

NEGOTIATION NATION

Lee Miller saw the need for better negotiating skills in corporate America. **Now he's a widely sought trainer, author and speaker who makes negotiation expertise his nonnegotiable demand.**

If you've been surfing the cable news channels or checking in with ABC's "Good Morning America" in recent months, you may well have hit on segments featuring a savvy New Yorker and his equally savvy daughter who illustrate the techniques of better business negotiations for women.

Indeed, Lee E. Miller is becoming a high-profile priest of the give-and-take art, via his books, consulting practice, corporate training, and live appearances, often with his daughter and co-author, Jessica Miller. Together, they've produced an influential niche bestseller, *A Woman's Guide to Successful Negotiating* (McGraw Hill;

2002), that explains how women in all walks of life and business can strike better deals for themselves and their organizations. But the more general Miller message to HR—learn to negotiate, and train your work force to negotiate as well—is just as strong.

For Lee Miller, now managing director of **NegotiationPlus.com**, in Morristown, N.J., the role of negotiation guru is the latest incarnation in a well-rooted career that began after his graduation from **Harvard Law School** and his move into labor and employment law for large East Coast law firms. From law he turned to HR, and served as senior vice president of HR for **TV Guide**

magazine, HR head at **USA Networks**, **Barney's New York**, and a vice president of labor and employee relations for **R.H. Macy & Co.**

Now, in addition to his consulting and training work, he teaches MBA courses in negotiating, decision-making and HR management as an adjunct professor at **Seton Hall University**. *HR Innovator* editor-in-chief Matt Damsker caught up with Miller recently, and their conversation focused on negotiation styles, on Miller's negotiation training technique—Convince, Collaborate, Create—and how HR can benefit from it all.



Lee Miller: From Harvard law whiz to HR honcho to negotiation guru.

HR Innovator: You have an HR and law background. What led you to become a negotiation training expert?

Lee Miller: I found that everything I did as an employment lawyer and head of HR involved negotiating in one sense or another. Whether recruiting or dealing with resources or benefits, it was all about negotiating. But I don't think there was any moment or epiphany where I discovered that this was something I had to do. I was always good at negotiating, though, so I decided at some point to write a book about it, and it proved to be useful and necessary and was very well received.

HR Innovator: That first book was about negotiating in an employment context. It was called *Get More Money On Your Next Job* (McGraw-Hill; 1997). What was its value?

Miller: That offered a perspective on recruiting and what was necessary from both candidates' and employers' points of view. I think that the key to success in business is bringing in the best and brightest, and we don't realize at the moment that we still have a critical shortage of human talent out there. And as the economy continues to expand and get better, we'll be back to where we were a few years ago. Finding talent, knowing how to recruit it and how to negotiate to get the deal into a reasonable package on both sides—and make it work for both sides—is critical.

HR Innovator: You got into training following the success of your second book, *A Woman's Guide to Successful Negotiation*, written with your daughter,

Jessica Miller. Is there some fundamental difference between women's and men's negotiating styles?

Miller: There's parity in terms of results but not in terms of how they get there. To give you the sound bite, in terms of negotiating, it's one word: relationships. Women tend to value relationships in and of themselves; men tend to value relationships based on what they can get out of them. That single difference manifests itself in a big way when you negotiate.

For example, you have a negotiation with a car dealer; it's all about outcome. On the other end of the continuum there are negotiations that are all about relationships, such as when we negotiate with our spouses or children. But most of the negotiations we do fall in the middle ground. And since women tend to value the relationship, even at the expense of giving up something in the outcome, they tend to want to preserve the relationship, as a general rule. Whereas men will tend to do the opposite: they'll get to the outcome and worry about fixing the relationship later.

So we came up with a model called Convince, Collaborate and Create—three approaches you'd use either separately or together. Convince is basically how you persuade the other party to your point of view, based on what the other party values. If they care a lot about status, say, then you're going to appeal to their valuing of status and try to persuade them that status is going to be enhanced by whatever you're proposing.

The second approach, Collaborate, is your basic win-win negotiating. What does the other party need? Persuasion has an emotional component, and your needs are often based on what your interests are. And interests are different from values. Let's say you want a house with an unobstructed view of the lake, but the person next door has a treed lot and won't sell. You have to look at their interests in negotiating a solution.

The third approach, Create, is about coming up with a whole different negotiating paradigm. My daughter is particularly good at that. Instead of approaching things the traditional way, can the nego-

ment tool [at www.NegotiationPlus.com] that reveals 20 basic different styles, primary and secondary. And a secondary or a lack of a secondary style tells a lot about what a person needs from training. Someone with, say, a collaborative style and a secondary competitive style is very different from someone with a collaborative style and a secondary accommodating style. You would train them differently.

HR Innovator: Does HR place enough value on negotiation training?

Miller: I don't think so. HR is very focused on leadership skills and training. HR people often think that someone who is an expert in leadership training can have a small segment on negotiating and that's enough, but it's not. Negotiating is a critical skill, an essential skill; your executives are negotiating all the time. Leaders negotiate with subordinates, peers, external customers. It's a skill needed for much more than just sales or purchasing.

And HR people should recognize that they themselves need this training. Think about it in terms of recruiting.

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But the fact that women are good at building relationships is a critical strength. It's hard to say no to someone who has a good relationship with you. But one of the weaknesses of women's negotiating style is that they can, at times, let people use relationships against them.

HR Innovator: And that led you to develop a specific negotiation technique?

Miller: The basic model we developed works for men and women, it's not gender-specific. Your own personal negotiating style is more important than your gender.

tiating parties come up with something new? Maybe there's a better person to negotiate with if the one you're dealing with doesn't have the authority. Or you can ask the other party, "What would you do in this situation?" instead of saying, "Can you give me this or that?" It's a matter of looking at the situation and creating a different one.

HR Innovator: How does this differ from other negotiating techniques?

Miller: What's unique about this training is its emphasis on the importance of negotiating style, since people have different styles. So we developed an online assess-

Most recruiting is involved in identifying talent, but you have to get job candidates to accept the job package, and you must also convince your management that the package is appropriate. So you're negotiating internally and with the candidate. You must start to negotiate the moment you first meet the candidate, but very often negotiation begins after the process has started. Many times job searches fail due to poor negotiating early on.

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