



### **Talk on “ Negotiation Skills for Business Applications” by Ir. Chew Weng Yuen**

Ir. Chew Weng Yuen is currently a committee member in the Engineering Education Technical Division (E2TD).

The Engineering Education Technical Division had co-organized a talk entitled “Negotiation Skills for Business Applications” with Engineers Australia Malaysia Chapter, and the Institution of Mechanical Engineers Malaysia Branch, on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2016, at Wisma IEM. The talk was delivered by Ir. Dr. Ling Chen Hoe who is currently the Senior General Manager and Director of Meiden Malaysia.

There were 48 participants in the talk, and Ir. Dr. Ling commenced by defining negotiation as the process by which two or more parties with different needs and goals discuss an issue to find a mutually acceptable solution from their initial disparity. He cited examples of high profile negotiation such as the negotiation for a Comprehensive Agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme between the Western powers, China, and Iran on March 30, 2015 at Lausanne, and also the breakdown of negotiation at Capitol Hill in the United States back in 2013. Ir. Dr. Ling added that negotiation is a skill acquired through practice and by learning techniques.

Ir. Dr. Ling then proceeded to discuss the process involved in negotiation. He mentioned that every time we negotiate, we have to make choices that affect whether we achieve a positive outcome for ourselves or our business. In order to obtain the most optimal outcomes, we need to understand the steps involved in the negotiation process.

Ir. Dr. Ling informed that the first step in the negotiation process is preparation and planning. He pointed out that we must plan our approach to the subject under negotiation, and also our tone and communication style. We have to set our objectives clearly in our own mind. These include our minimum acceptable outcome, our anticipated outcome, and our ideal outcome. In relation to the above, we must determine our needs, the needs of the other party and the reasons behind those needs. Then we will have to list and rank our issues, and consider concessions we may have to make. It is prudent that we also analyse the other party that we will be negotiating with. We need to know their objectives and the information they require. In this respect, we need to conduct research and consult others who may have knowledge of the party concerned. Ir. Dr. Ling stressed that we must rehearse the negotiation. Write an agenda pertaining to the discussion topics, participants, schedule, and location. We also need to determine what we will do if the negotiation fails to achieve the minimum outcome.

During the discussion stage, we need to decide on our communication style, familiarize ourselves with various successful negotiating strategies, and have a confident and calm tone. Make our first proposal and try to understand the other party's proposal. Ir. Dr. Ling emphasized that we must always remember our objectives and discuss concepts and ideas with the other party. Making proposition, consider compromises, and seek concessions are all part and parcel of the discussion. Once an acceptable outcome has been reached, we must try to get agreements in writing at the earliest possible.

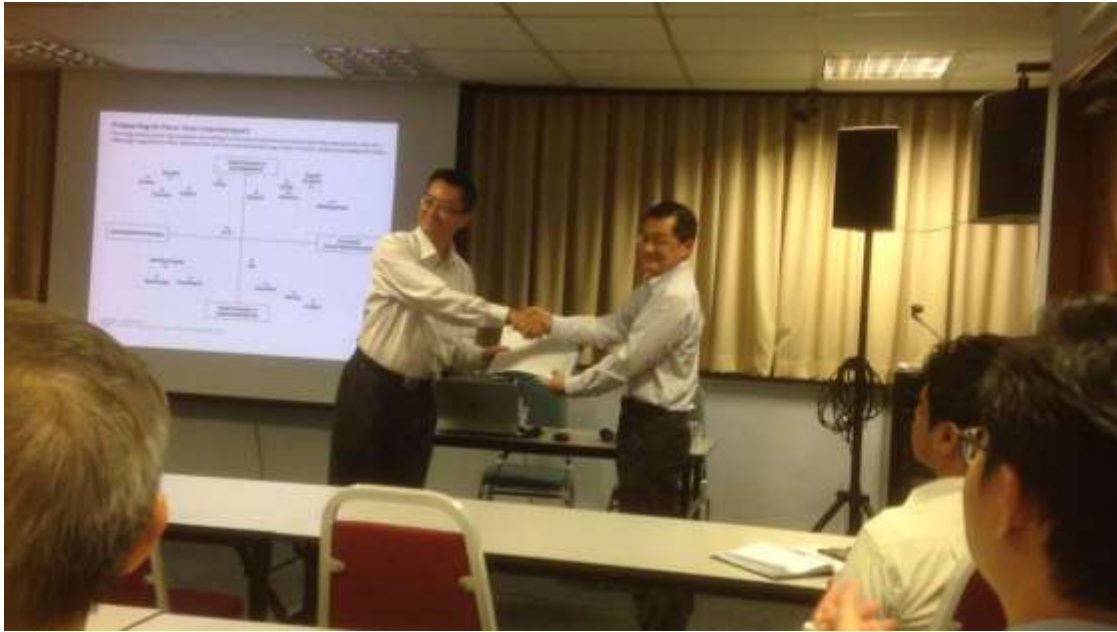
Ir. Dr. Ling then proceeded to discuss on negotiation techniques and strategies. He informed about the distributive and integrative types of negotiation. Basically, a distributive negotiation involves a win-lose strategy whereby one party's gain is another party's loss whereas an integrative negotiation involves a joint problem solving to achieve results benefiting both parties which can lead to win-win outcome. Ir. Dr. Ling also illustrated a matrix depicting various negotiating strategy and the continuum of negotiating styles to the participants. He briefly explained the classification and traits of various negotiating styles such as the competitor, the avoider, compromiser, accommodator, collaborator, and the goal collaborative. He shared and discussed some of the negotiation techniques.

Ir. Dr. Ling next explained the importance of knowing the culture of the opposite party during a negotiation. He emphasized the essentiality for people in business to understand cultural differences when dealing with each other. He also illustrated a map depicting the degree of confrontational and emotional expressiveness of various nationalities around the globe. They are grouped into four quadrants namely, the emotionally expressive, those that avoid confrontation, the emotionally unexpressive, and the confrontational.

The key approaches to negotiation was next discussed. Ir. Dr. Ling informed about the partisan advocates approach and the joint problem solvers approach. He mentioned that negotiators can either act as partisan advocates, pushing their side's position, or they can act as joint problem solvers, working with the other party to develop a solution that is better for both organizations than either one could develop independently. He cited a better approach to negotiation as a cycle that involves improve mutual understanding between parties, expand the scope of discussions, create valuable options, improve trust and communication, and share information about interests of the respective parties.

Ir. Dr. Ling concluded the talk by sharing that difficult negotiation can be fruitful with adequate preparation. It requires flexible, multiple approaches to look for innovative ways to achieve an acceptable outcome for the mutual benefits of the negotiating parties. A good negotiation will leave each party satisfied and ready to do business with each other again.

The talk was supported by visualized slides presentation with numerous quotes from renowned industry leaders being shown to the participants. Ir. Dr. Ling also engaged the participants with active discussion during the end part of the talk. It ended with the presentation of a memento to Ir. Dr. Ling Chen Hoe by the chairman of the session.



*Ir. Chew Weng Yuen of the Engineering Education Technical Division presenting a memento to Ir. Dr. Ling Chen Hoe.*