



# Negotiation & Influencing Profile

## **Facilitator Manual**



# Guide to the New NIP

## THE NIP STORY SO FAR...

The Negotiation & Influencing Profile (NIP) has grown from a means of assessing the negotiation and influencing capacities of individuals to a powerful tool for differentiating ENS International from our competitors. Indeed the NIP has become the flagship of our 'Needs Analysis' approach. A number of ENS consultants who are using our packaging solutions approach, sell the NIP as a key component of needs analysis. They advise clients that ENS begins our collaboration by assessing current skill levels. This allows us to closely target interventions on areas that require specific development, and enhance areas where participants are stronger.

We have also developed a needs analysis report based on the NIP and PFQ analysis that can be provided for the NAM before the workshop or consulting assignment is delivered (refer to your CSC or Graeme Orchiston for details). Commenting on our needs analysis approach, clients have told us, for example, that: 'XXX competitor' never does that – they often don't even ask us what we negotiate about'. Other clients for whom we have undertaken several workshops have asked for a NIP analysis post-intervention to establish the best approaches for further development.

At times, NAMs use such a report as the primary means to on-sell ENS to colleagues in other centres of operation. The NIP has also been used very effectively within workshops to focus respondents on their own assessment of their skills, and to draw their attention to key competencies as the workshop progresses. When the NIP is used in these ways, it has assisted in moving clients to consider using ENS in a consulting role. The NIP has thus proven to be a major distinguishing feature for ENS and has provided us with an effective marketing and business development edge. [North American Note: The word 'Profile' has been suggested as possibly being unacceptable in the USA. In such cases, we recommend that the term 'Practices' or 'Preferences' be used.]

## THE LOOK OF THE NEW NIP

In 2005, ENS engaged a new group to provide the engine for the NIP assessment system. This gave us the opportunity to redesign the report format to provide more detail for individuals and clients. The new NIP continues to provide a description of the underlying skills with each competency. It will also provide a more sophisticated graphical representation of the individual score and will indicate both the group average and the range of scores within the group.

In the following diagram, the 'expectation level' is indicated by the arrows or triangles above and below the score line. The blue indicator is the 'individual score' and the deep yellow box indicates the 'group average'. The ends of the line indicate the top and bottom range of scores within the group.

Where a 360° approach is used, the report will also provide the average and the range of scores of those (clients, direct reports, peers or managers) who complete the NIP on an individual. In all cases the individual will be able to examine where they fit within the range of scores recorded.

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT USING THE NIP

Increasingly, clients are asking about the capacity of ENS to make a difference through our interventions. NAMs are telling us that with the NIP reports they are finding it easier to persuade CFOs and CEOs that expenditure is not only needed but that it will be targeted at specific areas for development. The NIP also provides a means for measuring the effects of interventions and improvements in skill levels following ENS interventions.

When combined with PFQs, the NIP provides us with a foundation needs diagnosis tool and a great opportunity to sell a costed consulting day spent with the NAM and/or participants prior to the assignment. This enables ENS consultants to demonstrate how well we understand their needs and how we plan to target our interventions.

When marketing training assignments, the best representation of the NIP involves selling it as a needs diagnosis tool and as an important component of the process for tailoring programs to client needs. For consulting assignments involving negotiation team development, the NIP can be marketed as a very valuable tool for assisting team members to understand each other's strengths and weaknesses.

In these contexts the NIP represents a distinguishing feature against the off-the-shelf approaches of some of our competitors. Interpreting the NIP The NIP has a default 'expectation level' set at level 4. This means we assume most clients require their participants' negotiation/influencing capability to be at an 'advanced' level. In rare circumstances where participants exercise less significant responsibilities, lower levels of expectation can be set. Mostly, we consider senior professionals and managers attending ENS workshops should already be operating around level 3. Our task is to move their capability to level 4.

We define 'advanced' as being involved in situations that have a relatively high transaction value and/or impact on the organization, which involve the building of senior relationships and require a clear decision-making authority.

The expectation levels are:

- 5 – Expert
- 4 – Advanced
- 3 – Sound
- 2 – Developing
- 1 – Basic (raises serious concern)

In interpreting their scores, we advise clients as follows. Where the score is:

- up to 1 point below expectation level, we suggest the level of negotiation expertise is 'acceptable, with room for improvement'
- more than 1 point below expectation level, we indicate that this 'raises questions' about negotiation capability
- more than 1.5 points below expectation level, we would say that this is 'significant'
- more than 2 points below expectation level, indicate 'serious need for improvement'.

## MAKING USE OF THE NIP IN WORKSHOPS

Two approaches that work successfully are to hand out the NIP reports either just before lunch or at the close of the first day of a workshop. At this stage, a number of competencies have been covered and some of these can be highlighted for respondents. Consultants need to advise respondents how the report is to be interpreted and slides describing the features of the report have been developed for insertion into PowerPoint presentations.

Respondents should also be cautioned that, in cases where the 'flat' individual NIP has been used, they are looking at their personal self-assessments and these can vary considerably from individual to individual. Some respondents may rate themselves generously, and others more harshly. (Also see 'Less Effective Behaviours' below.)

Prior to a workshop it is suggested that consultants review the NIP reports and identify areas where the group excels and those where it needs development. When the individual NIP reports have been distributed it is then appropriate to draw respondents' attention to these sets of competencies, and urge them to focus on how they might enhance their capability during the workshop.

After each break during a workshop, draw respondents' attention to their NIP reports and suggest they review scores against the competencies that have been covered in the intervening sessions. When the ELO is announced for the first night, suggest that participants review their NIP reports as they reflect on the day one sessions. Likewise when the group reconvenes at the commencement of days 2, 3 or 4 suggest that the NIP reports again be considered during personal reflection time. Experience has been that where this is done participants make great use of the NIP. If the NAM is present, it demonstrates our willingness to focus in on the needs of participants at each stage of the program and our desire for them to link the workshop activities to their own development needs.

## 'LESS EFFECTIVE' BEHAVIOURS

An important aspect of the NIP is competency #20 – less effective behaviours. In part, this is the negative 'consistency check'. The expectation level is set at 1 (not 4) and a score of 2 or more indicates that the respondent may have approached the NIP giving him/herself consistently 'high' ratings. Alternatively, the respondent may inappropriately utilise or believe in the value of these behaviours considered to be less effective. In the NIP the four negotiation 'myths' selected are:

- Approaches negotiation on the basis that the facts speak for themselves (content focus)
- Considers OP's personal needs are entirely their business (hidden needs not important)
- Throughout negotiation, continually tries to minimise conflict between parties (too 'blue')
- Avoids giving any concessions during negotiation (too 'red')

## POST-WORKSHOP REPORT

The NIP data also enables consultants to provide a post-workshop report that summarises the scores of all participants and provides an opportunity for additional marketing.

### SUMMARY

The NIP provides an opportunity to tailor our approaches to program design and delivery and signals to our clients that we are focusing our interventions on the needs of their staff. Needs analysis is proving to be a powerful business development approach. The NIP reports also ensure that participants make the link between their own assessment of their skills and those sections of the program that are of most value to their development. The NIP also provides ENS consultants with a powerful consulting tool for aiding the development of negotiation teams. For more information about the use of the NIP contact Graeme Orchiston (for marketing advice) or your CSC.