

Negotiating terms

Task 1 Activity 5a

I. Listening

What, if anything, do you know about negotiations in Russia? Listen to an interview with a top executive, and answer these questions:

[Task 1 Activity 5a Audio](#)

1. In Russia, is it possible to plan a meeting just before flying back home? Why or why not?
2. What is meant when the speaker says that, "Russians are often considered as taking hard lines in business?"
3. What advice is given concerning presentation formats?
4. Are clothes important when you negotiate in Russia? Justify your answer
5. What should you keep in mind about contracts signed with Russian partners?

Answer Key:

1. No, because negotiations and meetings can last for a long time.
2. This phrase means that Russians tend to be hard negotiators, and it is difficult to get satisfaction.
3. Prepare short and precise key presentations. Do not necessarily use very technical words but be ready to explain meaning clearly and in simple words.
4. Yes, it is mentioned that formal clothes are important.
5. These contracts can change over time and can even become illegal. Russians prefer relationships based on trust over contracts.

- **Listening Interview transcript**

Well, first of all, you have to know that in Russia, negotiations may last for hours! Be prepared! If you can be helped by a local resource or 'connection' as a go-between, it will be an asset for you. Russians are known for their patience and business negotiations can stretch for long hours. You should also keep in mind that sharing information is not necessarily easy.

- Compromise is often thought as a 'bad' business strategy and Russians are often described as taking hard lines in business.
- However, 'Final Offers' are not final in nature and outcomes can be negotiated.
- Price is a decisive factor in negotiations and you should highlight 'exclusive relationship' or 'exclusive order' and/or the value your company will bring
- Prepare short and precise key presentations. Do not necessarily use very technical words but be ready to explain clearly, in simple words, what you mean. This is the case for any negotiation with international partners.
- Even if your partner speaks English, it may be a good idea to have printed materials available in both English and Russian. In the same way, it is better to have business cards printed in both languages, with the Russian side facing while presenting your card.
- You should wear formal clothes at business meetings
- You will be expected to be punctual but your Russian counterpart may be late

Remember there is overall low contract loyalty in Russia. Changes in signed contracts are common and negotiated contracts can sometimes become illegal at a later date. Russians prefer relationships based on trust over contracts. You should not ignore the relationship after the contract is signed.

Of course, you should keep in mind that behaviours may differ from one person to another.