



Negotiation Skills

A leading company in Hard Services-led Facilities Management wanted to improve margins and profitability across contracts in one of its key Divisions. It had previously run courses in Negotiation Skills but the lessons being taught were not wholly appropriate for their business; too much of the focus then was on winning and screwing down the other party.

We designed a tailored and practical programme which focused on the on-going relationship and a win/win for both parties. The mystique of 'negotiation' was removed and selling techniques were blended with good communication skills. In particular, the power of questioning techniques was practised along with a range of gambits and strategies to stay in control. Role-plays were realistic and the video feedback allowed learning to be shared within the larger group, and delegates could also take away copies to review in their own time.

The first two-day programme had paid for itself by the end of the next week when a retender was won with a 5% uplift, although the client was actually seeking a reduction in the contract value. Yet the client still won!

Structured and planned questioning allowed the client to recognise the true value of the services provided; the contract fee was put into perspective and the opportunity was taken to educate the client on another service they would benefit from.

Further savings were made across contracts by negotiating better deals with suppliers and sub-contractors, achieving win/wins and maintaining the longer business relationship. All the programmes paid for themselves many times over within 3 months, often spawning healthy competition with a 'let the games commence' attitude to see who could make the biggest savings or margin improvements.

We even designed a successful one-day programme for Contract Support staff in which the telephone was the key medium as they negotiated with Engineers, suppliers and sub-contractors. The PhoneCoach system we used was helpful in reviewing tailored role-plays and in letting participants hear themselves in action. Confidence was boosted and efficiencies were achieved, and they learned the importance of proper preparation.