

Thought for the day – 24

‘Take control!’

In a negotiation, if one person is asking questions, and the other is answering, it is quite obvious who is directing the negotiation and who is merely responding and being led in a particular direction. The person who is controlling the negotiation is the one who is thinking:

- What areas do I want this meeting to cover?
- Do I have enough information on this topic?
- Do I want to change the subject?
- What weaknesses does he have which I want him to talk about?

He is then translating these points into questions for the opponent such as:

- Why are your labour costs so high?
- How is it made?
- Will you explain your tooling charge? I don't understand it.
- What stocks do you hold?

Research by Neil Rackham suggests that the most successful negotiators ask twice as many questions as average negotiators. In analysis of negotiations, he found that 20 per cent of all behaviours used by successful negotiators in negotiation were questions. When watching a negotiation, you can easily work out who is in control simply by counting the number of questions being asked by each side.

Start asking!

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This thought has been taken from Eric's book 'Mastering Negotiations'. A master negotiator himself, he is our expert trainer on the subject – click [here](#) for details of one of his most popular courses.

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PLEASE CALL 01582 469080

<http://www.in-house-training.com>

Email: info@in-house-training.com