



Case Studies: Live Events and One-on-One Coaching

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Students of life never stop learning. They pick up new skills all the time, and they're never satisfied with where they are because they have a growth mindset and believe, rightfully so, that they can constantly improve.

At [Black Swan](#), we're focused on helping people like you become more effective negotiators.

With the right negotiation skills in place, you'll enjoy more favorable business outcomes. But you'll also find greater success in other areas of your life—like buying cars, negotiating real estate, and even convincing your significant other where to go out for dinner tonight.



Our clients are spread out across the country. They come from all different walks of life and all different backgrounds, and they work in all different disciplines. Many of them have found that using Black Swan techniques helps them achieve results they quite simply didn't think were possible.

To illustrate this, we've put together this case study, which reveals how three of our clients have used Black Swan techniques and supplemental training to:

- **Guide their counterparts to the outcome they had in mind all along**
- **Negotiate a 45 percent raise**
- **Persuade a talented candidate to work for their company**

Keep reading these real-life stories to get an idea about how you can create similar results using these tactics.



With the right negotiation skills in place, you'll enjoy more favorable business outcomes.





1. A Banking Manager and His Colleague Dominate Negotiations Together

After stumbling across a [Chris Voss video on YouTube](#), one manager at a banking institution based in Colorado decided that he needed to read the book to learn more. The manager runs a makeshift book club with some colleagues, and he figured that Chris' book would be an excellent conversation starter.

It was—to the point that the manager and a colleague decided that they needed to go to [one of Black Swan's live events](#), which was taking place halfway across the country in New York City.

- “Using Black Swan techniques, we were able to get the budget approved.”

While reading the book, the manager was drawn to the concept of tactical empathy—or consciously using empathy in a negotiation to see things from your counterpart's point of view.

- "My strengths are in controlling the outcome and the situation. I can puppeteer and navigate to get the outcomes we're aiming for," the manager says. "But I deploy the same skill set over and over again."

After reading up on tactical empathy, the manager decided it was time to develop a new skill that would help him become an even more effective negotiator.

- "Tactical empathy allowed me to get the same results with a different approach—one that was completely focused on our customers and their needs," he explains. "Once I understood what their interests were, I could adjust my positioning to make the negotiation a win-win for everyone. We call it *blackswanning*."




By his own admission, the manager is high-strung by nature. Thanks to Black Swan's teachings, he's improved his emotional intelligence—which gives him the upper hand in each negotiation.


- "Using Black Swan allows me to have this inner calm. Now, when the other side says something that would normally be a trigger for me, I zero in on it and say something like this: *It seems like we were on the same page. Can you take me back to the point where we started to diverge?* I've got the negotiating leverage because I am wrapped up in the other side's interests and what they're talking about."

During every negotiation, the manager looks for opportunities to use Black Swan's techniques—like accusation audits, calibrated questions, mirrors, and labels—to flip the entire negotiation around.

- "Instead of diffusing a tense situation with aggression or forcing the other side to act, I'm now diffusing it by shaking my head and saying, *That's interesting, tell me more.* They work their own problems out and I just guide them toward the outcomes I want."



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The manager and his colleague have found the most success by using Black Swan techniques together when they're in the same meeting.

- "She'll say something that indicates she's going in a Black Swan direction, and then I'll immediately increase my active listening," the manager says. "She works down a path, I pick it up, and then we're constantly trading back and forth."

Recently, the duo had a really successful meeting in which their use of Black Swan techniques prompted their client to reveal a ton of information. When it was over, the client thanked them for "one of the best meetings they'd ever been a part of." The budget was approved and both sides walked away with the feeling of winning.

- "When you've actually experienced a *black swan* moment, it's this amazing euphoria," the manager says. "We walked out of the room and high-fived."

Any last takeaways?

Read the book first, the manager says. Then be on the lookout for low-stakes opportunities and repeatedly practice what you've learned. Over time, it'll become second nature.



2. An Ethics Officer Negotiates a 45 Percent Salary Increase

Most professionals aren't huge fans of negotiating their salaries. In fact, a recent study by ZipRecruiter found that 64 percent of workers took the first salary they were offered when they took their current positions. Many of us are hesitant to engage in salary negotiations because they can quickly become heated.

At the same time, rarely do we ever get what we don't ask for.

Understanding this perfectly, a woman who was getting paid below market value recently hired Black Swan to help guide her through salary negotiations at her previous job.

The end result? She ended up with a whopping 45 percent bump in pay!

- "I started by saying that I'm not asking for \$1 million, just to put that figure in his mind," she says. "Then I asked for a 75 percent increase—which just seems like you're going to get people to laugh in your face. But we ultimately settled at 45 percent."

Without the help of the Black Swan team, the woman wouldn't have asked for so much. But after working with [Derek Gaunt](#) across [12 one-on-one coaching sessions](#), she decided to leave her fears at the door and trust the process—which unfolded over the course of several weeks.

- "I don't know if I would have made as aggressive of an ask for an increase in compensation at all if it had not been for that coaching."

The first four coaching sessions focused exclusively on the looming salary negotiations. Using a combination of coaching and role-playing exercises, Derek helped the client navigate an emotionally draining process that can seem excruciating at times.

- "He took my lead and followed it."

But the training was well worth it.

- "A 45 percent increase is pretty substantial."

In addition to sessions that focused exclusively on salary negotiation, the duo also focused on improving family dialogue (e.g., *How can I be a better daughter-in-law in these situations?*) and other skills needed around the workplace.

The woman was drawn to the Black Swan Group after reading Chris Voss' book, *Never Split the Difference: Negotiating as If Your Life Depended on It*.

- "I read a lot of business and professional development books, and I would say that Chris Voss' book was the most transformative to me. It was one of the few books where I read it and tried the techniques and saw immediate and obvious results that were very clearly linked to the techniques he outlined."

Today, the woman leads the ethics department at a major defense contractor. There, she manages more than twice as many employees as she did in her last role. Not only did her salary increase transfer over to her new job, she's also found that the Black Swan techniques have made it easier for her to adjust to her new role.

- "I have a new staff that I didn't hire—they're trying to figure out if they can trust me and count on me," she continues. "This is where techniques like mirroring help a lot."



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In addition to negotiating salary and managing new staffers, the professional has seen success by using other Black Swan techniques. For example, if someone isn't responding to your emails, send them a quick message with the following subject line: *Have you given up on X?*

- "Within five minutes, I got a response. Then I used mirrors and labeling, and within a half-hour, I had a documented plan ahead with accountability built into it."

Thanks to the Black Swan Group, the professional now understands that sometimes you need more than facts and logic to get your points across.

- "I think the techniques can benefit anyone—from having productive family conversations, to work, to asking for salary increases—basically you can use it for everything," she concludes.





3. A Financial Adviser Wins the War for Talent

One financial adviser who oversees a team of managers within a financial services company recently enlisted the help of Black Swan for negotiation training. After reading *Never Split the Difference*, the adviser went to Black Swan's website and decided to sign up for coaching calls with Derek Gaunt. The adviser did a few personal calls with Derek and then brought in the rest of his team for training sessions, which took place over six weeks.

- "We went right through the program Derek designed around what we were looking for: tips on how to succeed in negotiations of all kinds, how to have better interpersonal interactions, how to become a better listener, how to ask better questions—all sorts of things," the adviser explains. "It was impactful and incredible—very well done. Derek is a master."

The training has helped the adviser and his team become better listeners—and in turn, experience better business outcomes.

Armed with a deeper understanding of how people operate, the team is now able to get more information from the other side, using tactical empathy and other Black Swan techniques to connect with them. For example, the financial adviser's team recently used their training to convince a very talented candidate to work for them.

- "I think we won the talent because they felt like we connected with them, we listened to them, and we understood who they were and what their goals were."

It turns out that listening, the adviser says, is what sets him and his team apart from many of their competitors.

- "Most of us listen just to reply. The superpower I learned from the training was to become a better listener by listening more and talking less. And when you do talk, have good questions. That'll help you get more information. You'll learn how to see the world from their point of view and really get inside the head of the other person."





The adviser says that understanding which of the three personality types you're dealing with during a negotiation is incredibly helpful. But it's also something most people overlook.

Beyond that, asking what and how questions—or calibrated questions—has helped his team uncover hidden information that proved to be game-changing.

In particular, the adviser has found success by asking this question:
What needs to be true for you to X?

- "That's a showstopper. People start thinking—you can read it in their body language. These kinds of questions build trust."

The adviser believes that the Black Swan teachings can apply to any endeavor in life—from business negotiations and picking a restaurant with your spouse to having beers with your buddy or ordering food at a cafe.

- "A lot of it is non-intuitive, You've got to trust the system. But you can test it all the time. And once you see how effective it is, you'll be convinced, too."

The adviser encourages folks like you to read Chris' book, as well as Derek's book, *Ego, Authority, Failure: Using Emotional Intelligence Like a Hostage Negotiator to Succeed as a Leader*. He's read both several times and has given copies of each to his friends.

- "Having the books is massive. You learn that you've got to step outside yourself and start looking at things from the other person's point of view if you ever want to connect or get to *yes* or *that's right*."

As soon as you read the books and start learning these new skills, you need to deploy them. A great way to practice, the adviser says, is over dinner. Come up with a handful of calibrated questions and ask them throughout the evening.

- "When you leave, the other person will think, *That person is the best conversationalist I ever met*."



Are You Ready to Sharpen Your Negotiation Skills?

Everything we've previously been taught about negotiation is wrong. No one is purely rational and nothing in life is fair. You may have the facts and logic on your side. But all too often, that's not enough.

By understanding what makes people tick and working diligently to see things from their perspective during every conversation, all areas of your life will improve. In the business realm, you'll find it easier to guide people toward the outcomes you're aiming for—and have them say *thank you* when all is said and done.

You've read Chris' book, and you've read Derek's book. But you're just getting started.

Further your training by attending a [live event](#), enrolling in [online courses](#), hiring Black Swan for [business training](#), or signing up for [one-on-one negotiation](#) coaching.





**Have questions about training,
speaking engagements or coaching?**

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