

Think Procurement – The Online Procurement Newsletter from Brian Farrington Ltd

September 2006 Issue:

- **Beating the Opposition**
- **Beat your Internal Opposition**
- **A new-different Farrington service - PowerPoint Design.**

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Approximate time to read: Just over 4 minutes

===== **This Month's Hot-Links** =====

Get previous issues of Think Procurement on the
web:<http://www.brianfarrington.co.uk/news.htm>

Stephen Ashcroft is co-presenting a Hawksmere seminar 'IT and Software Procurement' on 19-20 September 2006 in London. *Think Procurement* subscribers can attend the event and enjoy a £150 discount off the fee. We have negotiated a special rate, just insert the code SPK150 into the booking fee field and we will look forward to seeing you there.

<http://www.hawksmereltd.co.uk/hawksmere/event.php?product=192&type=public>

The CIPFA Procurement and Commissioning Forum is being held at Arsenal FC's splendid new Emirates Stadium on 21 September 2006. We are retained by CIPFA to design and deliver procurement training programmes to their members and this event provides a further invaluable insight into public sector procurement. Details can be viewed at <http://www.ipfprocurement.net/PACFlyerJul06.pdf>

1. Beating the opposition

Leafing through a business magazine over the holiday period, I came across an ad that made me smile.

The headline read: "Everything You've Ever Learned About Negotiation Is WRONG!" But it was the subheading that really gave me a chuckle: "Beat Your Opposition into A Demoralised Quivering Pulp."

Yes, you read that right, although I'm not even sure that we should view the other party - supplier or otherwise - as 'the opposition'.

The offer was for an (initial) free Webinar (!?). The picture in the ad was of an angry looking man (named Nigel, apparently) wagging his finger at me.

I'm not sure the kind of response he got, but it was very clear who he was targeting: Angry, fearful people. Perhaps he is seeking to influence people with so little self confidence that they would actually find this ad appealing.

The sad thing is that he just might get a decent response to this approach, if only out of curiosity because there are lots of people out there with this sort of mindset.

However, I assure you that there are techniques that work a whole lot better, are much easier to live with, and leave you feeling professional and fulfilled about your approach to negotiation.

Having met a few people like Nigel, in my time, I was left reflecting upon how a conversation between us might have unfolded. For example, he might have said, "That approach is not for me. Negotiation is a cut-throat, dog-eat-dog business. It's either you or them. Kill the opposition, Grind them to a bloody pulp and come out victorious!"

"Brilliant," I would reply. "And what will this actually get you except a few more pennies in your pocket? Will you (or your organisation for that matter) really be better off? How about all the enemies you create?"

"That's the problem with all you bleeding-heart liberals," says Nigel. "You come across with all this 'win-win' and strategy guff. But I'll tell you, it's the last man standing that counts.

My response - "Hey, I don't have a problem with winning the game of negotiation. I'm all for that. But my biggest opposition isn't out there, it's me. It's my resistance, my procrastination, my limited skill-set, my indifference. When I've conquered those, there are enough good deals to go around for the best suppliers and for me."

Nigel is now horrified: "Listen, never admit your weaknesses. You'll be eaten alive by the big guys. You need to show strength no matter how weak you feel. Make no mistake, your enemy is out there."

To which I reply, "Well, Nigel, then I have a question for you. What kind of person would be so worried about the opposition? What kind of person would have to succeed no matter what the cost?"

"What do you mean?" says Nigel, with a dirty look.

I explain "Wouldn't it be someone who deep down was very unsure of himself, who had something to prove, who didn't feel confident that he had planned and thought

through the aims of his negotiation ?"

At this point, in this hypothetical, but all too familiar exchange, you often touch a nerve. "Are you saying I'm weak? This is war, buddy. Watch your back, because I will crush you to a pulp."

Nigel will now, probably, regress and storm off, muttering and cursing to himself as I wish him a cheery farewell. "OK Nigel, enjoy your day, I still have some suppliers to take care of."

Think Procurement Summary: The "beat your opposition" mentality is, at best, severely limiting; at worst, it's evil and destructive. You don't need to go there to be more successful in your negotiations.

Have you learned how to work creatively with your suppliers? Please contact us with your approach to negotiation.

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2. Beat Your Internal Opposition

Worry less about the opposition out there and put more focus on building your negotiation skills, and you'll do just fine. There's enough business for the best suppliers if you know and practise the game of procurement with passion.

If you put your focus on what everyone else is doing, you'll miss the greatest resource of all – which is enhancing your own creativity and your commitment to making a difference with your best suppliers.

Brian Farrington Ltd have enhanced negotiation skills of over 5,000 procurement people- at all levels from CEOs to junior buyers - since 1978, in the UK, North America, Southern Africa and Asia.

Our tutors are seasoned in 'real-life' procurement and sales roles supported by rigorous academic research, including publishing their own works and we promise that nobody sleeps on our courses.

We have a programme of increasingly demanding and self-searching courses for you and your colleagues. So take the next step and contact

s.ashcroft@brianfarrington.com for

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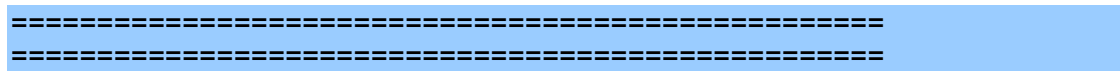
3. PowerPoint Design Service

And now for something a little bit different. We regularly present PowerPoint material to clients and suppliers designed using our own internal expertise. We in BFL almost take the competence of our own Julie Ellison for granted. However many people

have commented very favourably on the quality of this material which includes innovative designs and animation features.

Professionally-designed PowerPoint slides, templates and animations can instantly add an impressive edge to your presentation.

So we have an offer for your consideration next time you are grappling with a key presentation to suppliers, clients or senior colleagues. Please contact Julie on j.ellison@brianfarrington.com or 01744 20698 for a fully customised service at very competitive rates (Julie has done her market research!).



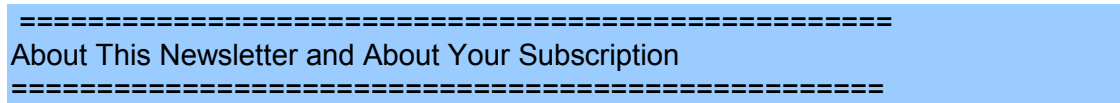
Until next month,

Stephen Ashcroft
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Helping procurement and related professionals manage third party expenditure and mitigate risk.

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