Myti-pet case report

Business

Chris Romano Reflection Paper #2 – Myti-Pet 1. How did you plan for the negotiation? Explain how you decided on a strategy? In the Myti-Pet case I played the role of one member of the Myti-Pet leadership team. After individually reading the case information, I felt that some time would have to be spent deescalating the situation regarding our refusal to pay and their threat of a potential lawsuit. It was obvious that a long-term, trusting relationship could not be established without addressing this issue. It was also clear that a potential mutually beneficial relationship existed regarding our need for additional meat flour and our desire to change supplier for our wheat flour.

If we were able to reestablish a trusting relationship that addressed some of our concerns, a lucrative opportunity existed for both firms. As discussed in Lewicki, et al. (1993), the idea of promotive interdependence is clearly evident in this case; if the negation was managed correctly, both sides would benefit greatly. However, it was very possible that each side’s perception of the degree of interdependence that existed would vary significantly. Without open information sharing, it would be very difficult to assess the existing levels of interdependence.

Planning for the negation was made more complicated when I realized that I would be accompanied in the negotiation by two co-workers. We quickly determined that it would be most effective to select individual roles to play during the negotiation (I was the VP of Operations). This strategy allowed each of us to focus on certain aspects of the case and also allotted some flexibility in the ways we communicated during the negotiation. The last-minute case data instructing us to display anger at the start of the negotiation also played a role in the interaction by pushing us to display some of the cognitive distortions discussed in class, including “ demonizing the other side” and “ jumping to conclusions” (class handout, Feb 2, 2011).

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How did the actual process and outcome compare to the predictions in the readings? It was clear that the Rawmat team was immediately taken aback by our display of anger. Rawmat seemed uncomfortable, apologetic, and ready to yield to our demands. Rawmat’s initial response reinforced our angry behavior and resulted in a stronger barrage of demands and insults from my co-workers (after a short while I began to take a more sympathetic position). According to Fisher, Ury and Patton’s (1991) theory regarding contentious negotiation, Rawmat might have more effectively responded by identifying our tactic and clearly bringing it to our attention. Instead, their initial approach of threatening to take their business elsewhere caused us to increase our angry tactics.

In addition, our initial anger caused my team members and myself to display some of the negotiating mistakes outlined in Sebenius (2010), including failing to correct for skewed vision (partisan perceptions) and letting our positions drive out our underlying interests. As the VP of Operations I understood the potential that existed between the two firms, and I had perhaps the strongest desire to reach a positive solution. It was therefore easiest for me to begin utilizing integrative negotiating tactics including: separating the people from the problem, focusing on interests and not problems, and inventing options for mutual gain (Fisher, Ury and Patton, 1991). As predicted in course readings, as I began negotiating in a more integrative manner, the Rawmat team seemed to become more comfortable. In fact, it was interesting to see that as the negotiation progressed Rawmat began to negotiate exclusively with me, effectively ignoring my more condescending co-workers.

Rawmat also began utilizing some of the tactics outlined in Leritz (1988) including sidestepping some of the criticism, refusing to counterattack, and reframing the issue. This response made it harder for my team to continue to be angry. Once the destructing conflict was alleviated and we began discussing issues and not problems, we quickly realized the possible mutual benefits. A strong characteristic of interdependence in negotiations is the importance of sharing information and building trust (Lewicki, et al. , 1993).

This, however, meant addressing both the Dilemma of Honesty and the Dilemma of Trust. Because both sides had begun to understand the potentially synergistic relationship, there was strong motivation to tell the truth and also believe the other side. By the end of the negotiation, both sides were satisfied, trust had been restored, and there was no risk of pending lawsuits or a reduction in business. 3. What did you learn about yourself? How effective was your negotiation strategy? This negotiation vividly showed the leverage that anger can create, as well as the barriers it can present to a successful negotiation. Some of the characteristics of destructive conflict that were discussed in class were quickly apparent at the start of our negotiation (heightened emotions, increasingly unproductive behavior, and distorted judgments) (Feb 2, 2011).

I also realized that I typically do not negotiate from a position of anger. It was uncomfortable for me to begin the negotiation in that manner, and I was the first member of our team to begin to pursue a more agreeable solution. Ironically, my team's display of anger seemed to have tilted the negotiation in our favor. It caused anxiety and a level of discomfort in the other side. Rawmat was, especially initially, not able to utilize some of the tactics described in Leritz (1988) for negotiating with problem people. Rawmat seemed susceptible to the " bullying" and " wad shooter" techniques.

Having said that, I believe it was the implementation of integrative negotiating strategies later in the negotiation that caused the favorable conclusion. Had we continued with negotiating tactics steeped in anger, I do not believe we would have reached a satisfactory agreement. After the negotiation, I was reminded of the Williams and Miller article (2002) which states that most people use a one-size-fits-all negotiating strategy. This specific negotiation made it clear that different tactics can work at different times, and in different environment. 4. What would you do differently next time? Why? There were three primary changes that I would make if given the opportunity to redo this negotiation.

First, I would more immediately suggest that a contingent contract be used to address the quality of product vs. ong-term contract debate. In hindsight, it could have been very efficient to propose an agreement that allowed for Rawmat's longer term deal while also recognizing Myti-Pet's desire for higher quality. By not initially considering a contingency contract, our group fell into the trap discussed in Bazerman and Gillespie (1999). We simply did not allow ourselves to consider a contingency contract, and when the idea was first proposed we initially felt uncomfortable with the concept.

In hindsight, this reaction was highly unproductive. In addition, in our negotiation we initially anchored on the disputed payment. In fact it was extremely important to us that we not be responsible for the cost of the unsatisfactory shipments. It was not until after the negotiation when we realized the value of that cost was mere pennies when compared with the value of the negotiated agreement. As shown in Bazerman (1990), we were so concerned with our anchored position that we failed to realize the bigger issue.

Finally, our initial angry approach to the negotiation created little opportunity for Rawmat to save face during the argument. Our persistent claim that Rawmat had wronged us made it very difficult for the other side to compromise or show flexibility. These and other face-saving techniques are discussed in the article entitled “ Face Saving” included in the Course packet (Ch. 5). Had we utilized some of these techniques, we could have fostered an environment in which concessions and compromises flowed more easily. This might have resulted in a more efficient negotiation.

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