

ER refers to the employer, EE refers to the employee in the context of workplace negotiation.

Virtual cognitions (Knowledge): For the upcoming meeting, it could be a negotiation again like the last time. Eh...yes, I remember it well. It was with Jack, about his lateness for work. During that meeting, I followed the four main stages of negotiation: private preparation, joint exploration, bidding, and closing sequentially.

Virtual cognitions (self-motivating statement): Hmm... the negotiation went well. [XXX, you are a good negotiator.]

In the first stage, the private preparation stage, I collected and reviewed the relevant information about Jack and the upcoming meeting. I also discovered my own ideas and desires.

At the second stage, joint exploration, I shared the information I knew with Jack, such as the childcare centre, and explored a lot about his situation, what he really wanted and the underlying reasons why he wants to drop-off and pick-up Jenny by himself.

For the bidding stage, I didn't simply limit myself by my initial desire that Jack should come to work on time. Instead I developed lots of options for him, for example working for one more hour after the normal quitting time or changing the working contract.

In the final stage, the closing, I asked Jack to clearly repeat the agreement we had achieved to eliminate all possible doubts for both sides.

So, according to the previous successful experience, for the upcoming meeting, I believe I still should follow the four main stages of negotiation, go through them one by one, do not start to bid immediately.

However, I have also gained new knowledge from the courses I took after the negotiation with Jack. I should try to apply it in this meeting. What was it again?... O yes, I remember. The teacher stressed that we need a BATNA before entering any negotiation. But what's a BATNA again? Uh, let me see. Oh right, BATNA refers to Best... Alternative to a... Negotiated ...Agreement. It is the most advantageous alternative course of action I can take if negotiations fail and an agreement cannot be reached.

He gave a simple but understandable example about....., yeah, about selling a car. Supposing I want to sell my car and I have already had a written offer from a dealership to buy my car for Euro 9,000, then my BATNA when dealing with other potential purchasers would be Euro 9,000 since I can get Euro 9,000 for the car even without reaching an agreement with an alternative purchaser.

As the teacher said, a BATNA could protect me against two things. 1) Accepting an agreement, I should reject and 2) rejecting an agreement I should accept. So let me think, how would I use that in a negotiation? I could compare a proposal with my BATNA to see whether it better satisfies my interests or not. Like selling the car, if someone proposes an offer of 11,000 but will pay it in 30 days. Or an offer from another dealer to offset Euro 12,000 against the price of a new car.

With a BATNA, I could be more relaxed and confident, as I will not be too committed to reaching agreement or too pessimistic about what would happen if a negotiation failed. This sound as a smart thing.

Ok, so for Tom's case, what's the BATNA? Hmmm...Let me think about what will happen and what I could do if I don't invite Tom to negotiate, or if the upcoming negotiation fails and no agreement can be reached.

If I let Tom take a vacation immediately and do nothing about the project, the project could not be finished on time, the loss could cost more than 30 thousand euros. That sounds terrible. Forget it! Is there any other option? Let me see... I could separate Tom's work and give some of it to the other members in his team. Would that work? ... Maybe at first, but I would risk overworking them and creating an even worse situation. It doesn't seem worth it. Umm, wait a minute. It's also possible to extend the deadline of the project, but the penalty would cost us 10 thousand euros. So, let's think of other options..., I could also recruit one person from another team to finish Tom's task, but I may have to pay another 3 thousand euros. Well, it also costs extra money, but it seems to be the best alternative option until now for this case. So that's it! That will be the BATNA for the upcoming negotiation: hire some from another team to do Tom work when he is on holiday. Which will cost me 3.000 euro.

Virtual cognitions (Knowledge): Yes, I got a BATNA, now I should focus on the first stage, private preparation. In this stage, I remember two things very clearly: gather and reflect information, figure out my own desires. Firstly, I should review Tom's personal information

in the company system and his calendar. It seems he worked for more than 10 hours every day in the past two weeks. What's more, he always has a great grade in the annual assessment of the company. Secondly, I should understand my own desire is not only to make sure the project could be finished on time, but also that Tom remains fit so he can continue working for me. He is a good man I can depend on him.

Tap-tap (a knock at the door)

Virtual cognitions (Knowledge): He is coming. The next stage is Stage II, Joint exploration. In this stage, I should keep two key factors in mind: explore the underlying interests and create negotiation space as big as possible.

ER: Come in please. Have a seat!

ER: Hello Tom, I got your email about your plan to take a holiday. I thought it would be better if we discuss this face to face, that's why I arranged this meeting. Could you please tell me more about your idea?

EE: Yes, no problem. I want to take a vacation for one week.

Virtual cognitions (Knowledge): Now, it's joint exploration stage, I should explore more about Tom's current situation and his plan for the holiday, so try to encourage him to say more but also not push him too hard.

ER: Hmmmm.....

EE: I am planning on going to Spain. Spain is the place I always wanted to go to and it's not too far away from here. It will be quite affordable and convenient to visit there.

ER: Cool, Spain. I also like Spain, it's a wonderful place. Which city will you visit? Madrid? Barcelona?

EE: Málaga, the main reason we chose Spain is to visit the beach.

ER: Beach? That's very cool, sunshine, cocktails and palm trees. Will any other people go with you?

EE: Yes, my wife is planning to go with me. I image she will be very excited if we can go there for a vacation. She has been talking about the beauties and wonders of Spain for a whole year.

ER: Uh-huh...

EE: However, I still haven't bought the tickets and booked the hotels. I intend to buy the flight tickets after meeting with you.

Virtual cognitions (Knowledge): But what are his underlying reasons? why does he wants to take a vacation now?

ER: Ok. But could I ask why you want to have a holiday now?

EE: Eee, well, for one year I have 100 hours' holiday available, but until now I haven't taken any holidays this year, so I decided to take one now.

ER: Ok, that makes sense. But in your email, you said you wanted to take a leave on May 23, which is next Monday, is that right?

EE: Yes, I want to take a vacation immediately.

ER: Eeee....

EE: I have to say in the past two weeks, I worked for more than 10 hours every day. I feel over-worked and exhausted, so I need to take a vacation.

ER: Ok, I see. I really appreciate all the hours you have put in in the last few weeks. I understand you are very tired. Nowadays you are in a project that is so important for the company and there is just a limited time for your team to complete the project. How would you feel about adjusting your plans a little bit, such as maybe postponing it?

EE: No, I don't think so. I feel so tired that I can't work like this anymore. I have very little energy and enthusiasm at this point.

ER: I understand you want to take a vacation, and you should also understand you are giving me very short notice. You are planning to leave next week already! That gives me little to no time to find a replacement for you. Do you understand that this puts me in a very tight spot? I don't suppose you have found anyone to take over your work for you.

EE: I have not thought about that, I am sorry, but I have been working so hard lately that I didn't think of that.

ER: Ok, I understand. So, the main reason that you insist on taking this holiday immediately is because you are so tired and run out of steam? What if you were to take a short break, for maybe a couple of days, now and then a proper holiday later? Would that give you enough energy to finish the project first?

EE: Well, yes, my exhaustion is a big reason, but I am also concerned that if I go on holiday later, the weather will not be as nice.

ER: Oo.....?

EE: Yeah, next week is the last week that is still warm in Spain. After that it will be too cold to enjoy the beach this year. My wife likes the beach very much and she has already been asking me to take her to a beach for over a year. Next week is the last chance for us to go.

ER: Ok, I see. So, you want to have a holiday immediately next week mainly because you worry that you can't take your wife to the beach later this year?

EE: Yes, you can say that.

Virtual cognitions (Self-motivating): [XXX, you did a great job in the joint exploration stage]. I gathered a large amount of information about Tom's plan for holiday and successfully explored a lot about his desires and the underlying reason why he wanted to take a vacation immediately.

Virtual cognitions (Knowledge): Now, the negotiation will come to the next stage: bidding. The teacher once emphasized that BATNA should always be kept in mind. I should share more information about my interests with Tom and develop multiple options for him to choose from.

ER: Fine. I understand. How about you finish your project first, then I can arrange for you to go to Egypt for a new project. You can take your wife with you, so during the weekends you can relax and enjoy the sunshine and the beach all the time. There are lots of amazing beaches in Egypt and it's always warm there. I think both of you will have a great time.

EE: Um, but I don't have enough money to take my wife to Egypt.

ER: If you can take your wife with you to Egypt, how do you want to go there? By flight or boat?

EE: Flight seems like the only real option.

Virtual cognitions (Knowledge-BATNA): A round-trip flight ticket to Egypt costs about 350 euros, compared with the loss if we can't complete the project on time and the expense, we have to pay for recruiting another team to finish the project, the cost is quite small. I should make it work.

ER: Ok, if you can finish the project on time and agree to join the project in Egypt. The company could provide a ticket for your wife as a bonus, what do you think?

EE: Egypt, yeah. It's an amazing place. I always wanted to visit there, but nowadays.....Egypt was in the news recently, did you see that?

ER: Yeah, I saw that. It is unsettling.

EE: Heummm. So, I don't think it's a good idea to go to Egypt in the next few weeks. I wouldn't feel so safe there.

ER: Yeah, I see your point.

Ok, let me see, we also have a job opportunity in Sydney, Australia. How about working there? Bondi Beach, Manly Beach, Palm Beach and so on. They are all very famous beaches and totally fantastic.

EE: Yes, I know. Sydney is awesome, incredible ocean and beach, wonderful weather and great food, however it is quite far away from the Netherlands. My wife has a great job here and I also don't want to leave my family. So, I think it is not possible for me to work in Australia and have my wife accompany me.

Virtual cognitions (Knowledge-BATNA?): Tom doesn't want to work in Australia, but he seems to be willing to have a holiday there later. Although Sydney is far away from the Netherlands, the round-trip tickets for two people will cost more, almost about 2300 euros, it is still 700 euro cheaper than the cost of BATNA. So, it is still worth a try/trying at least.

ER: Ok, I understand. How about you finish the current project first on time, then you can take a vacation with your wife in Australia, the company will cover the flight tickets for both of you.

EE: A round-trip ticket to Australia for both my wife and me?

ER: Yes.

EE: It sounds great. But I can still take two days off first before I come back to work, right? I think at least I need a short rest immediately otherwise I may will be bogged down by overwork.

ER: Yes, you still can take two days off first, but please make sure you can complete your work before the deadline, otherwise everything is in vain.

EE: Ok, I get it.

Virtual cognitions (Self-motivating): Yeah, we are almost there. I kept the BATNA in mind and developed lots of options for Tom. [XXX, you are a quite good negotiator].

Virtual cognitions (Knowledge): We have already come to the last stage: closing. For this phase, I remember I should propose a clear closure of the negotiation by asking the other party to clearly repeat the agreement we have already made.

ER: Well. I think we've made good progress. Could you please run over the main points again?

EE: We both agree that I can take two days off immediately but after that I have to come back to complete my work. After the project is completed, I can take my wife with me to have a holiday in Sydney and my flight tickets will be covered by the company.

ER: Yeah, but please make sure the project is completed before the deadline, otherwise the bonus will not be possible.

EE: Ok, finishing the work, getting the bonus.

ER: Is that clear?

EE: Yes, it's totally clear.

ER: I am happy that we solved the issue and thank you Tom/Susan working with me to find a solution. I will talk with Bob from human resources and ask him to arrange what we have agreed. Bye, Tom

EE: Thank you. Bye.

Virtual cognitions (Self-motivating): Wow, I made it. [XXX, you are a good negotiator].

In this negotiation, I went through the four major stages of negotiation one after another. Private preparation, joint exploration, bidding, and closing, Yes! All of them have been kept in my mind.

I also followed my teachers advise about the BATNA - the most advantageous alternative course of action in case negation fails. The BATNA here was to hire someone that would cost me 3.000 euro.

And at the bidding stage I nicely could compare the options with this BATNA. It helped me to settle for the bonus flight of 2300 euro. Which is much, but much better than the alternative. So, I didn't reject a good option.

Virtual cognitions: Looking back on this I could say: [XXX, you are a good negotiator].