HOW INTEREST-BASED BARGAINING WORKS

Interest-based bargaining/problem solving is a collaborative method that, unlike competition or compromise, not only leaves the relationship between the parties intact, but can even improve it.











DEFINE THE ISSUE

TASK: Describe the problem that needs to be addressed.

WHY: Expressing the problem by itself removes opinions on how it should be solved.



DETERMINE INTERESTS

TASK: Each side develops its own list of interests by describing why the problem is important and stating the underlying concern. Once the separate lists are complete, the two sides sit together and build a list of their common interests.

WHY: This approach allows both sides to focus on core concerns, which are often similar, and avoid taking extreme positions.



DEVELOP OPTIONS

TASK: Brainstorm potential solutions.

WHY: Brainstorming allows for a wide range of possible solutions to emerge. The best ideas may come out of the synergy of the process.



SELECT SOLUTIONS

TASK: Reach consensus on a solution or solutions.

WHY: Reaching consensus allows everyone involved in the process to support the final product. Each person weighs in with a thumbs up or a thumbs down.

Some issues need more discussion and more rounds of pollingbefore all parties can live with the result.

IS THAT 'INTEREST' REALLY A POSITION?

What do you do when you've got a position masquerading as an interest? Usually, you can get to the interests that underlie a position if you listen carefully and ask the right questions. Find out the needs and concerns behind the position.

A position tells us what you want but not necessarily why you want it.

- » A spouse wants to put 5 percent of income into a retirement fund.
- » A parent wants a child in bed by 9:30 on a weeknight.
- » A union wants a 3 percent acrossthe-board wage increase in collective bargaining.

An interest tells us what is important to you.

- » A spouse wants enough saved to have a comfortable retirement.
- » A parent wants a child to be well rested for school the next day.
- » A union rep wants a compensation package for members that aids recruitment and retention.

