner:** on behalf of the company vision and the general objectives.
- **The Finance Manager:** profitability and sustainable pricing.
- **The Legal Advisor:** checking the terms of the contract to reduce risk.
- **The Procurement or Facility Manager at HBL:** acting on behalf of the operation and budget issues of the bank.

Every participant has with them various priorities. The knowledge of these roles at an early age assists in strategizing and planning your communication and tone. The only way that a negotiation can

succeed is when the parties involved feel listened to and when the agreement that is arrived at does not disrespect the interests of the parties involved.

## P2 - Key Steps and Considerations for Negotiating and Generating Deals

The best negotiation is a planned negotiation rather than a spontaneous one. The clear process gives the confidence and order to the approach towards the large clients like the Habib Bank Limited (HBL) in the case of small businesses like DoubleShot.

### 1. Preparation

Any successful negotiation begins prior to the negotiation. It is preparation and knowing what each side requires, making clear goals and ascertaining what you will compromise on. In the case of DoubleShot, e.g., the company has to study the expectations of HBL, set its own price floor, and develop other proposals that would not jeopardise its quality.

### 2. Bargaining and Communication

When the dialogue starts, it is better to listen actively and be clear than use elegant phrases. DoubleShot must continue to speak value how their high quality coffee is contributing to their employee satisfaction and high productivity rather than price defence. This creates confidence and builds trust without being defensive.

### 3. Closing and Agreement

Once the two sides are on the same page, the second thing is the confirmation of terms. Contracts are supposed to be in a written form, specific and clear in regard to prices, schedules and obligations. Brief conclusion of some reflections does not get one confused in future.

## 4. Review

Any negotiation is a learning experience. Once the closing is made, DoubleShot needs to review the work done and areas to be improved when it comes to future contracts.

The secret of making business agreements sustainable is preparation, the ability to communicate, and mutual respect; yet, as Fisher and Ury (1981) explain in Getting to Yes, this is the secret (Beyond Intractability, 2020).

## M1 - Rationale for the Negotiation Process

Negotiation is not a mere business formality, but it is a tactic which enables both parties to come up with solutions that are to their benefit. The primary reason why negotiating is essential is to achieve trade-offs between value and fairness and establish a long-term relationship, which is founded on trust.

Negotiation is extremely essential to survival and growth to small businesses such as DoubleShot. In case of a large client like HBL, it is not just about negotiating the contract but also establishing credibility and mutual respect. In the negotiation process, DoubleShot will be asked to come across as a professional partner that is reliable instead of a one-time vendor.

Loyalty of the interest of both parties is also safeguarded through negotiation. An example is that HBL may be interested in cost-efficiency whereas the DoubleShot will be required to uphold quality as it safeguards its brand image. The discussion and compromise will help to achieve a structure where both sides agree on one that ensures that the prices remain fair but sustainable. This will make a win-win situation that will facilitate long-term cooperation rather than short-term benefit.

An explicit negotiation procedure is also effective in preventing a future conflict. Avoidance of the misconception or misunderstanding in the contract can be reduced through commenting on

expectations, terms and deliverables. The organising of the negotiation process can assist negotiators in becoming less distracted, developing trust, and reaching their mutual goals (MindTools, 2024).

Simply, negotiation is not a win or lose game but a construction exercise. In the case of DoubleShot, any negotiation constitutes an opportunity to develop, learn, and establish a strong presence in the market without breaking relations and making them unprofessional and unsustainable.

## D1 - Critical Evaluation of the Negotiation Process and Solutions for Key Issues

Even the most well-planned negotiations cannot go smoothly since the situations might be surprisingly difficult, and confidence, clarity, and patience will be tested. A good negotiator does not work by the checklist, he is able to change when the heat is on and can remain calm when questioned.

Pressure on price is one of the biggest issues to face at DoubleShot when negotiating with HBL. Big companies tend to demand low prices out of small suppliers. In the case of a startup such as DoubleShot, competing against rivals by lowering price too fast has the potential to damage profitability and brand value. The clever step is to create the emphasis on price to value elucidating how the high-quality beans, employee training, and dependability of DoubleShot enhance the satisfaction of the staff and the working environment of HBL in general. This re- frames the debate as cost- saving to value creation in the long-term.

Inequality of powers, in which the bigger company is the domineer, is another problem. This is something that DoubleShot can do by drawing up its BATNA (Best Alternative to a Negotiated

Agreement) in anticipation of the most suitable back-up plan in case the deal goes awry. The attitude will enhance trust and avoid panic concessions.

Measuring value also aids to re-equilibrium leverage. As an illustration, when the productivity of the staff of HBL increases even by 10-15 percent on the back of improved coffee and services that is more than worth the small difference in costs. Emotional discourse can be transformed into quantifiable action by reasoning that is driven by data.

Tension may also come about due to miscommunication and priorities. Credibility is maintained by remaining professional, posing clarifying questions and responding with facts and not emotion. According to Harvard Business School Online (2023), good negotiators always plan in advance, be a good listener, and are result oriented (Harvard Business School Online, 2023).

Ultimately, bargaining is not about problem-avoidance it is a matter of problem management. In the case of DoubleShot, this consists of empathy, being adamant on value, and developing solutions that transform struggles and challenges into ongoing partnerships.

## **LO2:P3 - Understanding the RFP Process and Required Documentation**

Request for Proposal (RFP) is a written document, which offers suppliers or service providers to offer their proposals to a given project or service. It assists organisations in reviewing various bids equally and selecting the best based on their requirements on the basis of price, quality and value. In the case

of DoubleShot, an invitation to bid on the Habib Bank Limited (HBL) is a significant possibility to enter the corporate market by operating the in-house coffee shop of the bank.

The RFP process typically initiates as a result of an organisation giving a public or private announcement of what they require. Organisations then make a proposal on how they can provide such requirements with details on pricing, experience and operation. After receiving all the bids, the buyer will be able to go through them and shortlist the best candidates to be involved during final negotiations.

In the case of DoubleShot, the best strategy to respond to RFP involves a clear description of the services offered by the cafe and pricing model, sustainability strategy and quality assurance measures.

The proposal should include

- **An overview of the company:** displaying competence and experience.
- **A technical proposal:** explaining menu design, expertise of the staff, and operations plan.
- **A financial offer:** open-price proposal, the expenses and possible value-added services.
- **Supporting records:** These include certifications, hygiene compliance and customer testimonials.

The guidelines to tenders provided by UK Government (2024) to SMEs include the principle of comprehension of needs, planning of functions, and the organisation of documentation, which, according to the author, is relevant everywhere, including in the context of the SME sector in Pakistan (GOV.UK, 2024).

These steps will help DoubleShot to experience professional appearance of its proposal, fulfilling the expectations of the clients, and enhancing its credibility as a small business competitor.

## P4 - Contractual Process and Agreements

After the Request for Proposal (RFP) is done and the supplier of choice has been selected, the contracting stage begins. This stage determines the legal and practical structure of the way the agreement will be run. By having a well-constructed contract the two parties are safeguarded, expectations are clear and the chances of conflicts in the future are minimised.

In the case of DoubleShot, the legal and procurement departments of HBL will address the main aspects of price, service quality, delivery conditions, and the length of agreement on the case. The contract would also entail information on payment schedules, quality standards, health and safety standards and conditions of renewal or termination.

All terms should be looked at by both parties prior to signing making sure that they understand each other. DoubleShot must ensure that the contract is flexible to include price changes in case of costs increase and ownership of brand materials should also be retained by the business. Any ambiguity must be addressed and revised where needed before it is approved.

It is equally important to manage the contract after signing it like it is to create it. Consistent reporting, documentation and frequent reviews are used to uphold compliance and trust. GOV.UK (2024) says that the key to risk elimination and the successful implementation of a contract is proper documentation, clear monitoring, and the definition of responsibilities (GOV.UK, 2024).

In case a failure is caused like a deadline slip or quality concerns in both directions must consider the dispute resolution procedures established by the contract prior to any further intervention. In case of DoubleShot, some proactive handling and the truthful communication will serve to maintain the positive relationship with HBL and build its professional image.

## M2 - Evaluation of the RFP Process in an Organisational Context

Request for Proposal (RFP) process provides the small businesses with a programmed and transparent manner of competing on contracts which may be otherwise hard to reach. In the case of DoubleShot, completing the RFP of HBL is a sales opportunity as well as a chance to demonstrate professionalism and credibility to a large corporate client.

The process of RFP is fair and consistent in practise. It enables HBL to compare all bidders based on the same criteria of service quality price reliability and innovation with a defined structure to introduce its strengths to Double Shot. This openness minimises the level of bias and enhances the possibility of small firms securing the work on basis of merit and not size or contacts.

But, in fact, it is also true that RFPs are sometimes tiring and not in balance. Coming up with elaborate projects takes time, effort and money that little companies are not able to invest without a certainty of success. Bigger competitors may possess bid teams or advantages that are less visible such as having prior relationships making the system not as even as it seems. In the case of DoubleShot, this will involve the selection of RFPs to submit and concentrating its efforts in those that the organisation is best suited and able to execute.

The UK Government (2024) identifies that the successful SMEs prepare in advance through reviewing the requirements of the tender, internal deadline setting, and alignment of the proposal with the objectives of the buyer, the method works worldwide, and it is equally applicable in the context of the Pakistan developing SME sector (GOV.UK, 2024).

In general, the RFP process helps DoubleShot to be structured, exposed and provided with the valuable feedback, although the company may not win all the bids. It makes tendering an act of guessing a professional business strategy.

## D2 - Critical Evaluation of the Tendering and Contracting Process with Recommendations

The tendering and contracting process provides the small businesses with a formal avenue of acquiring partners with the large organisations. In the case of DoubleShot, participating in the tender of HBL will enable it to prove its capacity, transparency and value. But, although it is structured and provides an opportunity, the process is not without flaws and obstacles that can affect smaller businesses.

One of the benefits of tendering is that all bidders are evaluated on transparent, published criteria. Such equity fosters responsibility and assists buyers in making comparisons of the propositions in a more objective way. However, as Investopedia (2024) states, although RFPs put all companies on an even playing field in principle, in practise they could put smaller companies at a disadvantage that cannot afford to take the time to write down and examine the forms, as well as legal professionals (Investopedia, 2024).

In the case of DoubleShot, resource strain is an issue. A good proposal takes time, money, and in-house organisation. Having a small team to balance daily operations in the cafe may make it hard to come up with polished submissions without outside assistance. Contract negotiation may also turn out to be complicated in case of hard terms or too much favour to the client. Under these circumstances, DoubleShot will run the risk of taking poor terms in order to gain visibility.

In order to enhance its performance, DoubleShot needs to be strategic with its tender selection, focusing only on the ones that are highly related to its size, capacity and brand values. It must also

come up with standard templates of proposals and contracts to save time and achieve uniformity. Errors will also be minimised by investing in basic staff training on contract literacy and negotiation which will enhance professionalism.

According to the UK Government (2024), successful SMEs can achieve success in tendering due to planning in advance, defining responsibilities, and monitoring performance after awarding. The ability to prepare and make realistic project choices enables DoubleShot to compete effectively, maintain quality and form sustainable relationships.

## P5 - Developing a Professional Business Pitch

An effective business pitch must not only be enthusiastic but should be planned, structured, and have a clear understanding of what the people listening would appreciate the most. In the case of DoubleShot, the objective is to prepare a confident and compelling pitch that will persuade Habib Bank Limited (HBL) that a partnership with a local coffee brand will help strengthen its corporate culture and work experience.

The presentation will start with a brief introduction of DoubleShot, its local background, its environmentally-friendly sourcing, and devotion to quality. Illustrated presentations and summarised points will make the presentation precise, and there will be no need to make it too detailed. The most important indicators, including customer satisfaction rates and product sourcing statistics, will allow establishing credibility as well as demonstrating that the brand is transparent and sustainable.

The key of the pitch will inform the management of how DoubleShot will operate the in-house coffee shop of the HBL, some of the menu design, staff training, and service standards. It will also discuss

how the sustainable packaging and locally-grown beans at DoubleShot will support the corporate responsibility objectives of HBL transforming coffee service into a valuable brand statement instead of a necessary overhead.

In order to keep the audience interested, the pitch will incorporate both information and narrative. A brief brand narrative how DoubleShot began in Lahore in 2024 and expanded to two branches in one year lends it some credibility. Indeed (2023) points out that effective pitches appeal to emotions, are clear visually, and provide brief evidence to reach out to the decision-makers and create trust (Indeed, 2023).

In short, the pitch of DoubleShot is set to be designed, catchy, and purposefully placed in accordance with the values of HBL that makes it a reliable, future-thinking partner willing to provide the level of excellence with a purpose.

### **M3 - Justification of the Pitch Approach and Evaluation of Strengths and Improvements**

The business pitch of DoubleShot is aimed at being both professional and personality a blend, which resonates with corporate audience of HBL logically and preserves local and authentic voice of the brand. The strategy concentrates on three areas namely clarity, emotional appeal and compatibility with the values of the client.

The introduction, main proposal, and conclusion pitch structure are guaranteed to make the message flow logically and assure the attention is focused. The personal, opening the storey of DoubleShot, creates a personal connexion, and the presentation is simple to follow because of the clear visuals and a well-spoken language. The emphasis on sustainability and local sourcing outlines that the brand has a value proposal other than the price, which is in the corporate social responsibility objectives of HBL.

The balance between facts and storytelling is one of the strengths of the pitch. It aids the decision-makers to make emotional contact and yet obtain practical data on the quality of the services and possible results. According to Forbes (2025), storytelling is a better approach to business communication because it makes a company more engaging, more trustworthy, and more memorable, which allows the audience to engage in the message conveyed by the brand on a more personal level (Forbes, 2025). The other strength is the emphasis on shared values the notion that the investment of HBL is not just coffee, but also adds to the satisfaction of the employees and the sustainability of business operations.

It would be possible to improve by adding more visual imagery, including mock-ups of the cafe design or brief testimonial videos. These would increase the interaction and prove competence. Indeed (2023) further notes that successful pitches are presented with visual presentation, emotional appeal and briefed in order to keep the audience focused throughout (Indeed, 2023). Similarly, Harvard Business School online (2020) points out that effective pitches are clear, relevant, and visual to draw attention and create trust (Harvard Business School Online, 2020).

Altogether, the pitch of DoubleShot is quite good in its authenticity, structure, and emotional connexion. Schematic presentation of visual storytelling and brand messaging With sharp visual storytelling and regular brand messages, it can provide a confident, professional, and memorable presentation to HBL.

## D3 - Critical Evaluation of the Business Pitch and Strategic Recommendations

It takes more than enthusiasm to give a convincing pitch, it will need preparation, knowledge of the audience and flexibility. Although the pitch presented by DoubleShot to HBL was clear and captivating, the formal assessment reveals the strong and weak points of the company, which could be optimised to bring it to the next strategic level.

One of the strengths is truthful storytelling. The story of the brand a coffee start-up company based in Lahore with a focus on sustainability and community generates emotional connexion and helps to differentiate between DoubleShot and other larger competitors that are less intimate. Storytelling improves the memory and level of trust; Forbes (2024) reports that messages presented in the form of a story are easier to relate to and are better retained because the audience can associate emotionally with the brand (Forbes, 2024). But excessively depending on emotion will be a mistake since one may ignore the persuasion of the mind. As a business-focused audience like HBL, one would incorporate emotional narration with data-driven lessons e.g. the employee engagement rates or cost-benefit analysis, which would enhance the main thesis.

There is also clarity and structure in the pitch. It is logically presented with graphics and brief points. Nevertheless, according to Harvard Business School Online (2024), the narrative appeal of a persuasive pitch should be combined with a proven impact of outcomes and definite ROI to investors or clients (Harvard Business School Online, 2024). Short forecasts or financial model could therefore be incorporated in DoubleShot to demonstrate real value to HBL.

The other challenge is audience adaptation. Every decision-maker of HBL procurement officers, marketing executives or HR managers maintain another priority. Entrepreneur (2024) emphasises

that addressing the communication to the demands of the audience is a way to increase the level of engagement and effectiveness because it demonstrates concern regarding the priorities of the stakeholders (Entrepreneur, 2021). The flexible slides or points of emphasis that DoubleShot should create to swing between the efficiency, branding, and sustainability should be designed.

Moreover, the use of post-presentation reviews might increase continuous improvement. Gibbs Reflective Cycle, which is discussed in MindTools (2024) is a structured reflection that helps the presenter to refinish messaging, pacing and delivery style; each pitch that is made is a learning experience (MindTools, 2024). In addition, rehearsal is recommended to be conducted under simulated time, and practising improves clarity, confidence, and interest to the audience (Indeed, 2023).

Generally, the pitch by DoubleShot is credible, structured and authentic. It will elevate it to an excellent level by making it stronger with results that can be measured, flexible communication, and reflective assessment. With the emotional appeal and the use of a strategic focus, DoubleShot will be able to transform into a reliable corporate sponsor that fits the long-term strategic business outlook of HBL.

## P6 - Evaluation of Negotiation Outcomes and Professional Reflection

Marketing is not only about reaching an agreement it is about learning how to be confident, flexible, and understanding in a business level. Upon the negotiations simulation between DoubleShot and HBL, there were several key outcomes and lessons learned which have been observed to be successful as well as not so successful.

Business-wise, the negotiation fulfilled its main objective a win win agreement. HBL found a trustworthy value-driven coffee supplier, and DoubleShot found a good corporate partner with which it increased its market competence. The meeting was conducted in a professional manner which had seen both parties being respectful and constructively dialogic. Active listening, open ended questioning and evidential usage enabled DoubleShot to defend its pricing and place emphasis on brand value as opposed to competition based on cost only.

Nevertheless, as it became clear during the reflection, DoubleShot could have been more confident about its Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA). At the beginning of the process, the reluctance to map out fallback options was a minor setback in leverage. According to the explanation of Harvard Law School (2024), a clear BATNA should be defined in advance prior to the start of negotiations, which is why confidence is established and value-driven decisions are made based on value and not pressure (Harvard Law School, 2024).

The other lesson learned was the topic of non-verbal and interpersonal communication. Remaining calm, consistent in posture and tone and looking straight into the eye created a sense of trust and tension could be managed by being emotionally aware. Indeed (2024) suggests empathy combined with assertiveness as effective negotiators should achieve results that please both sides and enable the establishment of long-term relationships (Indeed, 2024).

On a professional level, trust, flexibility, and self-understanding were enhanced by this exercise. It has shown that effective negotiation is dependent on preparation, emotional intelligence and reflection after the discussion. To continue onward, DoubleShot could improve its negotiation approach by establishing clearer goals, practising important points, and having systematic post-deal debriefs. Such a strategy will guarantee steady growth both as a company and as a professional team.

## M4 - Evaluation of Negotiation Outcomes and How They Benefit Both Parties

The outcomes of the negotiation process between DoubleShot and HBL were mutually beneficial as both parties achieved shared value and established a relationship. It did not only provide a deal it enhanced co-operation, trust, and strategic focus.

The joint venture was beneficial to DoubleShot both in real time and image. HBL as a corporate client gave it instant visibility and recognition that it is a trusted and locally-based coffee provider. The contract provided stable revenue, brand awareness, and a chance to present the quality of the services to more professionals. According to Forbes (2024), strategic partnerships enable small businesses to gain access to market and provide more customer value by linking with reputable organisations (Forbes, 2024). Development of better internal communication and planning skills was also another outcome of DoubleShot as the members of the team learned to present value convincingly and negotiate assertively.

In the case of HBL, the returns were as well. The premium coffee service increased work satisfaction and morale of employees and reaffirmed the bank to the idea of promoting sustainable and local businesses. The collaboration with DoubleShot was in line with the social responsibilities of this company and it increased the perception of HBL as a progressive employer. Such purpose-related partnerships augment brand culture and commitment to the long run.

The other significant result was mutual trust. The transparency and positive dialogue between the two parties promoted respect and minimised friction ended up in a satisfying negotiation process. The Programme on Negotiation at Harvard Law School (2024) notes that integrative negotiation when parties look to common interests instead of hard-line positions fosters relationships that are

durable and win-win and are not limited to the contract (Harvard Law School, 2024). This principle was manifested by the balanced approach of both parties to the business logic and relationship value.

Both organisations can enhance post-negotiation evaluation in order to maintain such advantages. Employee satisfaction, quality of service, and potential of repeat businesses are some of the performance metrics that DoubleShot should monitor. In the meantime, HBL can carry out surveys on the level of satisfaction to detect gaps in the services. According to MindTools (2024), business interaction can be converted into a learning process with the aid of reflection and feedback loops that ensure teams optimise strategies and stand up to the high standards (MindTools, 2024).

As the continuing relationship strategy after the negotiations, DoubleShot might also present an employee discount scheme of six months on the HBL employees. This would not only be a reward to the employees but also motivate them to maintain the same sales volume and brand loyalty. The scheme is organised under a formal service level agreement and indicates that there is long-term commitment to the value creation beyond the initial agreement. In the case of HBL, it improves employee welfare and involvement; in the case of DoubleShot, it guarantees re-business and brand awareness in an important corporate network.

Overall, the negotiation brought about shared growth: DoubleShot got stability, recognition, and confidence whereas HBL increased the wellbeing of its employees as well as achieved its social responsibility goals. The collaboration revealed how transparency, compassion, and well-organised communication can transform what might have been a mere deal with an individual to a long-term strategic relationship.

## D4 - Critical Evaluation of the Negotiation Process and Professional Development

Considering the negotiation between DoubleShot and HBL, one can emphasise that planning, flexibility, and emotional intelligence are essential and sufficient to promote a successful professional activity. The experience was not merely a transactional one, but rather it demonstrated that with strategic consciousness and reflection negotiation can become a long-term learning process.

Strategically, the process strengthened the need to prepare in detail. In order to make its offer tied to the common cause, DoubleShot examined the priorities of HBL employee wellbeing, sustainability, brand positioning before getting into the discussion. This emphasis on the win-win solution matched Harvard Business School Online (2023), which elaborates that negotiators can obtain credibility and direct negotiations towards integrative solutions by understanding the motives and objectives of both sides (Harvard Business School Online, 2023).

But the main reflection that was also critical was the necessity to strike a balance between authenticity and professionalism. Although the informal tone has been successful at establishing rapport within the team, there were instances when the team was too friendly and thus lost the sense of authority. This observation reinforced the importance of being calm and organised without losing individual warmth attribute that is core to corporate negotiation. One of the most important lessons was that it is necessary to learn how to change between collaborative and assertive communication.

Emotional intelligence played out in a very vivid manner. Rather than responding defensively to HBL on issues relating to pricing, DoubleShot used empathy and active listening to learn the roots of interest. This worked against possible tension and established trust. According to Forbes India (2024), when handled in a positive manner, emotions can make the process of negotiation a contest a cooperative approach that improves overall relationship and reputation over time (Forbes India, 2024). This experience impressed on me that emotional awareness is not an emotional skill, it is a strategic strength.

Reflecting on negotiation process enhanced professional learning. The team also evaluated what went well and what had to be refined with the help of Gibbs Reflective Cycle. According to MindTools (2024), reflective practice transforms experience into practical knowledge by leading professionals to analyze, appraise, and refine (MindTools, 2024). Using this framework, DoubleShot determined the necessity of more effective development of BATNA and planning of scenarios to increase the confidence in future deals.

Maybe the best thing was the understanding of negotiation as a life-long-learning field. Such skills as adaptability, empathy, and persuasion are not fixed; they are developed in the course of repetition and revision. The Program on negotiation at Harvard law school (2025) emphasizes that efficient negotiators should consider every negotiation a rehearsal towards building long-term practices of preparation, contemplation, and correction (Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School, 2025). Such an attitude is a complete reflection of the choice of DoubleShot to adhere to formal post-negotiation debriefing and mentorship.

The process provided a sense of composure, analytical thinking, and self-awareness, which are personal values. It demonstrated that it is not all about persuasion in negotiation but about psychology, circumstances, and timing. The implementation of these lessons outside of this project, in future leadership, entrepreneurship, or client management, will allow making more powerful and ethical decisions.

Finally, this negotiation experience was both career-changing and personal. It turned out that dominance is powerless in creating success, empathy, structure, and reflection are the drivers. The DoubleShot became a more competent, better educated and flexible organisation with the attitude of life long learning which is the greatest attribute of professional excellence.

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