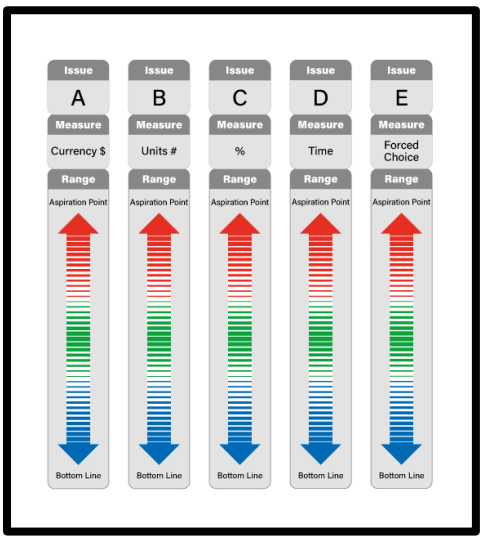
*The Nixon Method©
Step 2 - Issues





This article describes the importance and application of ***The Nixon Method***, in particular, **Step Two - Issues**. I cover three main areas: Measurement & Range, Concession Exchange, and Multiple Offers.

This article is part of a series of five, each describing a different step in the method. People wanting to learn in detail how to lead each step can engage Peter to speak or train in-company, subscribe to his online learning platform, or read his books.

What is an issue?
I define an issue as any measurable interest (e.g. price, currency, deadline, etc.) known to exist to the stakeholders and subject to negotiation either before reaching agreement or during the life of the contract.

Issues & Categories
Lawyers and diplomats (but few others) know that any given scenario involves roughly 50-60 issues. Complex scenarios, like those negotiated by diplomats, can involve hundreds of issues. My work over the years has identified that issues can normally be categorised into 5-8 groups and knowing these groups helps people identify issues. Almost every scenario involves

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financial, timing, quality, scope, personnel and legal issues. Other categories are specific to individual scenarios and can include topics like location, design, governance, manufacturing, shipping etc.

Good lawyer or bad

Some issues may never arise in dialogue but are nonetheless included in (well written) legal contracts. Good lawyers (in my experience) include contract clauses to cover any issue that is foreseen to arise or possibly arise during the life of a contract. Not so good lawyers (I have worked with them too) suggest it is better for contracts to remain silent on issues not raised during the negotiation. I find the second approach self-serving because if the silent issue arises the contracting parties will normally turn back to their lawyers to work things out at even more fees.

List the Issues First

My favourite way to get clients to list their issues is to complete a *Challenge Map* with them. I like to begin by identifying all the challenges (each challenge is an issue) and then I help them prioritise their issues before proceeding. It is useful to get as many issues on the list (every stakeholder has issues, some different than yours) as possible before proceeding to measurement.



One thing I have learned is that as people get more stressed their focus narrows from caring about others, the scenario and themselves (when calm) to only caring about themselves (when very stressed). It is no surprise therefore that people in conflict only want to focus on one or two issues. *"What's in it for me"* (WIIFM) is a common refrain.

Issues Description

Every issue has a measure, and every measure has a range. It is useful to consider an example: Price is often measured in US$ and a price range typically varies from high price e.g. USD100/unit to low price e.g. USD10/unit.

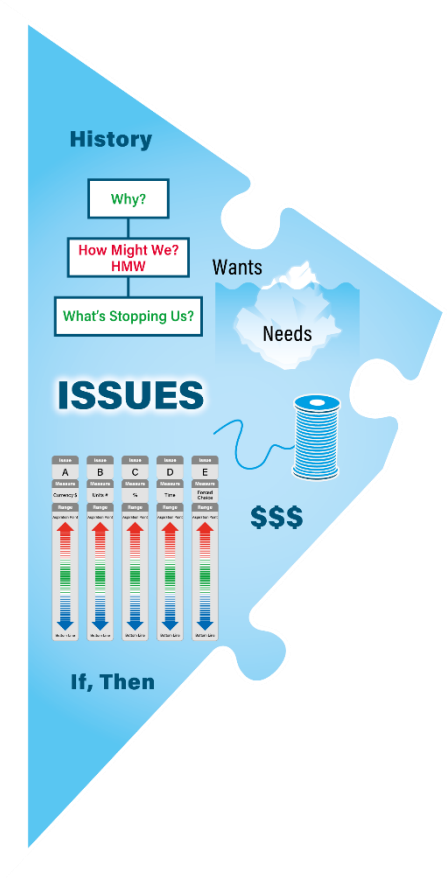
The naming and measurement of each issue is itself a dialogue so don't expect to get it right the first time. For example you might suggest the issue is price and the measure is USD but as the example above indicates the better issue name is *Price Per Unit*. This may not seem important but if you are dealing with a supplier that prices in batches of 1 dozen then the name should be changed to *Price Per Dozen*. Getting things right at this stage helps people that get caught up calculating total contract cost or revenue.

Issue Measure

Each issue can be measured in some way and if not you probably haven't described the issue properly. As shown in the attached graphic issues can be measured in **currency** e.g. USD, **units** e.g. dozen per batch, **%** e.g. annual inflationary increase, **time** e.g. completed by August 31st, and **forced choice** e.g. final decision you or me.

Issue Range
You will know that the issue description and measure are correct if you can properly identify the range but if not this exercise will help you refine your description or measure to match the scenario you are working on. This is the hard work in identifying what you want. When you do this well you will be considerably better prepared than the other parties to your negotiation.

Two ends of the range
There are two ends of your range. At one end is your *aspiration point* – the best you can ask for without causing the other party to dismiss you and deal with someone else. At the other end is your *bottom line*, the point beyond which your accountants will remind you the company will be losing money or otherwise hurting your overall position.



Your starting position
Somewhere in the middle of your range is your typical starting position. We will counsel you to double your aspiration point and aim high. Self-negotiating down in your range is a unilateral concession and is not recommended.

Motivations influence positions
Another aspect of range arising from our research described in step three is the correlation between a person's motivations and where they a comfortable positioning their initial request on a range. People who place results above relationships aim high and the opposite is true for people that place relationships over results. People that value the rationale tend to fall in the middle of the range, influenced by external metrics like the previous price, inflation, reasonableness etc.

Concession Exchange
Once you have listed and measured your issues you need to prepare your give and take. In order to take concessions from others you will need to make concessions yourself. Your concessions can be surrendering range on given issues or removing issues altogether from your list. Regardless of what you give, you should always be asking for something in return. Preparing your concession exchange BEFORE you meet others is very good practice. Good leaders empower their negotiators by enabling them to make pre-agreed concessions.

Packaged Deals
Research suggests preparing three packaged deals of roughly equal value leads to faster agreement, better relationships and better outcomes. We help our clients identify and measure issues and then package their positions on these into three packaged offers: best, worst and middle.

Tools
We teach our clients to list issues by doing a *Challenge Map*. We teach issue range description and measurement using our copyrighted *Issue & Range Analysis Worksheet*. We teach preparing for concession making and taking with *The Concession Exchange Worksheet* and we use of *Packaged Offer Worksheet* to summarise your three offers.

I cancelled the iOS version of the *Issue & Range Analysis Worksheet* and am now investigating using ai to help people list, measure and package issues for negotiation. This tool, in any form, is essential for anyone negotiating regularly.

Summary
Having now considered what you want (step one) and what the issues are (step two) the natural next step is to consider the people involved, what I call the stakeholders.

Step three involves considering the stakeholders at different levels. Many clients find my approach something that sticks with them the rest of their lives.

See you again in the next step. In the meantime add your comments and questions below.



Sincerely,

Peter

Professor Peter Nixon FCPA
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Master trainer, speaker, author, consultant;
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Website | Online Learning Site | Books | Video | Podcast |

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**The Nixon Method©* is a five-step process designed to help leaders and their teams clarify what they want and then refine and rehearse the tactics and techniques needed to influence and negotiate with key stakeholders to achieve positive change @work, @home and @large in society.

The Nixon Method© was created by Peter Nixon, FCPA based on decades of training and consulting leaders from MNC's, Professional Firms, Government, Start-Ups, Banks and non-profit organisations in over 60 countries worldwide. The method also builds on his decade auditing for PwC legacy firm C&L in Quebec, Ontario, Switzerland, France, Hong Kong and China.

Peter Nixon is based in Hong Kong (Nov-May) and Montreal (June-October). He helps clients lead technological and organisational change personally (on-site) or by inspiring others to do so through keynotes, masterclasses and teaching. People can contact Peter Nixon through his website www.PotentialDialogue.com

For over thirty years Peter has specialised in the dialogue, negotiation and leadership of change. During this time, based in Hong Kong and consulting globally, Peter developed ***The Nixon Method***, to help current and emerging leaders improve decision making, lead positive change and achieve better results at work, at home, and at large in society. Peter has helped thousands of leaders from hundreds of the world's leading organisations (both private and public sector) in over 60 countries. Peter's six books (Wiley, Routledge, Kindle) are available on Amazon. His popular ***Leadership Passport to Positive Change*** is only shared with onsite participants. Peter's service business ***Potential Dialogue*** #57627706-000-03-23-9 is registered in HK and all intellectual property marked ©Potential is owned by Peter Nixon.