

How Introverts Can Win at Negotiating Retail Purchases

Yes, you can succeed at haggling, even if it makes you uncomfortable.

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Savings await. (GETTY IMAGES)

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How Introverts Can Win at Negotiating Retail Purchases

Consumers who enjoy bartering see shopping as a game, one in which the selling price is simply a starting point. For the more introverted among us, however, the anxiety created by haggling often isn't worth the outcome, despite some very real savings opportunities. According to a 2013 survey by Consumer Reports, 89 percent of people who [haggled](#) over the price of a retail purchase were rewarded with a discount at least once.

While there are many degrees of introversion, it's commonly characterized by those who are quiet and introspective. [Introverts](#) are often private, thoughtful and observant people who prefer contemplation to confrontation. However, many experts agree that embracing this quietude and other common traits of introversion is helpful in successful haggling, even if the process presents a personal challenge.

[See: [The Best Credit Cards.](#)]

"Many people think that the best negotiators are aggressive, extroverted bulldogs," says James Goodnow, attorney at Fennemore Craig in Phoenix. "Nothing could be further from the truth; introverts can actually have a major negotiating advantage – they just may not realize it."

The keys to successful negotiation include traits that come naturally to introverts, such as research, preparation, knowledge and self-awareness.

Research

The first step introverts should take before haggling on a retail purchase is to research the item extensively. "Information is at the core of any successful negotiation," Goodnow adds. "Regardless of personality type, the key in persuading another is being armed with data."

Indeed, without such information as price histories and current selling prices among competitors, even the most aggressive personalities will fail to effectively make their [case for a discount](#).

Websites and mobile apps make the research process fairly easy. In addition to general Internet searches for product features and user reviews, specialized websites are helpful in the pursuit of specific information. CamelCamelCamel.com, for example, provides price

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histories for products sold on Amazon, which helps both online and brick-and-mortar shoppers establish a baseline for the price they want to pay.

Research should not be limited to price alone. Deborah Sweeney, CEO of MyCorporation.com, an online business incorporation company, encourages shoppers to go beyond the cost of an item. "If you're buying a car, don't just look up the Bluebook price," she advises, "but know about any recalls, common complaints and problems." These details help consumers demonstrate their knowledge of the product and provide leverage, an essential component to [any negotiation](#).

[See: [10 Money Saving Websites to Check Before Shopping](#).]

Practice Makes Perfect

Information-gathering is easy for introverts, who are natural knowledge-seekers. Presenting what they've learned in a persuasive way is where the challenge lies, and experts suggest visualizing the conversation to prepare for the exchange. "In sport psychology, we refer to this as mental rehearsal, or seeing something prior to it actually happening," explains Ariane Machin, a clinical and sports psychologist. "It may sound a little strange if you haven't done it before, but it is key to feeling confident in situations that might otherwise be awkward," she says.

Goodnow agrees. "If you model alternative scenarios in advance, you can take much of the anxiety out of negotiating because you've already made your decisions," he says.

This exercise needn't be elaborate or time-consuming; simply gather your main points and envision how the conversation may transpire. Prepare responses to different scenarios, like how to react when a salesperson declines your request for a price drop, or the best way to request the presence of a store manager. Working these exchanges out in advance will make haggling much easier.

[See: [10 Fun, Frugal Ways to Spend Your Free Time](#).]

Know the Game

While research and rehearsal can help introverts prepare for a successful retail haggle, unexpected [sales strategies](#) can undercut those efforts. Dr. Mike Frazier, a psychiatrist and self-described introvert in Orange County, California, suggests getting acquainted with common sales practices. "If you understand why salespeople are doing what they're doing, you can go in with a game plan and take control of the situation," he says.

Frazier uses the example of purchasing a car to highlight common methods employed by salespeople. The initial offer of a beverage may seem innocent, for example, but it's a strategy. "If they do something for you, you consciously or unconsciously feel obligated to do something for them," Frazier advises either declining the offer or accepting it with the knowledge that it's a "sales technique designed to manipulate you."

[Other strategies](#) include getting customers to touch a product, which increases their emotional attachment; hiding the true price of an item by steering the conversation toward the details of a payment plan; and handing off the negotiation to a "higher-up" who just can't meet a customer's price request. Identifying these strategies as sales techniques enables introverts to better navigate the nuances of price haggling.

Accept Discomfort

Regardless of how prepared shoppers are for a retail negotiation, there will always be moments full of tension and awkwardness. Accepting this reality helps consumers of all personalities persevere. "Introverts [and anyone for that matter] need to recognize their voice matters," Machin says. "It might be uncomfortable but it is necessary."

When consumers reach an impasse with a salesperson, the most effective strategy is likely the most welcome one for introverts: walking away. "If the salesperson is too pushy or they 'just can't' meet your price," thank them for their time and walk away," Frazier says. "In my experience, this is your very best move to get the price you're looking for."

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