

Founded in New York City in 1967, DBM has over 40 years of history in achievement and leadership, providing career transition and talent development solutions to the individual and the organisation and ensuring successful transitions and tangible improvements to business performance. Its service model provides individuals in transition with the optimum one-on-one consultant coaching and direction, access to networking and job leads, and assessment and guidance for career and career-shifting options.

Ms Chin Lee Yen, the Business Development Director of DBM Singapore, has talent development experience focused on developing leadership competencies and improving sales force effectiveness. Ms Chin takes time off her busy schedule to chat with Business Minds on negotiation in a company environment.

Business Minds: What makes a company prominent in the aspect of negotiation?

Chin Lee Yen: The importance of negotiation in business is an invaluable component in any great business endeavour. In the competitive field of business you want to be sure that the importance of negotiation in business and the exceptional and crucial value it plays are stressed within the company.

We might say that a company prominent in the aspect of negotiation will be one that is able to negotiate to bring about the best value to its various stakeholders, such as the impact on employee engagement, productivity on the value of products and services, customer loyalty and its impact on the company's profitability and growth.

Business Minds: Where is the line between giving in to the other party in good faith and knowing what's good for business?



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Chin Lee Yen: Good faith is an abstract and comprehensive term that encompasses a sincere belief or motive without any malice or the desire to defraud others. It derives from the translation of the Latin term *bona fide*, and courts use the two terms interchangeably.

Giving in to the other party in good faith has its benefits for business as it leads to a sustainable long term relationship with the other party of stakeholders. This is because the doctrines of good faith enhance the flow of goods in commerce, as under them, buyers are not required, in the ordinary course of business, to go to extraordinary efforts to determine whether sellers actually have good title. A purchaser can move quickly to close a deal with the knowledge that a fraudulent seller and a legitimate titleholder will have to sort the issue out

in court. Of course, the purchaser will be required to demonstrate to the court evidence of good faith.

All said, good faith seems to have evolved into an over-used "marketing" term in business. We cannot emphasize enough about creating value. In balancing the scale between maintaining long term relationships without compromising on your position, bear in mind and work with the outcome of value-creation for your stakeholders.

Business Minds: In business, are negotiations always necessary?

Chin Lee Yen: Negotiation is almost always a constant in business – whether you're dealing with your shareholders, customers, suppliers or employees –

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improving leadership succession as key strategies to address talent challenges.

Operating under tight resources, it is not uncommon for us to observe negotiations on where, how and who should the organisation invest in to grow a talent pool that's aligned to the organisation's growth strategy. In the event of workforce alignment, we see negotiations around the process of who to keep, who to let go, how to manage changing job roles, severance benefits and so forth. Ultimately, negotiations involving different stakeholders need to have the ultimate aim of maintaining the corporate brand value.

The most successful negotiators from our experience are usually those who are clear on the outcome yet know when and what can be compromised; those who are firm yet open to creative and innovative ways to move the negotiation forward. Most importantly, successful negotiators are clear in articulating their interests at the negotiation table and are also able to express the negotiated outcome to impacted stakeholders without paving the path for a bad climate.

Business Minds: *What would be the worse example in your opinion (in general)?*

Chin Lee Yen: "People" is at the heart of DBM's business, and we tend to apply the "people" yardstick to the success of a business negotiation. If the outcome does not create value for people linked to the business, it may be worth a second thought or a re-visit to the negotiation agenda.

For example, the process of a salary negotiation encapsulates the experience of a good or bad negotiation. A salary negotiation window exists from the time the organisation offers a job to a candidate until the acceptance of the job by the selected candidate. The result of this salary negotiation can leave a candidate feeling wanted or devalued, or the employer excited to welcome the candidate or feeling as if he lost. A positive employer and a positive employee are the result of a successful salary negotiation.

another. The only difference is perhaps the intensity of the negotiations that are taking place. Business negotiations don't always begin nor end in the boardroom either since as we mentioned earlier, business relationships is an important function in the negotiation equation.

Negotiating effectively is a crucial professional skill. Like warfare tactics, it must be honed. Company staff members SHOULD know how to negotiate. If you don't know the principles, you may be costing the organisation in lost opportunities. Truly, the importance of negotiation in business can be the difference between companies that thrive and companies that soon falter and often go out of business.

Business Minds: *What has been DBM's case study (experience) in this area?*

Chin Lee Yen: DBM has been working with companies through their transitions since the 1960s. We've seen numerous business evolutions, from M&As, strategic alliances, organic expansion, down-sizing, closures... the list goes on.

The most common kinds of negotiations that we see with our customers are those concerning "people".

According to the Conference Board, the CEO challenge 2011 report, Talent, emerged as one of the top three strategies on CEOs' growth agenda. CEOs are increasingly looking at internally-focused actions such as improving leadership development, growing talent internally, enhancing the effectiveness of the senior team, and