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Book Review

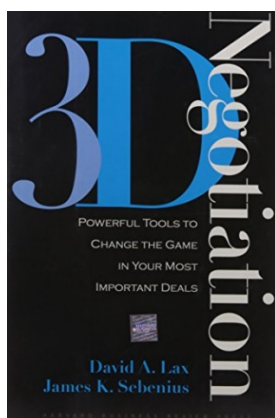
Lax, D., & Sebenius, J. (2006). 3-D Negotiation: Powerful Tools to Change the Game in Your Most Important Deals. Harvard Business Review Press.

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Game theory allows the analysis of the decision-making process from a rational perspective. Axelrod (1984, 1986) as one of the leading theorists in this field showed the possibility of a strategist's position change. In principle, the decision maker proceeds to establish competition strategies because it seems that the rules of the game reward acts of opportunism.

Nonetheless, when Axelrod (1986) has deepened his studies, he found out that in negotiations there was an evolution on the side of the decision maker. Whoever took a competitive position first, considering that the rules seemed to reward acts of opportunism, changed positions in repeated games.

This evolution was enabled by two situations. The first one, when there was the expectation of meeting the counterpart again. The second one, when after several encounters the counterpart had cooperated despite some opportunistic acts. In both situations, the normally competing individual proceeded to transform his or her strategy. He or she was concentrating on cooperation even though the rules hadn't changed. However, the chance to replay the game had transformed everything.

There are many books on negotiation which have been written from this perspective. They are normally focused on a two-sides table game. There are two parties implied, that meet to express their positions regarding an event and find a point of mutual interest through dialogue.



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All this is for the sake of collaboration. However, in real life, business is not a table game, and much of what can be learnt from these negotiation techniques is often practical but limited in scope. Negotiation goes beyond a table, negotiating is a permanent and complex process (González, 2012). It is not just about sitting down and reaching an agreement. It is more about going through life and building new scenarios.

The ability of the true strategist is demonstrated when he or she is capable, not only of performing a good negotiation, but also of changing the rules of the game and transforming the scenarios. It is precisely at this point where the 3-D Negotiation book makes a valuable contribution and generates the best inside. It is made up of 15 chapters that help the reader to recognize the importance of thinking strategically in order to act on time.

The authors, thanks to their experience and the results that they have obtained as negotiators, express the way in which a favourable scenario can be created by establishing new rules. They even conclude that the party can be made to believe that it has reached its goals, when in fact it has attained other side's aspirations.

To conclude, Lax and Sebenius (2007) achieve their objective by transmitting to the reader the importance of considering negotiation in three dimensions. The transformation of the scenarios towards situations that generate greater value for all the involved parties is the key.

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