negotiation

communication

relationship management

conflict resolution

mediation
When individuals think of a negotiation, they often feel pressed to choose between two options: being nice or getting what they want. Traditionally, one comes at the expense of the other.

However, neither choice bodes well for the business. If one adopts a concessionary posture in order to win the favor of the negotiation counterpart, unrealized revenue and profit can be sacrificed in the process. Conversely, obstinate behaviors might be one tactic for meeting one’s substantive goals in a negotiation, but they usually jeopardize the underlying relationship with the other party. This, in turn, can affect long-term revenues and profits.

Similarly, relationships or communication processes among parties often deteriorate to a point that progress is impeded, if not altogether halted. Walking away is one option. But that generally results in leaving value on the table.

Enter Consensus.

We are a consulting firm that specializes in negotiating and resolving interpersonal differences and tension. Since our inception in 1993, we have helped management teams from around the globe and across a variety of industries meet many professional challenges.

Our negotiation and mediation services – which are founded on principles developed by Harvard Law School – are designed to help clients capture value while preserving, if not enhancing, their relationships with negotiation counterparts. Likewise, our communication and conflict-resolution services – also founded on concepts and methodologies developed at Harvard - help clients improve interpersonal dynamics, breed harmony, and improve working conditions among different parties.

Hence, our structured approach to negotiation and relationship management helps client organizations improve their overall bottom line.
“In one of our concert grand pianos, 243 taut strings exert a pull of 40,000 pounds on an iron frame. It is proof that out of great tension may come great harmony.”

Theodore E. Steinway
Practice Areas

Consulting

Consensus helps clients prepare negotiation strategies, negotiates on their behalf, intercedes and helps resolve interpersonal and organizational conflicts, and provides other related services designed to help improve the bottom line. Our Consulting practice includes:

- Strategy & Preparation – our team helps our client develop a strategy and prepare for an upcoming negotiation
- Representation – one or more of our professionals acts as our client’s agent and negotiates on their behalf
- Mediation – we help our client and others find common ground
- Conflict Resolution – Consensus helps the client resolve interpersonal conflict and improve its relationship with the other party or parties involved

Professional Development

Consensus brings real-world experience to adult education and helps executives, managers, lawyers, salespeople, and other professionals improve their ability to engender positive working relationships and negotiate the best possible outcomes. Our Professional Development practice includes:

- Customized Workshops – we provide customized training in the areas of negotiation, conflict resolution, and communication
- Executive Coaching – through intensive, one-on-one interactions with a Consensus professional, we help individuals improve their negotiation, communication, and/or conflict resolution skills

Peace Building

Consensus develops and delivers a wide range of processes and interventions to support, transform, and maintain peaceful relationships among groups, organizations, and governments. Our Peace Building practice includes:

- Training & Education – we design and deliver a broad range of workshops which emphasize the cultural resources and experience of the participants
- Group Facilitation & Dialogue – the firm helps communities struggling with conflict have new kinds of interactions about the issues that divide them
- Program Development – Consensus supports the integration of effective conflict resolution skills, tools, and approaches into ongoing programming
“It is easy to know when a government wishes for peace by observing the character of the person sent to negotiate for it.”

Napoleon Bonaparte
Consulting Team

Donny Ebenstein, Esq.
- NYU Project on Negotiation & Conflict Resolution, Advisor
- Program on Negotiation, Faculty
- Hebrew University, Faculty
- JD, Harvard; BA, Michigan

Amy Fox
- Conflict Management Group, Trainer
- Rockwood Fund, Program Director
- Wellspace, Training & Org Dev Director
- City College, Special Ass't to the Dean
- MA, Lesley College; BA, Wesleyan

Bruce Hoelzen
- IBM, Negotiation Specialist
- Educor, Negotiation Trainer
- Distributed Solutions, Negotiation Trainer
- MBA, University of Arizona; BS, Arizona State University

Alex Kuilman, Esq.
- Heenan Blaikie, Associate
- City of Hamilton, French Prosecutor
- LLB, Western Ontario Law School
- BA, McGill University

Zachary Metz
- Center for International Conflict Resolution, Director, Education & Training
- Columbia University (SIPA), Adjunct
- Dispute Resolution Center, Prog Director
- MA, Columbia; BA, Earlham College

Steve Porter
- Harvard Law School, Program on Negotiation, Faculty
- IBM, Negotiation Specialist
- Founder, nSPM Consulting
- BA, Muskingum College

Michael Rosenthal
- First Financial, COO
- Consolidated Business Interests, EVP
- Training Roundtable, Chair
- BA, CUNY

Gillien Todd, Esq.
- Harvard Law School, Faculty
- Harvard Mediation Program, Advanced Program Director
- Hewlett Foundation, Research Fellow
- JD, Harvard; M. Ed., Harvard, BA, Yale

Michael Tsur, Esq.
- Hebrew University, Faculty
- Israel Defense Forces, Negotiator
- Supreme Court of Israel, ADR Consultant
- LLB, Faculty of Management (Israel)

Deborah Zarsky, Esq.
- ADR Committee, NYCity & NYC County Bar
- CUNY Dispute Resolution Consortium
- Certified Mediator, NYS Unified Court System
- JD, Cardozo; MA, CUNY; BA, Yeshiva
“Every fight is, on some level, a fight between differing ‘angles of vision’ illuminating the same truth.”

Mahatma Gandhi
The firm works with a wide variety of organizations within the private and public sectors. Since our team is fluent in six languages and accustomed to diverse cultures, our clientele spans the world.

Our most typical clients are publicly-owned companies and leading professional services firms. Nevertheless, our professionals have also consulted to government agencies, non-profit organizations, and emerging ventures, as well. These include the following:

- Automotive (Ford)
- Banking & Finance (JPMorgan Chase)
- Chemicals (Dupont)
- Communications (Ericsson)
- Consulting (Deloitte)
- Consumer Products (The Gap)
- Credit (MasterCard)
- Digital Imaging (Scitex)
- Economics (Analysis Group)
- Education (The Citadel)
- Energy (ChevronTexaco)
- Engineering (TRW)
- Financial Services (Fidelity Investments)
- Food & Beverage (Anheuser Busch)
- Government (Supreme Court of Costa Rica)
- Hardware (Compaq)
- Insurance (The Hartford)
- Law (Clifford Chance)
- Manufacturing (AO Smith)
- Military (Israel Defense Forces)
- Pharmaceuticals (Parke Davis)
- Professional Services (Geller & Company)
- Publishing (Conde Nast)
- Software (Microsoft)
- Textiles (Invista)
“Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate.”

John F. Kennedy
Case Studies

Strategic Acquisition - Healthcare Company
The firm negotiated the terms of a $40 million acquisition on behalf of a publicly owned healthcare company. The acquisition was designed to help the client penetrate a new geographic region and to provide a new offering to complement its preexisting services.

Hostage Negotiation - Church of the Nativity
In the summer of 2002, Palestinian militants sought refuge from the Israeli military by holding 120 hostages in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. One of our consultants, as a reservist in the Israeli Defense Forces, negotiated the safe release of the hostages and the surrender of the hostage-takers.

Conflict Resolution - Pharmaceutical Company
The firm was retained to improve the public company’s internal communications, as well as external relationships with third-parties. The Consensus team conducted a series of small-group training sessions across a number of divisions that helped the client meet its objectives.

Mediation Infrastructure Creation - The Supreme Court of Costa Rica
One of our specialists consulted to Supreme Court of Costa Rica on the design and implementation of an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) system to complement their preexisting court system. The initiative was designed to lighten the docket and to settle cases in a shorter span.

Negotiation Training - Investment Bank
Consensus was retained by a publicly owned investment bank to deliver a series of workshops to its finance professionals. Our team created a curriculum that addressed each department’s specific needs and that accommodated the special scheduling limitations of participants that could not attend training sessions during “market” hours.

Train the Trainer Program - Energy Company
The engagement began with the firm customizing a negotiation program that would be suitable for all of the divisions of the publicly owned company. We then taught members of the client’s in-house learning and development team how to deliver our content, provided the client with the materials needed to deliver workshops, and continue to provide ongoing coaching to the learning and development staff.