

## Knowledge Negotiation Goals and Strategies Guide

**Main Goals:** To ensure that the team does each of the following: (1) discusses alternative claims or ideas before making a decision, (2) justifies the claims by providing logical reasons such as weighing of options and use of fact-based evidence, and (3) critiques and validates ideas in a professional way that makes other members feel respected by using appropriate language.

### **Goal 1. Make an effort to identify possible alternative claims or ideas during discussions**

Objective 1.1: Consider alternative points of view.

#### **Problem 1.1.1: Only one perspective is explored during discussion.**

**Strategy 1.1.1.1:** Make it a point to search for alternatives.

“I like that idea, but let’s try to think of multiple options so we can compare them.”

“I think you’re right that technology can be detrimental for job growth, but I’m sure those that are pro technology could argue that it could support job growth. Could there be support for both claims?”

**Strategy 1.1.1.2:** Encourage all members to express his or her point of view. This may help bring up different points of view.

“So what do you think, Pat? Can you think of another perspective?”

**Strategy 1.1.1.3:** Encourage members having different backgrounds or expertise to contribute their insights.

“Tom, you have a lot of programming expertise, so how doable do you think this would be?”

“Jill, you work with RFID tags, right? Do you think it could be useful for emergency crisis management scenarios?”

**Strategy 1.1.1.4:** Consider the problem or topic from someone else’s point of view.

“So far, we’ve been discussing the issue from the developer’s perspective. How might a user of the app think about it?”

**Strategy 1.1.1.5:** Search for alternatives as preparation for discussion.

“So as I read this chapter, I was actively trying to think of different perspectives, I even went online and found that many people disagree with the author’s claim.”

**Problem 1.1.2: Members are quick to agree with an idea, without considering alternatives.**

**Strategy 1.1.2.1:** Encourage members to be creative and think of alternatives.

“Is that the only possibility? Perhaps we can think of some more.”

“Here’s another way to look at it.”

“Maybe, but I bet there are those that would disagree with the author.”

**Strategy 1.1.2.2:** Encourage members to play devil’s advocate and point out all possible flaws or other alternatives.

“That could work, but it might also be difficult to do in the amount of time we have.”

**Goal 2. Justify claims by providing logical reasons such as weighing of options and use of fact-based evidence**

**Objective 2.1: Ensure that members provide strong logic for claims.**

**Problem 2.1.1: Members are suggesting an idea without backing it up or providing reasons.**

**Strategy 2.1.1.1:** Ask members to provide reasons for their ideas. Push members to share their rationale.

“What do you think is the best idea we have come up with and why?”

“Why do you think that won’t work?”

**Strategy 2.1.1.2:** Try to persuade each other of the idea proposed.

“That’s a good point because different cultures have different ideas about what makes for quality of life.”

**Strategy 2.1.3.1:** Share your decision making process.

“Well, when we began, we wanted to address these major concerns because...”

**Problem 2.1.2: No attempt to synthesize different ideas by identifying the best supported claims or aspects to draw on.**

**Strategy 2.1.2.1:** Try to use aspects of different ideas to create a more robust perspective.

“Well, as both of you pointed out, technology can both hurt and help society, so pulling on our discussion, what are ways we can use this information to create best practices?”

**Problem 2.1.3: Members keep hitting a dead end when trying to resolve a problem.**

**Strategy 2.1.3.1:** Take a step back from the task and rethink your approach

“This isn't working, let's try something else...”

## **Objective 2.2: Engage in evidence-based argumentation**

**Problem 2.2.1.** Members do not back up ideas with fact-based evidence.

**Strategy 2.2.1.1:** Ask members to provide fact-based evidence for their idea, instead of only personal experience or stories.

“Do you know of any reliable sources that support your idea?”

“So you read about the idea from which article? Do you have a link for that?”

**Strategy 2.2.1.2:** Provide fact-based evidence when putting forward an idea.

“This article provides statistics on which is the more popular gaming console [include URL]”

“According to the textbook's definition, crackers don't have bad intentions. They just want access to information. So crackers shouldn't be used to describe anyone who hacks a security system”.

**Strategy 2.2.1.3. Support existing ideas with fact-based rationale**

“I think your suggestion to balance the beauty and usability of design seems relevant. I read an article which talks about quality design [url]. The author mentions consumers prefer something that looks nice and also has good usability, not that they don't care about design”.

## **Objective 2.3: Critique ideas deeply and evaluate trade-offs**

**Problem 2.3.1:** Members are making shallow criticisms and don't fully explore options.

**Strategy 2.3.1.1:** Model critical evaluation by criticizing your own ideas.  
“Well, here's my idea... but I'm not sure it would work best because...?”

**Problem 2.3.2:** Members are not carefully weighing different options or perspectives.

**Strategy 2.3.2.1:** Consider and evaluate different sides of an argument.  
“Can anyone think what’s good or bad about social media?”  
“The problem with cell phones is that they can be both helpful and unhelpful. There are tradeoffs associated with using them. For example, on the one hand it makes staying in contact with far away contacts easier and this can help build closer relationships with those who are far away. On the other hand, being in constant contact with so many people could also interfere with the relationships of those closest to you. So the tradeoff is building and maintaining relationships with those at a distance at the cost of building and maintaining relationships with those you live with. So couldn’t this lead to more shallow relationships?”

**Strategy 2.3.2.2:** Help members evaluate the feasibility of options.  
“I think that’s a good idea, but do we really have enough time to do it?  
Can we think of potential issues and solutions?”

**Strategy 2.3.2.3:** Make sure you provide claims and opinions that are open to additional insights. When people make forceful “closed” statements, i.e., “this is what we need to do”, it does not invite additional input. Work on providing more open suggestions that articulate doubt and promote more careful consideration.  
“We may want to consider...”  
“It’s possible that...”  
“Well, one possible perspective could be...”  
“Well, this may not be the best solution, but we could try...”  
“Well, we could try option A, but that could present some problems. Can anyone think of unintended consequences?”

**Strategy 2.3.2.4:** Have the team engage in a cost-benefit analysis.

“Why don’t we think about whether it makes sense for us to spend the extra effort on “X” given that “Y” is a likely outcome. I really want us to consider both sides.”

**Strategy 2.3.2.5:** Assign a member to be in charge of presenting trade-offs.

“Annie, I need you to focus on trade-offs this meeting and direct the team to relevant ones we should consider.”

**Problem 3.1.6: The team is not weighing options presented by different members before making final decisions**

**Strategy 3.1.6.1:** Summarize main arguments in order to pick the best solution or idea.

“Okay, so we thought that an interactive website would provide the best experience for users, but that would take more time. On the other hand, we could go with a more traditional website without cool features, but we probably won’t impress our client. Tom knows how to program and we could reduce some of his other responsibilities so he can focus on interactive features. We thought it would probably be doable to create more interaction, but we would have to make sure we could help the client be able to manage any new changes to the environment. So, should we go with the interactive website and take a risk or play it safe?

“So far we discussed how cybercrimes can affect a country economically and compared it to traditional warfare. Emily pointed out that traditional warfare causes many deaths and can cripple the other countries infrastructure and economy, but Sam pointed out that the same could be true of cyber warfare: if you incapacitate a nuclear power plant or steal technological innovations. So which one is more destructive or are they simply destructive in different ways?”

**Goal 3. Critique and validate different ideas in a professional way so as to make members feel respected, valued, and safe to take intellectual risks.**

**Objective 3.2: Evaluate and critique ideas in a professional manner**

**Problem 3.2.1: The critiques are too negative.**

**Strategy 3.2.1.1:** Remind members not to distort other people's ideas; represent their ideas fairly.

"I'm not sure that's what Chris meant."

**Strategy 3.2.1.2:** Have members give suggestions for how to improve something.

"You could make that better by..."

"I suppose we could make it work if we just..."

"So based on the problem you pointed out, how can we improve the idea?"

**Strategy 3.2.1.3:** Acknowledge positives as well as negatives.

"I see the value of the basic idea, but \_\_\_\_\_ seems problematic."

**Problem 3.2.2: Members feel they weren't treated fairly or respectfully**

**Strategy 3.2.2.1:** Validate their feelings and then provide constructive criticism.

"I think you have a valid point, you are right that is a popular approach, but we also have to think about being innovative and to that end it may not be the best idea. Can we find a way to make it more innovative?"

**Problem 3.2.3: The critiques are too personal and degrade people's sense of feeling valued by the group.**

**Strategy 3.2.3.1:** Criticize ideas not people.

"That's interesting, but the idea about X doesn't make sense to me, because..."

**Strategy 3.2.3.2:** Interrupt negative interactions by asking for more information.

"Why do you think that is problematic? What could we do about that?"

**Strategy 3.2.3.3:** Keep criticisms respectful and useful.

"There is no need to berate Rod's idea. It would be more helpful if you could help him improve it."

**Problem 3.2.4: Members are critiquing past performance not related to present task.**

**Strategy 3.2.4.1:** Distinguish between constructive criticism and unproductive complaints and push the team forward.

“Whether or not Frank performed well during the last discussion is irrelevant now. Hopefully as a team we can take steps to prevent these problems from repeating themselves and Frank can prove to the team that he is a valuable member by his contribution this time around. So, let's put this behind us and work on our current tasks. Jill, what is our agenda for this meeting?”

**Problem 3.2.5: Members feel uncomfortable criticizing others' ideas.**

**Strategy 3.2.5.1:** Explicitly state this as a discussion goal.

“As a team, I think we want to ensure that we make the best possible decisions and this means we'll ask a lot of questions and try to identify potential problems with ideas that are proposed. We should value all suggestions. Criticisms are extremely helpful for us, so feel free to jump in any time ”

**Problem 3.2.6: Someone is feeling frustrated with other members' objections and criticisms.**

**Strategy 3.2.6.1:** Always keep an open mind and a flexible agenda.

Planning is good, but so is adaptability. You may present the best possible solution from your point of view, but that does not mean it is “the best solution”. Remember that the best ideas are almost always built on others.

“That is a very valid point. How would you approach it?”

“This is what I propose, but I am open to alternative suggestions as well. What do you think?”

“This is my approach, but there are some drawbacks...”

**Strategy 3.2.6.2:** Ensure that criticism doesn't stall progress by moving team to use input to make informed decisions.

“Okay, well we have taken time to point out various perspectives on the future of technology, but now we should try to draw out useful information and think about the implications of what we have discussed. What does this mean for the future of technology?”

**Problem 3.2.7: Team members want to take different courses of action.**

**Strategy 3.2.7.1:** Find a solution that gives everyone some of what they want.

“Since we can't do both, maybe we could figure out how we could do part of each.”