

Achieving a win-win outcome

In the last reading, you learned about effective ways to negotiate a project's scope with stakeholders. The goal when negotiating with stakeholders should always be achieving a win-win outcome, or a **mutually beneficial agreement**. This is an agreement that benefits all parties involved. Mutually beneficial agreements aren't only for internal stakeholders, though. They are an important part of the process for negotiating with vendors, contractors, suppliers, and more.

Best practices for reaching a mutually beneficial agreement

- **Share information.** Sometimes in negotiations, one or both parties might think they need to withhold information in order to not give too much away. This isn't very effective, though. It is best to strive for open lines of communication, where each party shares their worries and preferences. For instance, if your team's last supplier provided you with low quality products, you might voice this as a concern so your expectations around quality are clear.
- **Ask questions and listen actively to responses.** Just like you shared your concerns and expectations, you can ask the other party questions to clarify what their concerns and expectations are. That way, both parties will have shared all the necessary information to achieve a mutually beneficial agreement.
- **Propose multiple options whenever possible.** In negotiations, presenting only one option or solution can set you up for failure because the other person might think your first offer is the only one. If the other party rejects all of your proposals, ask them to communicate which one they like best, as that may point you in the direction of finding a solution that works for everyone.

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