



Importance of Time

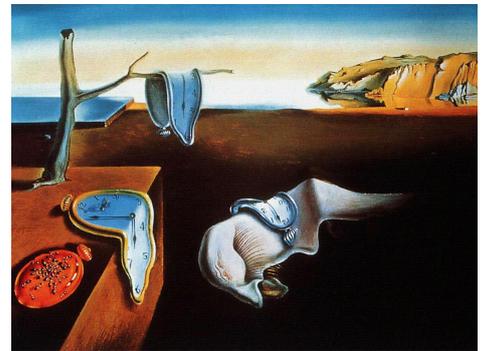
"Time and tide wait for no man."
- Geoffrey Chaucer

There are several important aspects of time that professional negotiators need to be aware of, to use, and to counter, if time is used against you; here are four:

1. Deadlines: These can be imposed by one party or agreed by both. They can encourage both parties to concentrate on creative solutions and/or create urgency for concessions. However, beware this does not lead to reckless solutions, or cause you to give in too early, for fear of losing a deal.

As false deadlines are a common tactic, you should not over-react. Simply make a note of the deadline on your pad, avoid further discussion about the deadline, but become a little brisker in your approach.

Remember, it is *their* deadline not yours, so when it gets near remind them that their deadline is approaching, and that if they are to meet it they will need to flex their proposition.



2. Strategic delay: Seeking an adjournment to consolidate, review, re-calculate, or possibly reshape a deal can be a good tactic. New ideas often emerge if a break is taken, away from the stress of the live negotiation. It often encourages one or both parties to re-consider their stance and the reasonableness of the positions they have taken. It also enables each party to consult with their internal stakeholders, which may bring greater flexibility back to the table.

Recesses are also helpful when emotions are running high, or when you're negotiating as a team and things are beginning to fall apart. A recess can result in a renewal of energy and concentration; it can also help to break a deadlock.

3. Long-term versus Short-term orientation: People have different ideas as to how quickly things should happen in business. This can create a sense of urgency, frustration and mismatched expectations, which itself is something to be negotiated! Also, consider this negotiation in the context of a longer time-line. Maybe a concession here and now could be an investment in a future, bigger deal.

4. Never appear desperate: Even if you are, as soon as the other party senses you need to close the deal urgently, they may use the pressure of time to force you to concede more, and sooner. Showing desperation diminishes your power - massively! So, disguise any sense of urgency; never say "yes" to the first offer, or "yes" too quickly, intimate that you have time, plenty of it, and other options, and watch your body language!