

1. Why don't most of us like to nibble?

Most of us don't like to nibble, because people feel like they are taking advantage of the other party when they employ the nibble negotiation tactic. The nibble is a hardball approach, which causes people to want to avoid being labeled as using a hardball tactic. For many Americans, they would prefer to be agreeable with one another and get along rather than feeling like they are selfish. The nibble is viewed by many as a greedy ploy by a selfish person. Many people even consider the nibble to be an immoral tactic. People think that others should be willing to accept an outcome. Another reason people don't like to nibble is that it takes work to get that extra item thrown into the agreement. It could be laziness, or fear of losing the negotiation, or complacency. If two parties are close to reaching an agreement, people may think that it is good enough and not bother with trying to nibble. I have been involved in negotiations for systems development between the information technology department and project managers. Project managers typically push for as many features as they can possibly get out of a software system. Of course, every project contains time and cost constraints that limit the amount of features that can be built into a system. The negotiations will typically result in a requirements document that will serve as the scope for building the system. Project managers will still have features that are outstanding. In the middle of the system's development, they may approach programmers and request that additional features be incorporated into the system. This nibble is referred to as scope creep in the realm of software development. These additional features will require more time to be added to the project plan and requirements document, but the project manager hopes that the programmer will just squeeze them into their workload. Many

programmers view scope creep, or the nibble, as unfair, because they may feel pressure to accommodate the project manager's extracurricular requests.

2. Why do some people succeed in nibbling while other don't?

Some people succeed in nibbling, because they understand the psychology of using the nibble, have used it successfully before, or do not consider it an immoral negotiating tactic. To some people, nibbling is a viable negotiation tactic. The nibble does not violate their personal constitution. People succeed in nibbling, because they are experienced at using it or have been on the receiving end of it. They may have been in many negotiations where nibbling was commonplace. This experience allows people to develop a comfort level with using the nibble tactic. They probably enjoy using the nibble, because it adds an interesting twist to the negotiation process that keeps experienced negotiators focused on creating an optimal outcome. People successful at nibbling are clever at bringing up items near the end of the negotiation and making those items appear to be insignificant, causing the other party not to realize that a nibble is being used. (Macfarlane, 242) These negotiators are successful at nibbling, because they are able to control their emotions when using the nibble tactic.

Some people don't succeed at nibbling, because they view it as immoral or unfair. People's principles prevent them from using the nibble tactic, and if they are forced into using it, they may not be experienced with it. This lack of experience can lead to failure in people's attempt to nibble. People who don't succeed in nibbling lack a certain level of comfort with using the hardball tactic. Furthermore, people do not succeed in nibbling, because they are unaware that it is a tactic available to them in negotiations. This lack of awareness points to the lack of experience that a negotiator may have with the entire process.

3. Why is the person who gives you a firm or “take it or leave it” price particularly vulnerable to the Nibble?

The person who gives a firm “take it or leave it” price is stating a price they have committed themselves to maintaining. They are more willing to give the buyer a throw-in item in order to sell at their designated price. This person may not be willing to consider that the buyer may simply walk away when they establish a firm price. They are vulnerable as well, because they may be overconfident or under pressure. Pressure may be coming from superiors to sell an item at the take-it-or-leave-it price and to do so as soon as possible. This pressure makes a seller vulnerable to the nibble. They figure as long as they make the sale, the additional item will not matter. Their overconfidence may stem from their self-perception as a salesman. Past successes may lead the seller to believe that they can simply set whatever price they want, and their salesmanship will garner the result they want. They may not notice the nibble if it is small enough and may overlook the significance of the nibble.

4. How can a Nibble be worth thousands of dollars?

A nibble can be worth thousands of dollars, because the nibble could be a precursor to much larger items or more lucrative negotiations. A nibble may lead to future negotiations between business partners instead of merely being icing on the cake in the current negotiations. A nibble can be in the neighborhood of millions of dollars in regard to the NBA’s Collective Bargaining Agreement. In this ongoing debate, NBA team owners negotiate to keep as much of their teams’ profits as they can, while players negotiate to gain items such as guaranteed contracts and maximum salaries. (Broussard) If the NBA players union negotiates for the items they want, they may nibble for something additional, such as additional performance incentives that they do not already receive.

5. Why is it easier to nibble from those in higher authority?

It is easier to nibble from those in higher authority, because they have more to lose than people of lesser authority.

It is easier to nibble from those in higher authority, because they have the luxury of being able to offer a larger nibble.

6. How can the Nibble be stopped?

The nibble can be stopped by discovering what the other negotiating party is attempting to do and refusing to acquiesce.

The nibble can be stopped by offering a counter-nibble that the other party was not expecting.

Request that all demands that are part of the negotiation be identified at the beginning to prevent a nibble from appearing later in the process. (Lenski)

The nibble can be stopped through delisting of a customer or strict enforcement of contractual terms. (Kennedy, 135)

7. How do buyers and their organization nibble on sellers?

Buyers and their organization can nibble on sellers by asking for smaller items in order to make the sellers their sole supplier of a good.

Buyer can use methods such as late payments, accepting discounts, special return policies, and free training. (Kennedy, 134)

8. How do sellers and their organization nibble on buyers?

Sellers and their organization can nibble on buyers by providing a small sample of the good or service they are attempting to sell.

Sellers can use methods such as shipping slightly inferior merchandise, charging for extras, under-shipments, or over-shipments. (Kennedy, 134)

9. Why is it easier to nibble for the cost reduction that comes out of some other department's budget?

It is easier to nibble for the cost reduction from some other department's budget, because it is preferable to reducing cost in an individual's own department's budget. In addition, it is easier to make a case for nibbling for cost reduction from another department's budget. It is easier to isolate unnecessary costs in other departments. Within an information technology department, for example, it is easy to justify the cost of a network, servers, workstations, laptops, peripheral devices, software, and furniture, among many other items. Every company must manage its information since the world is now in the information age. It is much easier for marketing to reduce their department, because they are not as essential to the company as information management. The company can succeed just fine without advertisements in the newspaper. It's more cost-effective to advertise online instead. One or two less marketing campaigns will not hurt the company.

10. Give an example of Nibbling from your own experiences.

An example of nibbling from my own experiences was when a friend of mine had debt problems. He had run up large balances on his credit cards in addition to having living expenses, a car loan, a mortgage, and student loan bills to pay every month. My friend did not manage his money well and never thought about creating a budget and trying to live within his income. He took vacations when he should have been saving or paying off debt. He went out to eat often instead of reducing his expenses. The balances on his credit cards went over the credit limits, which led to collectors calling him. In order to avoid nasty arguments with debt collectors, my

friend would initially use the nibble tactic of telling the collectors that the check was in the mail or that he would be sending a check when he got his next paycheck. This tactic worked for a little while until eventually my friend went to a debt consolidator. I was surprised that he could simply get out of initial payments to creditors with his nibble tactic, but it worked for a brief time.

References

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