

How to Achieve Robust Negotiations with Latin Americans.
According to Dr. Habib Chamoun-Nicolas – Part I, INTRODUCTION

Negotiation with a global vision leads to better deals for both parties.

Learn how to build better bridges between the Americas.

If we examine the cultural differences in negotiation and the factors that affect the negotiation style between the USA and Latin American Countries such as Mexico, we will better understand our neighbors and do a better job building long-term business and personal relationships. The reflections and findings reported in this article are based on research conducted by the author using Dr. Jeswald Salacuse's model of 10 factors affecting the negotiation style. Salacuse, J.W. *Making Global Deals- What Every Executive Should Know About Negotiating Abroad*: Times Business, 1992. It is not the intention by reporting these findings to either create a stereotype or to predispose ourselves when entering into negotiations. This would only increase existing cultural barriers!

It is intended that we reduce the gap in understanding and improve respect for cultural differences. Remember, "When in Rome do as the Romans do." I would suggest adding to it "without compromising values", so "Do as the Romans do in Rome without compromising values".

As discussed in the books "Trato Hecho-guía para una negociación sin fallas", "Desarrollo de Negocios 3era edición" and "Robust Negotiations- How to Obtain GREAT DEALS? – It is not a COINCIDENCE!" ©2003 by Dr. Chamoun-Nicolas: a global negotiation vision could be gained by breaking any negotiation into six fundamental elements.

1. **People**: "the players"
2. **Product**: the business opportunity element to be analyzed
3. **Process**: negotiation process and its parts
4. **Problem**: the "Conflict Matter"
5. **Power**: sources of power element
6. **Prediction**: forecast element

The six P's are analyzed extensively in existing publications. The focus of this article is the P of People. However, for the sake of completeness let us mention briefly

the six P's. Especially the "Product", sometimes referred to as the Business Opportunity, has been carefully analyzed by many authors of sales methodologies. Most of the methodologies help the readers concentrate on analyzing the opportunity, the decision makers, the influencers and the decision making process. They also help to find client's needs and wants. In summary, the methodologies help the sellers to find out if there is a real opportunity, if he can compete, if he can win and if it is worth the effort of pursuing the specific opportunity. These sales methodologies help the seller understand the buyer's vision of the buying decision making process.

The "Process" or the negotiation process is also discussed in depth in literature. The action of negotiation is a time consuming effort. It is not a single pointed activity without interrelation; rather, it is a continuous process that needs to be understood fully by all negotiating parties. Sometimes understanding is more important to the process than the substance we are negotiating. Negotiators, having the tendency to focus on substance, can easily forget the process and fail to obtain win/win negotiations. There are many treatises in the literature that explains the science of negotiations and its complexities.

The P of "Power" is the power of negotiation and many authors have explained the sources of power and the importance of power over the negotiation parties and outcomes.

When negotiating conflicts, the "Problem" is a completely different ball game and is referred to as the mediation process with a third party coming into play. Authors in the literature of conflict resolution and mediation are numerous.

The ability to forecast with accuracy the negotiation outcome is a function of how much knowledge and understanding one

has on the external factors that affect one's industry and market. The P of "Prediction" reminds us of the uncertainties that could make deals sour.

The P of "People" or Players is the focus of this series of articles. The most important P of all is People. After all, we are negotiating with people all the time; people with different business habits and cultures. Therefore, if we can get a better understanding of their issues, their business models, and their business habits, we are more likely to achieve better results when negotiating with them.

One aspect of the P of "People or "the players" that we focus upon herein is the different cultures and their effect on negotiating style. Let us define culture as not only the customs, institutions and achievements of a nation or a people, but also as the corporate, professional and different communications behaviors and attitudes of people, including the role of gender.

The work developed by Dr. Jeswald Salacuse on culture and negotiation and the ten factors affecting the negotiation style were studied and analyzed for people coming from Latin American Cultures

including the different locations within Mexico, Ecuador and other Latin American countries.

One trend of interest to international business people is that Latin American and Mexican negotiators typically stand out by bringing creative elements to the negotiation table and that USA negotiators typically were found to bring a methodology and a plan for a win-win situation.

Analysis of the Latin American culture's influence on negotiation within the context of the Chamoun model has enabled construction of useful profiles for different business sectors. While nothing replaces relationship building on an individual basis, every person doing business with Latin Americans will benefit from this cross-section of expectations and preferences in business negotiating.

Next month's article will discuss the cultural and personal aspects of the negotiation findings by Dr. Chamoun-Nicolas for Latin-American with emphasis on the Mexican culture.

Note: This article material is based upon the principles outline in the following books:
Desarrollo de Negocios 3era edición, 2003 Dr. Habib Chamoun-Nicolás
Trato Hecho-guía para una negociación sin fallas-Dr. Habib Chamoun-Nicolás
Robust Negotiations- How to Obtain GREAT DEALS? – It is not a COINCIDENCE! Dr. Habib Chamoun-Nicolás