

Contemporary Corporate Negotiation Training

Research and the Negotiation DoJo[®] Approach



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Negotiation and Martial Arts

Martial arts embrace the concept of training for physical conflict. To develop a large reservoir of small skills that stack and work together after intervals of practice. This is done by practicing the moves that counter or promote an offense. Repetition of moves in succession builds “muscle memory” when one step is followed by another given input or situation. Sparring in various situations ensures these skills are known instinctively.

Negotiation, influence, and persuasion are how we avoid physical conflict and communicate our needs to the world. How effective we are at those skills determines if, in fact, our needs are met. The Negotiation Dojo is a private peer negotiation, persuasion, and influence practice group that meets periodically to practice, drill, and role-play members' critical negotiations. A short lesson is offered prior to head-to-head negotiation sparring. This is a safe, non-customer-facing, non-strategic partner-facing sparring ground that allows employees to delve deeply into this most critical of skill sets. The Negotiation DoJo is a science-based approach to corporate training using the martial arts mode of interaction between collaborators or adversaries. There are strategic imperatives historically linking strategy and negotiation, works such as Sun Tsu's *Art of War* and Miyamoto Musashi's *Book of Five Rings* Demonstrate the thousands of years negotiation is linked to the martial arts. Contemporary research links how corporate training should be delivered in this style.

Building an Organization of Team Negotiators

According to [research at Microsoft](#), work is no longer a place but an experience that binds employees and leaders across home offices, company headquarters, time zones, and more. Conversely, leaders still crave the familiarity of the traditional office where brainstorming happens in-person to solve negotiation problems

recommended by Roger Fisher and William Ury associated with the Harvard Project on Negotiation and authors of “Getting to Yes.” Chance encounters in the hallways yield unexpected collaboration. This research points to three things that matter: the impact of work, team connectedness, and experiential learning as a catalyst for building team community.

Return to Work New Productivity and Negotiation Skills

The pandemic exposed the possibilities and the constrictions of remote learning at work. Recent studies challenge the notion that demanding all employees return to a central office is not persuasive to employees who find productivity in remote work. Competitors who have no such mandates understand the nuances of remote work. Yet decades of research show physical proximity has merit. Giving employees a reason to come in periodically or serially is effective. This is a driving force in the Negotiation DoJo is built.

First, the impact of work, not the appearance of work, requires distinction. The indicia of work psychologically make leaders feel like progress is being made. This involves traditional perceptions of work in the office. For example, the clicking of keyboards and phones ringing classically showed a busy business. This is what Microsoft calls “productivity theater.” Data show this disconnect as the indicia of productivity according to leaders is not the same as employees: 85% of leaders can’t verify productivity, yet 87% of employees report they are productive. Understanding what matters and alignment with those imperatives added to confidential feedback from employees creates better outcomes. Negotiation, persuasion, and influence performance are better accomplished by establishing performance goals. That is what the Negotiation DoJo™ curriculum offers, focusing on effective techniques informed by real-time participant feedback. The goal is the performance of the skills learned by a coach.

Second, rolling back their return-to-office mandates proves that people need a better reason to come into the office than policy alone or indicia of a busy business. Workers show up, according to the research, for each other. Eighty-four percent of employees say they'd be motivated to go to the office to socialize with coworkers, while 85% are motivated by rebuilding team bonds. During the work-from-home phase, half of the employees say their relationships outside their immediate teams have frayed, and 43% say they feel disconnected from their company. In a hybrid world, leaders need to think beyond the office, too: No matter where your employees work, consistent communication and connection is critical to help them feel like they're part of a community. The Negotiation DoJo offers a distributed multi-modal learning environment with multiple platforms. Communication of our needs to the world involves negotiation, persuasion, and influence. Physical time together in the DoJo is planned and meaningful.

Finally, to retain talent, organizations must prioritize learning. Microsoft claims 76% percent of employees say that if they could benefit more from learning and development, they would not move and stay at their company longer:

Employees consider opportunities to learn and grow as the No. 1 driver of great work culture, a jump from 2019 when it ranked ninth. It's undoubtedly more cost-effective to upskill workers than hire brand-new people.

Artificial Intelligence

Based on recent research professional negotiators were as effective as current AI negotiators in “non-rules based negotiations.” AI negotiators outperformed humans in rules based negotiations (e.g., auctions, game theory based interactions like prisoner’s dilemma or stag hunt). Unstructured and emotionally driven negotiations favor humans and systems that can adapt and overcome the conflict between the logos, ethos and pathos of human centered negotiation.

Corporate Learning Efficacy Research

The Association for Talent Development recently looked at how to ensure learned workshops and seminars actually improve corporate performance. Founder of Oji Life Lab and former Director of Training for Robert Half, Andrea Hoban, [published research imperatives](#) research on training optimization.

Micro-lessons and Software as a Service Platform

Lengthy training sessions are effective for most learners, but not always possible. Micro lessons broken into small, self-contained units delivered over days, weeks, or months allow learners to quickly consume and process.

Martin Medeiros researched human learning and has written about how we learn in the book, *Negotiating Beyond Tomorrow*; serial learning in small sessions is the best. In his book, *Negotiating College*, he encourages students to avoid multi-hour weekly sessions in favor of meeting three times a week - if their objective is learning.

In 2019, the National Institute of Health published a [study](#)¹ validating this notion. The Negotiation Dojo is a multi-week or multi-month curriculum that makes learners available to access software as a service (SaaS) platform integrated negotiation tool in thepersuasionlab.com. The micro lessons are searchable in video and audio.

Practice and Review

Learning by doing is the way of martial arts. The academic download has very little retention in long one and two-day seminars or workshops for most learners. The Negotiation DoJo™ allows users to “spar” the skill over and over with participation; the next session gives the user the ability to practice the last lesson and drill the new skill on top of the previous. Using actual or primed negotiation situations allows users to learn by doing. The antidote to knowledge evanescence is to review in different ways. The Negotiation DoJo emphasizes a negotiator’s journal in the format to avoid knowledge loss, research show [multi-pronged review](#) helps keep learners' knowledge fresh. Whereas traditional training workshops present new knowledge to learners once—and then move on—the reinvented workshop takes the spiral approach to learning.

Conclusion

Microlessons, Experiential learning on multiple platforms over time ensure corporate training expenditure yields value. The learners must be able to access short lessons on these skills. The Negotiation DoJo™ method is built upon the best research available on teaching negotiation to corporate learners.

¹ Shail MS. Using Micro-learning on Mobile Applications to Increase Knowledge Retention and Work Performance: A Review of Literature. Cureus. 2019 Aug 2;11(8):e5307. doi: 10.7759/cureus.5307. PMID: 31511813; PMCID: PMC6716752.