

Round one (vs Ireland):

Our potential business partners for the round were two Irish girls who came prepared with a plan. Throughout most of the round, the Ireland team was the one speaking and asking us questions about whether their proposals seemed acceptable or what our thoughts were on a specific issue at hand. One judge commented that although we were only speaking about 20% of the time during the entire round, the deal that we obtained for our client was quite good. Overall, our team's strongest point was probably in the obtained deal and the use of silence. The Irish girls seemed both more than glad to talk and a bit uncomfortable with the silence, which they tended to fill with more talking and more information than we might have otherwise obtained.

However, through our silence our team might have conveyed a lack of knowledge, confidence, or initiative to the judges. This could have been counterbalanced with questions about pertinent details of the Irish team's proposals; unfortunately, our team did not ask as many questions as might have been necessary to show. Negotiations with a panel of judges is partly a performance art, with the competitors all trying to tell the judges indirectly that they are competent negotiators through their words and actions.

We also lost the ability to frame the dialogue of the negotiation with our silence. At one point our team brought up a legal proceedings our client was involved in, which resulted in shock from the other side and a sense that the negotiations might break down. Although we ended up getting a preferable deal in the end as a result of disclosure, our team had to defend the disclosure of that information to the judges when the judges began asking us questions. What we were told by the judges was that the information could indicate that our company was going bankrupt, and the other team was told that they should have been more skeptical about our client's ability to pay and incorporated safety measures into the contract.

Round two (vs South Korea, team 2):

These negotiations were a little bit more freeform than with the Irish team. Although both teams agreed on an agenda prior to entering the important issues, what actually happened was that we ended up skipping from topic to topic. Essentially we negotiated our final deal based on relativity. Each different part of the negotiations ended up affecting how another portion of the contract was negotiated. Overall, the South Korean team was in control of the negotiations for the majority of the time.

Our teams were focused not only on producing a mutually beneficial contract, but on being polite to each side and showing the judges that we were concerned for the other side. Although this showed that both sides were interested in maintaining business ties in the future, it also consumed a substantial amount of time as both sides exchanged praise, pleasantries, and assurances of quality. In the future, it may be helpful to limit the amount of time given to being polite and providing assurances to when the other party seems deeply concerned.

Round three (vs Scotland):

Negotiations with Scotland were quite different from the prior two negotiations, as they centered on ascertaining liability and other sensitive issues. While the Scottish team was amicable, it was difficult to work with them on certain points. The Scottish team blustered around the topic of liability and the fact that their client had provided a stamp to authorize certain changes; in retrospect, it would have been better for our team to have pushed that fact a little harder.

One comment from the judges during this round was that both teams should have discussed certain terms in more detail. The judge used our last negotiations as an example; while both teams were using the same vague terms to talk about a shared statement, neither team talked about what those vague terms could mean, and thus the specific meaning of those words were left up to the interpretation of each individual person on both sides. In our effort to avoid an all-out conflict, it seems that both parties left out discussion on important details.