

## **Negotiation Skills Among Librarians: A Study**

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### **Abstract**

People tend to be very efficient in managing relationships when they can understand and control their own behaviours. Librarians are not exception to this. Today librarians are working in large corporate offices and reputed institutional organizations. The negotiation skills are important to the librarians to have a cordial relationship with the people and maintaining the library wherever they work. This Paper examines negotiation skills among college librarians at Trichy.

**Keywords:** Negotiation skills, Soft skills, Professional skills

### **Introduction**

For today's librarians having professional degrees in library and information science is not sufficient unlike in the past. There is demand for librarians having multidimensional aptitude in the areas of technical work, administrative work and also in providing user oriented services along with soft skills.

Negotiation is one of the most common approaches used to make decisions and manage disputes. It is also the major building block for many other alternative dispute resolution procedures. Negotiation occurs between spouses, parents and children, managers and staff, employers and employees, professionals and clients, within and between organizations and between agencies and the public. Negotiation is a problem-solving process in which two or more people voluntarily discuss their differences and attempt to reach a joint decision on their common concerns. Negotiation requires participants to identify issues about which they differ, educate each other about their needs and interests, generate possible settlement options and bargain over the terms of the final agreement. Successful negotiations generally result in some kind of exchange or promise being made by the negotiators to each other. The exchange may be tangible (such as money, a commitment of time or a particular behavior) or intangible (such as an agreement to change an attitude or expectation, or make an apology).

For Library professional, Negotiation skills are required on special occasions such as handling bulk purchases, specialized databases subscription with vendors etc. Also some times in delicate situations like library committee meetings or avoiding undue requirements from arrogant users etc.

### **Negotiation**

Negotiation takes place when two or more people, with differing views, come together to attempt to reach agreement on an issue. It is persuasive communication or bargaining.

**“Negotiation is about getting the best possible deal in the best possible way.”**



### **Skills For Librarians**

Like any other profession, the skills are required in day-to-day working for carrying out routine jobs more effectively. The librarians working in large organizations like corporate offices are already practicing these skills through by experience or training. The following skills are required to negotiate to become a successful library professional.

#### **Listening Skills:**

The library professionals must have good listening skills as he/she has to interact with different types of users all the time. By carefully listening to users' he/she can identify the exact requirement and then provide the service accordingly.

#### **Communications Skills:**

Command on language especially English and also regional one will improve the communication. Good communication skills also require understanding people, self-confidence. With this one can achieve lot and solve problems too.

#### **Interpersonal Skills:**

Librarians have to deal with all levels of people like Management, users, colleagues in library, vendors etc. To deal with each one on them in rightful manner requires interpersonal skills. When you work in large organization, it is most important to

build rapport with all departments, which helps in managing the library and providing better services to everyone.

**Public Relations:**

One needs to use PR very effectively to attract users in libraries through various ways. It also helps to bond with users and vendors too. Also gives ability to work with other professionals.

**Customer Service:**

Customer is library user and to satisfy his information needs is customer service. The librarians are always giving attention to their users and providing services through CAS, SDI or other specialized services. The customer service emphasizes the customer satisfaction, which guarantees that user will always come back to library.

**Leadership Skills & Teamwork:**

Library management especially the big library is team exercise. Hence it is required to have leadership skills to manage and guiding the team time to time, as every subordinate is important for carrying out their work efficiently for smooth running of library.

**Writing Skills:**

The librarians are sometimes asked to submit/help in writing research proposal/business proposal/project report, which requires good writing skills. Today there are many library professionals who are contributing to various publications even in-house or even by blogging for sharing their experiences and helping users.

**Project Management Skills:**

In corporate sector many times, librarians are part of some project team and assigned specialized jobs such as knowledge management or digital institutional repository. These require dedication, understanding of the project, time management for completion of work, teamwork and reporting back the results etc.

**Presentation Skills:**

The presentation skills are required in report writing, library committee meetings and even in daily work which represents the library management overall for users. It not only emphasizes the individual skills but also from library presentation by means of its decoration, user's guides, and library ambience.

**Teaching skills:**

This is essential for new user orientations or in case new service is introduced such as online database searching. It also includes motivating reading habits in users.

**Objectives**

To Know the Negotiation skills among librarians working in college in Trichy.

## Methodology

Questionnaire Method is used to collecting data. I have selected 25 reputed colleges randomly for my research study in Trichy City. 25 questionnaires were distributed to college librarians. Out of 25 questionnaires 21 filled up Questionnaire were received back. Based on collected questionnaires data, the analysis has been carried out.

## Limitation

The study covered only 25 colleges located in Trichy city.

## Analysis and Interpretation

The collected data through questionnaire were analyzed to derive necessary results.

**Table 1:** Demographic Details

Demographical Details	Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	13	61.9
	Female	8	38
Salary	10,000-20,000	1	4.7
	21,000-30,000	3	14.2
	31,000-40,000	7	33.3
	Above 40000	10	47.6
Education	MLIS/M.Phil	4	19.4
	M.Phil/Net	6	28.5
	Ph.D	11	52.3
Experience	5-10 years	4	19
	11-15 years	7	33.3
	Above 20 years	10	47.6
Nativity	Rural	2	9.5
	Semi Urban	11	52.3
	Urban	8	14.2

From the table 1 shows that the male librarians are more (61.9%) than female (38%) Librarians are working in colleges in the Trichy regions. It is observed that the library and information course is attracted mostly by the male librarian than female librarians.

Majority of the librarians (47.6%) are getting above 40,000 salary per month and 52.3% of the librarians are having Ph.D. Regarding the nativity of librarians, Majority of Librarians (53%) are from Semi-urban background, and 14.2% from urban background.

**Table 2:** Preparing For Negotiation Skills.

Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage
a. Very Important	21	100
b. Important	-	-
c. Not at all	-	-

From the table 2 indicates that 100% of college Librarian is agreed negotiation skills is very important to prepare any strategic plan or activity.

**Table 3:** Negotiation with User Interaction

Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage
a. Talk with user with Strategies.	9	42.8
b. Describe Various tactics but let them decide	12	57.2
c. Work to understand my User’s interests and objectives, and while the ultimate decisions are up to them, give them my best advice on tactics and positions most likely to meet their goals.	-	-

From the table 3 reveals that among the above three options, 57.2% of librarians described that the various tactics are required for Negotiation while interacting with the library users and other interactions and 42.8% of librarians using some strategies while taking.

**Table 4:** Kind of Listener

Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage
a. Active: Listen to what the other side says and repeat it back to be sure I understand.	21	100
b. Passive: Listen quietly. Best To let them talk until they hang themselves or trip up.	-	-
c. Hostile: Listening Is overrated. It’s Important to take control of the negotiation and hammer my points home through repetition	-	-

From the above table 4 shows that all the 100 % of College Librarians are Good Listeners and try to understand the other side that’s speak. It is observed that a person should have the habit of Listening for any negotiation.

**Table 5 Negotiation in Library Activity**

Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage
a. Won't give on anything until I have.	8	38.09
b. Give on all the small points in order to build momentum towards resolution on more significant points. It Makes the other side like me and feels like they owe me.	3	14.2
c. Give on some points, as the long as the other side is also willing to give on some points. The art is in knowing which points to give on, and when, so that the negotiation feels like a trade or a win/win and not a win/loss for either side.	10	47.6

The fifth law of library says that the library is growing organisation. In this regard negotiation skills in all library activity questions were asked. From the above table, it is observed that 47.6% of Librarians are getting novel ideas from sides while negotiations, for example book ordering, user's demand, etc.

**Table 6: Affecting any approach while Negotiation**

Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage
a. I consider how the differences might affect communication styles, points of view or ultimate positions and take that into account in developing a successful negotiating strategy.	-	-
b. I figure out what buttons I Can push, and use whatever I Can to intimidate, irritate or patronize my opponent. Keeps' Off their game.	21	100

From the above table, it is observed that 100 % of Librarians are very Neutral and approaching the people with good kind while negotiations without giving any opportunities to age, gender, ethnic, etc.

## Findings

1. 100% of College Librarians have knowledge to enhance the Negotiation Skills.
2. Negotiations are Very Important for any strategy plan.
3. The study found that librarians give Importance to user needs of demand before Negotiations.
4. The study stated that Librarians understand user's interest and give them their best advice or tactics to meet their goals.

5. The study cited that 100% of College Librarians are good Listeners before going for Negotiations.
6. The study stated that 100% College Librarians have a neutral view about issues given by authorities in their Negotiations process.

### **Suggestions**

1. Librarians of College authority may arrange workshops, seminars regularly to promote the skills.
2. Librarians may conduct soft skills training programs for Library Professionals.

### **Conclusion**

Negotiating is a skill that impacts on all areas of life. One can negotiate good business for their institute. He/she can negotiate satisfactory terms and conditions for him/herself and his staff. And he/she can negotiate to get out of tricky situations. For example, if working relationships aren't going well, the Libraries have to look for the common ground and the area of mutual advantage and concentrate on developing relationships rather than destroying them. What are the steps one can anticipate taking in a negotiation? What kinds of situations might call for skills as a negotiator? And how can one make the most of each of them? A proper program to be incorporated in the institutions to answer all the above questions.

For young professionals, in this ICT Environment there is a tremendous competition, the soft skills which would be added advantage as when such skills are listed in Curriculum Vitae it will be enriched and no doubt it will attract the prospective employers and provide an opportunity to the employee.

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