



HOW TO NEGOTIATE IN GERMANY

TOP TIPS WITH CLIENTS &
DISTRIBUTORS



Association of
Translation Companies
DEFINING STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

1

LANGUAGE

LEVEL OF FORMALITY

Use titles and formal language (Sie, Herr/Frau).

NEGOTIATING VIA INTERPRETER

Speak slowly, clearly, and avoid idioms or jargon. Avoiding speaking directly to the interpreter.

NEGOTIATING IN ENGLISH

Keep language simple and avoid slang. Respect German preferences for clarity and formality.

DIRECT VS. INDIRECT COMMUNICATION

Germans prefer direct communication, so be clear, concise, and straightforward.

SILENCE

Embrace pauses, avoid unnecessary talking.

2

BODY LANGUAGE

POSTURE

Sit or stand upright, showing confidence.

HANDSHAKE

Firm and direct with eye contact.

GESTURES

Use controlled, purposeful hand movements.

FACIAL EXPRESSION

Keep neutral but approachable.

PERSONAL SPACE

Respect boundaries and avoid standing too close.

ARMS

Keep them relaxed and open, avoid crossing arms.

HEAD NODS

Subtle nodding shows attentiveness.

3

REACHING COMPROMISE

JUSTIFY YOUR POSITION

Germans like to know the reasoning behind a proposal; back it any compromise with facts & solid arguments.

Find mutually beneficial solutions instead of making concessions based on emotional appeal

STICK TO THE FACTS

Avoid over-promising to close a deal. Germans will respect you more for being realistic.

4

HOW TO HAGGLE

BE TRANSPARENT

Germans tend to prefer transparency over a back-and-forth bargaining process. Focus on discussing value vs price.

KNOW YOUR BOTTOM LINE

Germans appreciate clear and concise negotiations; know your limits before starting.

AVOID OVER-NEGOTIATING

Pushing for reductions could be seen as disrespectful/inefficient. Aim for an agreement that reflects your value.

5

HOW LONG SHOULD IT TAKE

BE PATIENT

Negotiations may take longer than expected. Germans tend to analyse everything carefully, considering all risks and consequences.

AVOID PRESSURING FOR SPEED

Pressuring for a fast decision could harm the negotiation; give them the time they need to evaluate the deal.

CLEAR TIMELINES

Germans appreciate knowing timelines up front. Be clear about what you expect.

6

PSYCHOLOGY IN NEGOTIATIONS

RESPECT FOR EXPERTISE AND COMPETENCE

When negotiating, demonstrate your knowledge and competence; this will build trust.

AVOIDING CONFRONTATION

Germans are typically risk-averse and prefer to avoid confrontational situations. Aim to foster mutual understanding.

APPRECIATION FOR RELIABILITY

If you say you will do something, ensure you follow through. Germans have a low tolerance for unreliability.

PROFESSIONALISM OVER PERSONAL CONNECTION

Germans feel personal rapport grows from a solid professional foundation.

CLOSING THE DEAL

BE PREPARED

Have all documents, terms, and facts ready to present.

BUILD TRUST GRADUALLY

Be transparent and reliable, and allow time for the relationship to grow.

RESPECT HIERARCHY

Know who the decision-makers are and understand their process.

FORMAL AGREEMENTS

Expect a legally binding, detailed contract.

CLEAR AND DIRECT COMMUNICATION

Be precise and avoid ambiguity.

AVOID PRESSURE TACTICS

Let the decision be made on logical grounds, not emotional pressure.

FOLLOW UP

Ensure everything is delivered as agreed, and stay engaged to maintain the relationship. Be open to tweaks post deal.

FIND THE RIGHT PARTNER

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