

THE 5 SECRETS TO MAKING CHANGES THAT COUNT

...Even When You're Told It's a "Take-It-Or-Leave-It" Contract



1. Play Devil's Advocate.

Before you even think about asking the other side to make a material change to the contract, take the time to figure out what the person you're dealing with on the other side would say in making a solid, impassioned argument for rejecting your changes.

2. Meet Them Where They Are.

You have two options: either convince them that their concerns are less important than yours, or show them how their concerns can still be addressed even if they make the change you're proposing. The best negotiators know that it's the second tactic that wins.

3. Refuse to Go Mountain Climbing Over Molehills.

For some people, argument is a sport. They do it for the sheer joy of doing it. Don't be one of those people – not if you actually want to accomplish something. Pick your battles, be judicious in choosing which issues on which you'll go to the mat, and then give an example to the other side that shows why your issue actually matters in the real world. As for the molehills, use them to show the other side that you can compromise as well.

4. Talk Before You Type.

Written communication has its place – whether in long, detailed contracts, emails, or short, to-the-point texts. But what it lacks are the elements critical to real understanding. Non-verbal communication, including tone of voice, pauses, and facial expression (in video or in-person chat) add indispensable depth and nuance that often make the difference between having your proposal rejected out of hand or seen as entirely reasonable. Translation: Pick up the phone.

5. Use the Most Powerful 4-Letter Word: F. A. I. R.

The fact is that even the most seasoned professionals tend to dislike being labeled as “unfair.” And while there's no law that business, let alone contracts, have to be fair, if you can show someone who a certain term or outcome simply isn't fair, you're more than halfway to getting the change you want.