

Overview

Team Retreat is a simple two-party negotiation exercise about creating and claiming value. It comprises one distributive and two integrative negotiation issues.

Learning objectives include:

- Students improve their integrative negotiation skills. The two integrative issues allow the players to create value by using logrolling (i.e. by trading issues of unequal subjective value).
- Students also improve their distributive negotiation skills by using anchoring, framing, storytelling, etc.

Scenario

Neuste Nationalgalerie is one of Europe's leading museums for contemporary art. It is both celebrated by the hard-to-please feuilleton critics and visited by enthusiastic masses of art aficionados and tourists. Neuste is known for its innovative approach to the visitor experience; guests can vote on questions like how much floor space to give to a certain theme or artist, and several times a year they are invited to spend a day co-creating a work of art together with an internationally well-known painter or sculptor. Neuste isn't just a museum; in many ways it can be seen as an interactive art installation itself. The administrative director and the creative director of the museum are jointly negotiating the organization of a four-day team retreat next year.

Required student knowledge

No prior knowledge is required. In fact, as the exercise is simple, I recommend running it before the students have been introduced to the concept of logrolling. Students may, however, already be familiar with value claiming skills.

Logistics

Timing

45-60 minutes:

- Preparation: 10 minutes
 - 5 minutes for a general introduction. The instructor may, for example, ask which students have ever been on a team retreat, what the goals of the retreat were, and how it went. (Students then often share fun stories about team dynamics and personal bonding).
 - 5 minutes for allowing the students to read the instructions.
- Negotiation: 15-20 minutes
- Debrief: 20-30 minutes

Plus additional time for optional peer-feedback (see Debriefing section point 3).

Requirements

The exercise can be used in on- and offline settings and does not require taking any breaks.

Roles

- Administrative Director of the museum
- Creative Director of the museum

Expected Outcomes

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In the past, about 70% of the students have reached the ideal integrative solution by agreeing on holding the retreat late in the year and in France. Some 15% have failed to reach an integrative agreement and have instead agreed to “meet in the middle” regarding both logrolling issues. The remaining 15% have reached an agreement that was partially integrative.

Debrief

1. Ideal agreement

The ideal agreement is holding the retreat late in year in France. This allows each pair of negotiators to gain a point total of 340. Pairs who instead agree to “meet in the middle” only gain a total of 280 points.

2. Questions for the debrief

To each pair:

- *What was your agreement regarding the budget, location, and time of year?*
- *What was your point total as a pair and how many points did each of you get individually?*

I recommend writing their answers down on a white board. Once all pairs have answered, the instructor may show a slide that displays the utility functions of both parties (see “Debrief slide” in the Instructor Packet).

To those pairs that have reached 340 points:

- *How long did it take you to reach this solution?*
- *How easy would it have been to find the ideal agreement in a scenario with more issues, for instance five or ten?*
- *Do you have any recommendations for how to best develop package offers (i.e. offers that include proposals for several issues at the same time)?*

To all students:

- *Why did you agree on such different budgets? (Often the budgets agreements in a group range from 40,000 to 120,000 Swiss francs)*
 - *What role did anchoring play?*
 - *What role did framing and story-telling play?*
 - *What role did assumptions about your BATNA play?*

3. Optional: Peer-Feedback

Peer-Feedback in small groups: As Bell & Valley (2020) mention, “a small-group debrief among negotiation counterparts is an opportunity to get valuable feedback on many issues, including how certain comments were interpreted, what opportunities were missed, and where they felt optimistic or frustrated” (p. 68). For the Team Retreat exercise, a feedback group of two or three pairs (four to six people in total) seems ideal. If possible, pairs with a high point total and pairs with a low point total can be mixed in order to allow the sharing for a diverse range of experiences.

Sources

Bell, A. & Valley, T. (2020). The Art of Negotiation Exercise Design: Five Basic Principles to Produce Powerful Learning Experiences. *Negotiation Journal*, 36(1), 57–72. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nejo.12>