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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**ENTREPRENEURIAL NEGOTIATION  
Understanding And Managing The Relationships  
That Determine Your Entrepreneurial Success**

By Samuel Dinnar and Lawrence Susskin

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“I have seen great technologies, great ventures and great sums of money lost to some of the most basic negotiating mistakes. The authors provide a useful and practical framework to prevent such missed opportunities. The result will be happier entrepreneurs, rewarded investors, and a better world.” —Paul Maeder, Chair and Founding Partner of Highland Capital

“This book should be read by everyone who is selling, buying, or trying to establish relationships. All of these require negotiation . . . The theme is that through conscious thought, you can improve your outcomes.” —Howard Stevenson, Sarofim-Rock Professor Emeritus, Harvard Business School; Founder and first President of the Baupost Group”

**DON'T LET POOR NEGOTIATION SKILLS  
DOOM YOUR ENTREPRENEURIAL VENTURE**

**In ENTREPRENEURIAL NEGOTIATION,  
Mediator Samuel Dinnar and MIT Professor Lawrence Susskind Reveal Eight  
Mistakes Entrepreneurs Make And Provide Real-World Solutions**

Eighty to ninety percent of all start-ups will fail. While there are many reasons for this, one of the biggest problems new ventures face is poor negotiation skills. According to expert mediator Samuel Dinnar and MIT professor Lawrence Susskind, authors of

**ENTREPRENEURIAL NEGOTIATION** (Palgrave Macmillan), “the single biggest threat to entrepreneurial success is an inability to handle the negotiations that arise at key interactions in the evolution of a start-up. Founders must be able to prevent, detect, and respond to potential negotiation mistakes in each part of their galaxy.”

In their book, the authors point to the mix of emotion, uncertainty, complexity, and relationships that makes entrepreneurial negotiation so difficult. They explain that the very

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qualities that help entrepreneurs launch businesses – willingness to take risks, high levels of self-confidence, a desire for rapid results – can be stumbling blocks in other situations. Based on their many years of hands-on experience teaching and consulting, plus their in-depth research – including videotaped interviews with more than 100 business founders – Dinnar and Susskind pinpoint eight common mistakes that entrepreneurs make. The mistakes are:

**Mistake #1: Entrepreneurs Are Self-Centered** – Because entrepreneurs are deeply focused on their own interests when building a business, they often fail to recognize the other side’s needs and priorities. This focus on their own desires can blind entrepreneurs to clues that could lead to good outcomes for both sides, an important goal when building working relationships.

**Mistake #2: Entrepreneurs Are Overly Optimistic and Overconfident** – Most entrepreneurs are supremely confident. They believe strongly that they will be successful (despite well-known statistics regarding failure rates). Because of this overconfidence, many fail to incorporate appropriate contingencies into the agreements they sign.

**Mistake #3: Entrepreneurs Need to Win. Now** – The primary objective of many entrepreneurs is to win. They are often primarily concerned about besting their counterpart and thus treat negotiations as one-off interactions, disregarding the possibility that future deals might be even more valuable than whatever is on the table at present.

**Mistake #4: Entrepreneurs Are Too Quick to Compromise** — Entrepreneurs are “doers.” They try to get things done while operating under incredible pressure. They feel compelled to decide quickly and “move on.” Instead of exploring additional options and finding even more advantageous trades, they settle for a quick (and acceptable) solution.

**Mistake #5: Entrepreneurs Work Alone** – When entrepreneurs let their independent spirit dominate the way they negotiate, they prepare alone (rather than consulting their stakeholders and advisors), misread unfamiliar signals, take unreasonable stands, or vent emotionally at inopportune times. They fail to recognize that negotiation is an organizational, not an individual, task.

**Mistake #6: Entrepreneurs Haggle** – Many entrepreneurs get “tunnel vision,” assuming that the only thing they’re negotiating is price. This leads them to take a series of aggressive positions along this one dimension, forgetting to consider other factors that can create significant value.

**Mistake #7: Entrepreneurs Rely Too Heavily on Their Intuition** – Many entrepreneurs rely on their instincts when a negotiation doesn’t go as planned. But when trusting their instincts, they are not sufficiently in touch with what they are doing and why. So they end

up blaming the other side. Worse, these same problems keep occurring because they are not aware of what is happening.

**Mistake #8: Entrepreneurs Deny Their Emotions** – Most entrepreneurs have a strong sense of what is fair. When they feel they are being mistreated, they fall prey to a slew of cognitive biases that allow emotion and ego to overrule logic. This can be especially problematic for entrepreneurs who tend to deny the relevance of emotions (and ego) to negotiation. While claiming “it is just business,” they can overvalue power, leverage, and control and undervalue the more subjective side of business negotiations.

To illustrate how these mistakes play out, Dinnar and Susskind have included key portions of their interviews with eight founders from various backgrounds and industries in **ENTREPRENEURIAL NEGOTIATION**. The authors provide commentary about the missteps and show how the founder’s performance improved moving forward. The interviews, which can be seen in their entirety at [www.entrepreneurialnegotiation.com](http://www.entrepreneurialnegotiation.com), are just one of the unique features of **ENTREPRENEURIAL NEGOTIATION**.

The book also includes extensive advice and worksheets to help readers recognize and prevent their own missteps. The authors explain how to prepare for, engage in, and reflect on each negotiation; how to deal with negative personal triggers; analyze the motivations that drive all participants; and step back to view heated situations “from the balcony” as an unbiased observer. These are the skills that entrepreneurs need to successfully negotiate the future of their enterprises. **ENTREPRENEURIAL NEGOTIATION** shows them how.

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#### **ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

**Samuel Dinnar** is a mediator, consultant, board member, and venture capital investor. He is an instructor at the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School, and a teacher at the Harvard Negotiation Institute and at the Program on Negotiation. He is also a research associate with MIT’s Science Impact Collaborative. Dinnar is founder and president of Meedance, which provides negotiation, training, and dispute resolution services. He has helped resolve highly emotional business conflicts involving founders, investors, and board members with some disputes reaching tens of millions of dollars. Dinnar builds on two decades of general management, strategic growth, and operations team leadership in high-tech and aerospace, including two start-ups that revolutionized their industries.

**Lawrence Susskind** is Ford Professor of Urban and Environmental Planning at MIT and head of MIT’s Science Impact Collaborative. An expert mediator and negotiation trainer, he is co-founder of the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School where he currently serves as Vice Chair of Instruction. He is also Director of the MIT-Harvard Public Disputes Program, and designed and teaches the MIT course, Entrepreneurial Negotiation: The MIT Way. Susskind who is the founder of the Consensus Building Institute, has advised more than 50 corporations, provided advanced negotiation training to more than 30,000 students and executives globally; served as advisor to supreme courts of several countries; and has published 20 books.