



Negotiating

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Delta Publishing (2007)
Pp. 64 and CD
ISBN: 978-1-905085-13-2

1. Introduction

Negotiating is part of a series of business communication skills books published by Delta with the objective of providing students with the skills they need to communicate effectively and confidently in English in a variety of business contexts. The 64-page book, accompanied by an audio CD, is designed for students with a pre-intermediate or intermediate level of English and can be used in class or for self-study. Other skills dealt with in the same series include telephoning, e-mailing, socialising and presenting.

2. Format

Following an *introduction* and a useful *needs analysis*, the book is divided into six areas: preparing to negotiate, opening the negotiation, making proposals, reaching agreement, involving others, and concluding the deal. At the back of the book the authors have included photocopyable *resource pages* for each unit followed by *audioscripts* and *answer keys*. Students are encouraged to keep a *learning journal* and a suggested model is included on pp. 6-7.

After the title and summary of the unit content, the first four pages of each six-page unit follow the same format: *context*, *presentation* and *practice*, and *consolidation*, after which students are encouraged to make notes on the unit in their learning journal before turning to the two-page reference and review sections. The page layout is attractive and uncluttered. Each section is clearly signalled with room for the student to make notes, and the highlighted boxes in the margins give handy tips and cross-references to other units in the book.

3. Contents

Within the set format for each unit described above, the student will find a wide variety of different exercises and activities.

The *context section* may consist of a reading or listening section providing information and opinions, or a focus on the realisation of particular language functions. This is accompanied by questions giving the students the opportunity to reflect on their own experiences,

opinions, and attitudes. Attention is drawn to areas such as cultural differences, or a comparison between negotiating on a one-to-one basis or as part of a team.

The *presentation sections* typically give input in the form of a listening comprehension followed by a variety of tasks such as true/false, gap-fills, matching, and putting sentences or dialogues into the correct order.

In the *practice sections*, students' attention is drawn to essential language and to particular grammatical structures which occur frequently in the different stages of a negotiation such as the use of the conditional, modals, comparisons, verb patterns and so on. Again, a wide variety of exercise types is used.

Some of the areas and functions covered are: introductions and welcoming, setting the agenda and getting started, making and responding to proposals, persuading, prioritising, giving reasons, asking for, giving and reacting to opinions, re-capping, reaching agreement, clarifying and checking, using vague language, being diplomatic,

Pronunciation work is included in both presentation and practice sections and covers areas such as word and sentence stress, linking and weak forms.

The *consolidation section* takes the form of a follow-up activity related to the unit topic. Students are asked to "think of a negotiation you will take part in soon / have recently taken part in", complete one of the resources pages included at the back of the book and finally to reflect on and evaluate their success.

4. Skills Work

As would be expected in a book devoted to negotiations, the emphasis is on spoken language, particularly on listening. The listening passages offer the student a variety of native and non-native speakers, mainly from Britain, the USA, and Europe. Tasks include listening for gist as well as for specific information. Situations include dialogues, meetings with several different speakers, and conference calls.

Since the book can be used for self-study, there are fewer opportunities for speaking than would be found in a book intended solely for use in class. However, many of the activities can be adapted for class work, particularly in the consolidation sections. A suggestion to students studying alone to make recordings of their speaking would have been useful. There are also some useful writing activities such as note-taking and writing e-mails.

5. Learner Training

There is a strong and explicit focus on learner training throughout the book. Students are encouraged to reflect on their attitudes and opinions and to make links between the materials and their own professional situation. They are given suggestions on how to organise and evaluate their learning. The tips included in the margins draw attention to, and thus raise awareness of, different aspects language use.

6. Conclusion

The strengths of this book lie in its practical approach, its clear layout, its careful choice of language, and particularly, in its the focus on learner training. It will provide the student with the basic tools to acquire what is a difficult skill in any language – indeed, some may call negotiating an art.

In short, *Negotiations* provides a useful introduction to the skill of negotiating both for self-study and classroom use, where teachers could easily exploit the course book themes and exercises to develop additional role-play and speaking activities.