

Planning for Negotiations

Introduction

This exercise asks you to focus on either an upcoming role-play negotiation or a real negotiation that will occur within your life within the next several weeks or months. In this exercise, your objective is to develop a plan for that negotiation.

Here you will find 10 question areas that can be used as a planning guide for this negotiation. These questions reflect the important elements to consider when you prepare to negotiate. Not all of these questions will be relevant to every negotiation, so you may not have a specific answer for every question. The purpose of the planning process is to make sure you consider all of the major factors that may impact the upcoming negotiation, and assemble information, arguments, or analysis so that you can be more effective in achieving your goals in that negotiation. The detailed questions are presented next, and a blank abbreviated planning guide is available after the questions for you to complete about your own upcoming negotiation. The readings in this book may offer additional help in considering how to plan most effectively.

If you are using this planning guide as part of a class exercise, your instructor may give you additional instructions on how to use the guide.

Planning Questions

Here are the major dimensions you should address in planning for a negotiation:

1. Understanding the issues—that is, what is to be negotiated.
2. Assembling the issues and defining the bargaining mix:
 - Which issues are most important and which issues are less important?
 - Which issues are linked to other issues, and which are separate or unconnected?
3. Defining the interests: What are the other's primary underlying interests?
4. Defining limits:
 - What is our walkaway point on each issue—that is, what is a minimally acceptable settlement for each issue or the issues as a package?
 - If this negotiation fails, what is our best alternative settlement (BATNA)?
5. Defining targets and openings:
 - What will be our preferred settlement in each issue?
 - What will be our opening request for each issue?
 - Where are we willing to trade off issues against each other in the bargaining mix?
6. Constituencies: To whom is the other accountable for the solution—that is, to whom does he or she report or have to explain or defend the outcome? Does this party also have to be involved in issue definition and goal setting?

7. Opposite negotiators: Who is the other party (or parties) in the negotiation?
 - What information do we have about them?
 - What issues will they have?
 - What priorities are they likely to have for their issues?
 - What are their interests?
 - What has been my past relationship with them? What future relationship do I need to have, or would I like to have with them?
 - What is their reputation and style, and how should I take this into consideration?
8. Selecting a strategy:
 - What overall negotiation and strategy do I want to select? How important are the outcome and the relationship with the other?
 - What strategy do I expect the other will be selecting?
9. Planning the issue presentation and defense:
 - What research do I need to do on the issues so that I can argue for them convincingly and compellingly?
 - Do I have (or can I prepare) graphs, charts, and figures that will clearly communicate my preferences?
 - In what order and sequence should I present the information?
 - What arguments can I anticipate from the other party, and how am I going to counteract their arguments?
 - What tactics will I use to present my arguments or defend against the other's arguments?
 - What tactics will I use to try to move us toward agreement?
 - What roles will different people play in the negotiation?
10. Protocol:
 - Where will we negotiate? Do we wish to influence the choice of location?
 - When will we negotiate? Do we wish to influence the time and length of negotiation?
 - Who will be at the actual negotiation meeting? Do we want to bring other parties to serve a particular purpose (e.g., an expert or an observer)?
 - Do we have an agenda? How can we help to either create the agenda or participate in its development?
 - What will we do if the negotiation fails?
 - Who will write down and confirm the agreement? Do we need to have the contract reviewed by a professional (e.g., attorney, accountant, agent)?

One member of each group should record the results of the group's work and be able to report the plan back to the group (you may wish to use large paper, overhead transparencies, or a written handout).

Planning Guide

This planning guide may be completed for any important upcoming negotiation:

1. What are the issues to be negotiated? _____

2. What are the priorities among the issues in the bargaining mix? _____

3. What are the primary underlying interests? _____

4. What are my limits on each issue—walkaway points and BATNAs? _____

5. What are my target points and opening requests on these issues? _____

6. Who are the important constituencies to whom I am accountable? _____

7. What do I know about the other negotiator's interests, negotiating style, and personal reputation? _____

8. What overall strategy do I want to pursue? _____

9. What do I need to assemble—research, documents, charts and graphs, and so on—to make the most effective presentation on what I want to achieve? What tactics will I use to present my arguments or defend against the other negotiator's arguments? _____

10. What protocol is important for this negotiation: where we negotiate, when we negotiate, who is present for the negotiation, agenda to be followed, note taking? Also, what is our backup plan if this negotiation fails? _____

