

Negotiating

Manual

Negotiations always start from the idea of partnership: arts, cultural and community centres, artists and intermediaries such as managers and booking agencies, are partners. Everyone wants fulfilled artists, a satisfied audience, affordable productions and well-organised touring schedules. It's all about making good arrangements, closing fair deals and negotiating transparent contracts.

Negotiating is not always easy. There often seems to be little space and time for it. But clarify what you are agreeing to and initiate a dialogue. Dare to negotiate and ask what you need and expect from each other. There is nothing wrong with this. And you will see that negotiating often pays off if it is done with respect for the negotiating partner's expectations.

The starting point is that the artist and the organisation need one another, and therefore negotiate the agreements as equal parties. Showing the work is important for both the organisation and the artist. The negotiations are therefore based on a common interest.

Determine your interests

- ✓ Determine what you really want to achieve. Keep in mind: the more specific the demand, the greater the chance of success.
- ✓ Determine on which points you want to/can compromise and which not.
- ✓ Determine for yourself how far you can go (budget, internal arrangements) and want to go (prudence principle).
- ✓ Coordinate with your colleagues/supporters/management.
- ✓ Inform your co-negotiators and negotiating partners. Create space for an open dialogue.

Prepare a dossier and be knowledgeable

- ✓ Make sure the proposal you receive is clear to you: ask questions about what is included and what is not. Take into account any additional costs or needs.

- ✓ Objectify (importance of figures) and argue with concrete examples, experiences or your own cost estimates.
- ✓ Appeal to 'reference persons' (= persons who may be important to the negotiating partner).

Try to understand the interests of the negotiating partner

- ✓ What might be important to him/her? Empathise with his/her position, and never attack that position (booking agencies, for example, are in a different market than cultural and community centres).
- ✓ Ask open questions: what does he/she do?
- ✓ Determine any possible common interests.
- ✓ Keep in mind: among these mutual interests there is a common basis for negotiations.

Create a good negotiating climate

- ✓ Don't forget the initial exchanges (preparatory phase).
- ✓ Emphasise that you want to reach an agreement.

Don't blindly focus on the opening position of the negotiating partner

- ✓ "It can't be done differently", "You're the only one who's making this an issue". Try to break through such a position without attacking it. This can be done by asking certain questions.
- ✓ Be flexible in your own position, but protect your interests.
- ✓ Avoid 'trench warfare' (= a collision of each other's positions).

Assume an open and inviting attitude

- ✓ Ask questions.
- ✓ Listen actively. If necessary, repeat what you understand of the other person's proposal.

- ✓ Discuss the contents and message of the negotiating partner.
- ✓ Frame and reframe: show understanding for the context of the negotiating partner and only then provide new frames of reference.
- ✓ Thinking about the longer term together can create goodwill.

Closing the deal

Determine the options that will be put on the table and work towards a clear agreement framework. Summarise, consolidate and define interim options/agreements. For example, send a summary e-mail after a meeting. Remember that each artistic work has its price. Negotiating endlessly makes little sense and can cloud good relationships.