

# Negotiations – The Client – Teacher’s Notes

## BEFORE WATCHING



What comes to your mind when you think of successful negotiations?

Suggested answers:

- small talk
- creating nice atmosphere
- thorough preparation
- knowing who is your counterpart and what they need/expect
- knowledge about the market
- analyzing what you can and want to offer (opening position, target position, walk-away position)
- asking many questions

Before watching the video, introduce the characters (Micheal, Jan, Christian, and possibly Jim and Pam). Don't forget to mention that Dunder-Mifflin is the name of the company Michael and Jan work for 😊

Watch the film and answer the questions:

**00:00 – 0:34**     **PART 1**    **It's actually a big deal.**

What is the meeting going to be about?

Jan and Michael are going to talk to a prospective client. He represents the county, so signing the contract will be very profitable for Dunder-Mifflin.

Why is it critical for Dunder-Mifflin to seal the deal?

Jim (the employee speaking at the beginning) indicates that the company has been having some financial problems, which might lead to downsizing. He hopes that signing this contract might prevent this from happening.

**00:34 – 01:12**     **PART 2**    **You're going to let me do the talking, we'd agreed on that**

What is Jan's attitude? Does Michael seem to be on the same wavelength?

Jan is **professional** – she collected and analysed all the necessary data about the subject of the negotiations. While driving to the restaurant, she keeps looking through the documents, probably checking the conditions of the agreement.

Jan is **cold** (according to Michael), which probably means that she doesn't reveal her emotions and true intentions.

Jan is **firm** – she insists on being the person that is responsible for dealing with the client.

Michael is more easy-going – he makes a joke about Jan not knowing Scranton. He'd like to be more spontaneous, that's why he suggests coming up with a signal that they might use in case they get into trouble. He doesn't want to stick to the guidelines Jan presented him.

They seem not to share the same idea about how the negotiation should go. Apparently, they haven't decided on a common strategy.

What should Jan and Michael have done differently?

- Michael should have listened more carefully to what Jan has prepared about the deal (facts, figures, projections etc.)
- they should have agreed on their opening position, target position and walk-away position
- they should have chosen what kind of approach to take – should the conversation be more serious and official or rather laid-back and relaxed?

**01:12 – 01:50**     **PART 3**    **Thank you very much for meeting with us, have you been waiting long?**

Which topic came up? What do you think of them? Are they safe?

When Michael introduces Jan, she mentions that her surname isn't Levinson-Gould anymore. Micheal doesn't show much consideration asking if her husband is dead and then making questions about her divorce.

It's not a safe topic. Personal issues are a very sensitive subject to bring up in business conversations, even when you're concerned for the other person's feelings.

Which other small talk topics should be avoided?

- religion
- health
- politics



**01:50 – 03:41**    **PART 4**    **I almost had Awesome Blossom coming out of my nose!**

What's Michael's strategy? Does it work?

**food**

While Jan and Christian are discussing the needs of the country, Michael suggests ordering an Awesome Blossom.

**humour**

Then he decides to tell a joke and has doubts which one to choose when Jan lets him tell only one. Finally, he calls the office to ask the receptionist to look for a good joke in his book. The joke he chooses is not appropriate given the circumstances and Jan seems angry, but Christian likes it, so Michael achieves his goal.

How does Jan react to Michael ideas?

She looks helpless and just orders a drink. She seems to have given up and lets Micheal run the meeting.

What else could Michael do to care for a friendly atmosphere? Which small talk topics should be encouraged?

- family
- current events
- holidays

**03:41 – 04:33**    **PART 5**    **Truth or dare?**

What's Michael's strategy? Does it work?

**getting personal, creating rapport**

Michael gets Christian to talk about his private life – about taking care of his sick mother. Next Michael prompts Jan to talk about her divorce. She's reluctant at first, but then she opens up and reveals the reason why she split up with her husband. After she explains that they had different points of view concerning having children, Christian starts to support her telling that she was brave and strong.

**04:33 – 05:27**    **PART 6**    **You have to meet me halfway, ok?**

Is the meeting successful?

Micheal's continues talking about his private life – he says that he was 'born and raised' in Scranton and he assures he wants best for this county and that he knows its problems and challenges.

Finally, Micheal uses the 'appeal to pity' strategy - he wants Christian to feel sorry for Dunder-Mifflin. He goes on to say that discounts suppliers don't care – they undercut everything and they run small companies out of business. Finally, when that happens, they increase the prices. It turns out to be a successful strategy, as Christian faces up the challenge of making cuts as well, so eventually he sympathises with Michael because they share the same difficulties. In the end, Christian decides to take Dunder-Mifflin's offer if they are willing to meet him halfway.

**AFTER WATCHING**

How can you summarise the video? Which strategies proved to be successful?

- food
- humour
- rapport, getting personal
- finding things in common
- appeal to pity