

Essay on self- reflection essay performance

[Business](#), [Company](#)



Abstract

Tuckman's five-stage model of small group development was evident in a previous course taken by the writer, in which business negotiations were simulated and conducted with a small group of peers. During the process of group development, forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning occurred, each stage playing a pivotal role in group development and the conducting of these assignments. From beginning to end, the group was shown to be amicable to avoid conflict, have tensions as a result of changing expectations of individual roles, settling into a cohesive rhythm and understanding, and delegation of trusted tasks to others.

In a previous class I took, I was tasked with working with a group of fellow students in order to negotiate business deals. In this class, we had approximately four different kinds of negotiations we had to successfully navigate, all while working together to use our skills and find a successful outcome. Over the course of this class, we made five negotiations from week 7 to week 11 - Two of them were face to face negotiations, where each team was in the same room, and the third was conducted over email. For our first negotiation in Week 7, the negotiation was about the selling of a car to a person from a foreign country. My group involved the selling of the car, and the other group was the party interested in buying it. Our target was to sell the car for \$12, 500, or as close to that as we could.

The development of our group to perform this task and the tasks beyond followed the Tuckman stages of small group development. This first stage is characterized by dependence and patterns of behavior; everyone tries to get

along and be accepted by the group (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). One tries to prevent controversy from starting conflicts early in the group dynamic, and topics are kept lightweight. During the 'forming' stage, we attempted to get to know each other as a group. At our first group meeting, we just got to know each other and attempted to be courteous around each other.

Individuals behaved cordially, and we tried not to conflict with each others' personal space or sense of worth. Overall, we got along well, especially at first since we were just meet-and-greeting, and not actively pitting our ideologies or preferences against one another.

The team work that went into the negotiation group, in general, evolved greatly from our first meeting. While forming was certainly a factor, there were already aspects of the next stage of group development - 'storming.' Storming is characterized by conflict and a certain dissonance between the ideas and preferences of the individual and those of the group as a whole (Tuckman, 1965). When we conducted our first group meeting after being given that first assignment, I considered it to be extremely ineffective, because no one recorded or kept track of time; also, a lot of time was wasted listening to everyone's ideas, some of which were overly complicated. These different ideas came from expression of the cultural diversities that we all shared, most of the group being from the same relative culture. As a result, it was easy for us to communicate with each other, meeting for two hours apiece three to four times a week. However, as the weeks went by, and we learned more and more about the negotiation process, we became more accustomed to each other and how to interact in a negotiation environment.

Our storming period of group development was fairly short; we attempted to be honest about our communications and our grievances, and most of the group members were fairly patient and kind to others in the group. At this point, we started the norming stage, which is characterized by group cohesion and the acknowledgement of all the attributes that each member can contribute to the group (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). At this point, the group was very willing to alter whose ideas of who would take what task, and were gracious enough to step aside when they needed to.

In terms of group behavior, all members attended all meetings, and were all punctual in their attendance. Our behavior was extremely professional, and each member worked hard to contribute to the group as a whole. Work interdependence was high, as multiple parties worked with each other in order to achieve the needed results and strategies. One of the members was highly active in terms of creating ideas and developing them in the form of strategies; thus various ideas emerged as we kept on moving ahead with negotiations every week. This prevented members from participating in unmitigated communion and making too many concessions in the negotiations, thus minimizing relational anxiety between group members.

Once the preparation for our first negotiation was underway, we underwent the performing stage of group development, which was indicated through the proper delegation and autonomous performance of our tasks in the interests of the larger group (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). We did not have the time or the opportunity to fully discuss things in committee, but we had reached the point where group unity was evident. We were extremely

productive during the active negotiations, and had a very clear grasp of what each member was capable of, trusting in their competence.

In this negotiation, my group was very well prepared to handle the procedures involved. We made a declaration of the design of the car that would be attractive to potential buyers - one that would make purchasing the car a good deal. During the negotiation process, we were able to successfully get the buyer excited about the car's features and agree that it was a good deal. Once we told them the price, however, the buyer informed us that they did not have that amount of money in cash. We were then able to make an arrangement wherein the cash they had was given to us right then, and the remainder of the amount was paid in installments of \$500 every month for six months. The buyer was in agreement - the group was convinced of the features of the car, as well as its value. This deal with our group was one of the most successful transactions made between the other groups.

During this first negotiation, we found that we worked extremely well together; despite having moved on to the performance stage, some of us had anxieties and running doubts regarding the changing of norms as a result of our first negotiation. However, we managed to exercise creative problem-solving in our various negotiations, which helped us break out of our sense of normalcy and rhythm and give us the faith to continue improvising (Rickards & Moger, 1999).

When dealing with people of different cultures, a plan of action was created by our group in order to facilitate the clearest communication possible. This

was the clearest component that would facilitate the performing stage of Tuckman's model of development, as we all had tasks that served the whole while operating relatively autonomously (1965). It included:

- The use of video conference to allow visual communication
- Establishing a contact person who would facilitate communication at either end
- Distributing key information before each meeting
- Selecting unique rules and specializations
- Dedicated note taker
- Build a rapport by constructing a biography of the participants
- Keep the communication light with an ice breaker
- Use interpreters to make the language barrier smoother
- Avoid interruptions by cell phone
- Take a step by step approach to technology involved in negotiation process

In order to prepare for the final negotiation, our group went through a significant number of steps. Our overall goal was to be as prepared as possible for the negotiation and come up with a strong strategy that addressed all the points that we needed (Spoelstra and Pienaar, 2000). We got an early start on the preparation, meeting several days ahead to discuss the negotiation and what we needed to do. Three meetings, each meeting taking up three hours, were held, in which we discussed strategy, analyzed the subject of discussion, learning more about its various aspects and attributes. The first day we read the case and analyzed it thoroughly; the second day, we distributed tasks among the group and determined the most important points, and the third day, we did a practice negotiation. We

searched the Internet in order to learn more about the subject and each side of the argument, finding out what the other side wants and is primarily concerned with.

Preparing for the negotiation is the most crucial step; without a proper strategy, there is no way that you can relate to the other side and communicate your demands. It lays the foundation of a successful negotiation – there are several key objectives involved in preparing for negotiations, including our overall objective, the points at which we could compromise, and the alternative goals that we have in the event that the other group does not accept our original demands. What's more, we also determined the reasons why they need to negotiate (their overall purpose), what resources they currently have. By analyzing these factors, we were able to understand the goal much better, and determine just what kind of challenges we would face during the negotiation.

In the Final Group Negotiation, we were an Australian mining company that negotiated a joint venture with a Chinese company that wishes to use our mining technology to be used in new larger mines. In our group, we divided ourselves into five different individuals representing the company – the Group Director, Assistant Director, Human Resources Manager, Information Technology Manager and Financial Manager. For this negotiation, I was the Financial manager, representing the concerns regarding profit satisfaction and maintaining the partnership with the Chinese company, all while making sure we achieved our goals.

During our meetings, we performed proper division of labor, denoting the points that were available to us in the joint venture, studying them thoroughly in order to get our profit. These points included closing the mines and reducing the workforce; training Chinese engineers in our technology; developing the railway; and splitting the profit between us and the Chinese company. In order to get as much as we wanted out of these points, it was necessary to come up with convincing reasons to the other side of the negotiation to acquiesce to our points. These points included the fact that we were an Australian company, making the costs much higher to train the Chinese engineers, and the fact that our profits link at the currency. The greater our profits, the more their profits would also increase, making it more advantageous to work with us.

Our overall strategy was to capitulate somewhat on our smaller points in order to get the biggest point value, which was in the profit share. We wished to settle on a 60/40 profit share, and to make sure that we would not give in too much on the other points (closing of the mines, training of engineers, etc.). We were to emphasize just how badly the Chinese company needed us to provide safe mining techniques to their mines, or else the Chinese government would be dissatisfied with them, and possibly lose their contract. This would make it necessary to work with us however possible. We stressed the amount of work that we put into developing the mining technology, making it sensible for us to get a bigger piece of the pie, as we had done more of the work. All of these things would appeal to them from an emotional and a business sense.

During the negotiation with the Chinese mining company, we started negotiating with the members of the defined groups after providing a simple overview of our company and what we do. The human resources representatives from either side began their negotiation, and we worked through each stage one by one. Luckily, the Chinese were very impressed with our offering of a gift, and they presented a gift in turn; it was clear that we had shared negotiation strategies to work with despite the different cultures.

As the financial side of the negotiation was of vital importance to me, being the financial manager, my goal was to gain the highest percentage of profits in the profit share axis of negotiation, while making sure we paid as little as possible to help the Chinese company upgrade the railway. Despite our preparedness, the Chinese company was rather inflexible, and it was a difficult negotiation to deal with. They took up a great deal of time discussing profits and attempting to gain a higher percentage of the profit share, but they did not give a convincing rationale for their request.

At the end of the debate, they even gave us a choice of three offers that were not discussed with us at all. Eventually, we chose to close 30 mines and reduce 2000 jobs; to train 100 engineers in the safe mining technology; to donate 10 million AUD to the upgrading of the railway, and split the profits 60/40 with the Chinese mining company. Once the discussion was over, they were so incensed at the way negotiations had gone that they had asked us to give them back the gift they had given us at the beginning of the

negotiation. This was indicative of a lack of respect to us and our group, as well as the negotiation process as a whole.

At the end of this difficult series of negotiation exercises, it was time for the adjourning phase of our group's development. We no longer had to work together, and so task behaviors were terminated, and we disengaged ourselves from our relationships with each other (Tuckman, 1965).

Overall, I am very satisfied with the interaction and the work performed by the group as a whole; by finding common ground and working together as a unit, successful outcomes were had in most negotiation examples. The Tuckman model of group development closely mirrored that of our initial group interactions. During the forming stage, we attempted to get to know each other and avoid conflict. In the storming stage, we began to conflict over ideas of how to proceed with each negotiation in the class. During norming, we began to compromise and reach consensus regarding how we would conduct these negotiations. In the performing stage, we split up into our component tasks during the negotiation process itself and behaved as we agreed during group meetings. Finally, we adjourned at the end of the class, separating ourselves from the group and making peace with the other group members. This business negotiation course was very difficult, but its direct experience and high-pressure context gave me firsthand experience of the difficulties of operating within a group.

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