

Interest-Based Decision Making

“Integrative” or Interest-Based Bargaining is a negotiating methodology for all parties to find a “win-win” in negotiating. Its main focus is to bring all parties involved in the negotiations to come together on a shared agenda and criteria for understanding what constitutes a “win” for the negotiating parties. This requires negotiators to understand the “needs, desires, concerns, and fears important to each side.” By understanding the motivations behind each side, negotiators can speak in the same “language,” and appreciate and take into consideration the perspective of each side.

An interest-based negotiation strategy should involve asking investigative questions to determine the “Why.” *Why do you need that? Why do you think that way? What makes you concerned about this?* Use the answers you find from these questions to help weigh the consequences (the pros and cons) of the different options presented. The graphic to the right summarizes the steps and considerations involved in interest-based decision making.

For more information on Integrative/Interest-Based Bargaining, please read the 2003 article by Brad Spangler at the following URL:

<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/interest-based-bargaining>. For

additional reading on multi-party negotiations, read the 2004 Harvard Business School article by Lawrence Susskind here:

<http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/3898.html>.



Here’s an example of interest-based decision making versus traditional “positional negotiating:”

Topic: “Clearly, the sky is always grey”

Positional Negotiations	Interest-Based Negotiations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That’s dumb, it’s blue! • It’s just grey, duh, I don’t have to explain myself! • Well, actually, it’s black at night, too. • That’s clearly an opinion and it’s not acceptable in this discussion. • Everyone knows the sky is blue. Unless you are color blind. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From <i>my perspective</i>, growing up in Seattle, the sky is grey fairly often due to the rain. • I understand in Seattle the sky may be grey much of the time, but in Spokane it can also be blue. Can we agree on that? • Well, scientifically, the molecules in the air scatter blue light from the sun more than they scatter red light, which is why it looks blue when it’s not cloudy.

Let's Practice! Consider the following scenario:

- You are part of the (16-17 person) city council in Dual Crests, WA
- Dual Crests' Mayor, Daniel Finch is a proponent of using interest-based decision making in deliberating changes going on in Dual Crests, and today's meeting of the city council is no different
- Dual Crests had a budget surplus this year due to a recent influx of tourism thanks to the upcoming release of the revival of the early '90s hit TV-show *Double Summits*, which was filmed partially in Dual Crests
- Today's city council meeting, mediated by the Mayor, has been convened to determine how to spend the additional \$500,000.00 in revenue. Use Interest-Based Decision making to collaboratively decide how to spend those dollars.

Divide into groups of 16-17 people. Count off to randomly assign each member of the group one of the city council members characters. Using interest-based decision making practices, take on your character's perspective and discuss your input on how to spend the additional \$500,000 in revenue.

City council members

#	Name	Interests and Motivations
1	Lori Walker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade school teacher • Middle school needs renovations, more teachers
2	Harold S. Newman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheriff of Dual Crests (yes, he's also a council member, go figure) • Wants greater investment in police force and prison space
3	D.D. Cooper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FBI agent based in Dual Crests • Wants greater investment in roads so that more tourists can come and try the pie in the local diner
4	Bill Maynard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local doctor • Wants more city investment in local hospital and provide free flu shots for all town residents
5	Lenny Bourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owns largest hotel in Dual Crests area • Wants more investment in local infrastructure, internet, roads, etc., to attract more tourists
6	Leslie Lockhart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owns local sawmill that's running nowhere near capacity • Wants investment in job training for locals in carpentry and woodwork and lumberjacking
7	Colonel Gnarland Biggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retired Air Force officer • Wants job training investment for deep-space research
8	Big Ned Curley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owner of local gas station • Wants better road investment to accommodate more tourists who will buy gas
9	Nelly Davidson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local waitress at the diner • Wants better job training programs for herself, better accommodations for tourists
10	Dr. Larry Renaldi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local psychiatrist • Wants more investment in local health programs
11	Avery Baccus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Store manager of local department store • Favors investment that will attract more tourists
12	Gary Bannon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheriff's deputy • Wants more investment in police for raises and more recruits
13	Marcy Loran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receptionist at Sheriff's department • Just wants a raise
14	Mary Winterman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local mystic • Wants investment to attract tourists to her place of business
15	Maggie Wilford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local newspaper publisher • Wants job training investment to hire new journalists
16	Robert Rose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local coroner • Wants more investment in law enforcement
17	Stan Samuel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forensics expert • Favors investment in job training and law enforcement