Business-to-Business Interaction:
Lessons From a Case-based In-class Simulation

Key Words


Abstract

Inter-organizational relationships involve active interfacing between organizations pursuing different goals, while being dependant on each others. Hence, Business-to-Business interaction can be characterized by a high degree of complexity involving issues and concepts stemming from Purchasing, Marketing, Key Account Management or Negotiation. This article shows how a business case may be a pertinent tool to teach BtoB interaction in such complexity. Based on his experience in designing a case study for a BtoB Marketing course at ESSEC Business School, the author first discusses the institutional and historical context of this “real-life” experience, and describes the case scenario and issues. The second part of the paper shows to what extent the management of BtoB interaction, as a professional field, is a good candidate for case teaching due to its complexity. Through the example introduced at the outset, the author shows how a case-based BtoB negotiation simulation actually addresses the training challenge by ensuring “high impact learning” as defined by IMD (IMD, 2005) in “Mastering Executive Education: How to Combine Content with Context and Emotion.”
In the third and last part, the paper discusses how ensuring real learning efficiency also highly depends on how the case-teaching process is driven, especially through case format and structure, preparation and teaching scenario, facilitation method and time management. The conclusion underlines the fact that the returns in training efficiency largely justify the intense work of case design in this context, provided that the case-teaching process is well managed.

**Introduction**

Inter-organizational relationships involve active interfacing between organizations pursuing different goals while being dependant on each others. On one side, the interface involves people such as Marketing and/or Sales Executives, Business Unit Managers and/or Key Account Managers. On the other side, it involves purchasing professionals of increasing variety and power, (Purchasing Managers, Category Sourcing Managers, Business Unit Buyers, etc.) and, very often, R&D, Supply Chain Management and/or Marketing. Hence, BtoB interaction can be characterized by a high degree of complexity, well dealt with in Key Account Management, a concept in full development today.

The objective of this article is to show how a business case may represent a pertinent approach to teach Business-to-Business interaction, by ensuring four key drivers to “high impact learning”: emotional highs, energizing roles, real world context, and action-based application. Our approach is case-base itself, as we start from our own experience in building a case series for a BtoB Marketing course, developing the case described in this article, and eventually recognizing that this case is better suited for BtoB interaction than for BtoB Marketing per se. In that sense, negotiation is used more as a training medium to experience BtoB interaction rather than the central, technical objective of the case. In the last part of the article, we draw some lessons from experience on how to optimize learning efficiency through the case method, specifically looking at case format and structure, preparation and teaching scenario, facilitation and time management.
“Fruit Prep’’, a Case Study to Teach Business-to-Business Interaction

In innovation, results often end up being quite different from initial expectations, and this story is no exception. In 2003, the intention at ESSEC Business School was to create a graduate course in applied Business-to-Business Agri-food Marketing as part of the new ESSEC-MBA Agri-Food track. It was decided to develop a series of business cases with top executives of the sector in order to emphasize a professional approach and avoid too much theory. The case discussed here did not come with the intent to study negotiation per se, but as the natural setting for dealing with BtoB marketing issues. It eventually turned out to be better suited to illustrate BtoB interaction than BtoB marketing per se. Given its importance in the unfolding of this experience, the institutional and historical context is briefly described here, before introducing the case scenario and the related negotiation issues.

1. The Institutional and Historical Context

The “Business-to-Business Agri-Food Marketing Policy” course was structured into ten three-hour sessions to be taught in English once a year. Five business cases were to be prepared, mobilizing one full session each, so that half of the total face-to-face time of the course was booked for business case solving. The population of the course was made of young, English-speaking students, aged 23 to 28 and the class size was expected to vary from 24 to 28 students.

Early on, in our search for meaningful business case topics, the opportunity arose to develop one of the cases with a former MBA student who had recently joined a large and well-known French food company as a Category Purchasing Manager. The most appropriate setting for this case soon appeared to be a corporate supplier / customer negotiation play, where the main challenges of dealing with customers’ corporate purchasing would be featured. In order to meet this objective, the case had to contain two separate “parts”, each with a specific set of information, displayed under Word, Excel or PowerPoint formats. Eventually entitled “Fruit Prep’ Supplies – How Corporate Purchasing Impacts Business-to-Business Negotiation”, the case was completed after an intensive one-year working process and is now published and used in the above-
mentioned course as well as in a number of other programs, including Industrial Marketing and Key Account Management\(^1\).

Although the scenario is inspired from a real business situation, the names and figures on competitors and distributors are blurred and disguised, while remaining plausible, as generally required in BtoB Marketing for confidentiality reasons. The market data, drawn from indicated open bibliographical sources, have remained real, however.

2. The Case Scenario

Victor du Thil is the Category Sourcing Manager for fruit preparations at the Biscuit division of **Delissia**, a large European food company. He is preparing to meet with Suzy O’Brien, Manager of the Fruit Ingredient Division at **Dair’Ing** Corporation, one of Delissia’s suppliers. As the yearly negotiation period is approaching, the meeting is scheduled for next week. The relationship between the two firms has been going on for several years, with events of varying importance arising more recently – some of them being critical - so that, on each side, the stakes are high…

– Products

The issues at stakes relate to fruit preparations, which can be defined as complex mixes of fruits, sweeteners, flavours, additives and water in various proportions and qualities. They are classified in the industry through the concept of “Water Activity” (Aw), a notion explained in the case, and fall into one of four categories: the “High Aw”, “Medium Aw”, “Low Aw” and “Very Low Aw” applications. The negotiation will mainly focus on projects using “Low Aw” fruit preparations, in high demand on the biscuit market. Within this segment, the “bake-stable” fruit preparations, which can be spread on biscuits before baking, make up an even more interesting segment for the biscuit market.

– The case context

**Delissia**, a worldwide player in the food industry with a strong activity in biscuit manufacturing, is one of Dair’Ing’s key customers. Delissia operates in a very difficult market and has to face important downstream market challenges such as recent

\(^1\) This case is published at ecch (the European Case Clearing House, Cranfield, U.K. – [http://www.ecch.com](http://www.ecch.com)), along with the four other ones making up our business case series on BtoB Agri-food Marketing Policy.
restructuring of the industry and the reputation of biscuits with respect to health problems. This is why the “bake-stable” fruit preps offered by Dair’Ing have become strategic to Delissia. **Dair’Ing** is one of the top eight identified fruit prep’ suppliers to Delissia. Yet, despite acknowledged mutual benefits and interesting innovation records, the relationship between the two organizations has not been easy in the past. For example, the strategy and organization of Delissia are far from being transparent to Dair’Ing: it is only incidentally, three years ago, that Suzy came to understand the rising strategic importance of bake-stable fruit fillings for Delissia; also, the purchasing organization and “who owns the negotiation power” at Delissia is not very clear. Customer complaints and demands have also left marks in Dair’Ing’s records: last year, for example, Delissia complained about a poor service level and the lack of cost transparency, which was a true challenge for Dair’Ing, eventually compelled to show its “cost breakdown analysis” to Delissia. Among Delissia’s requests is also the possibility to buy some of the fruit prep’ ingredients directly from Dair’Ing’s own suppliers, in order to save some of the fruit prep’ cost by increasing negotiated volumes, which is seen by Dair’Ing as an intrusion in its own business. More recently, an issue arose during winter time about fruit filling containers accidentally delivered at one of Delissia’s factory at a temperature well below specifications, which caused serious manufacturing problems. Despite strong reputation in know-how, Dair’Ing is recognized in turn as rather expensive by Dair’Ing compared to its competitors. Among the latter, **Akara** has recently benefited from intense lobbying by Delissia’s Marketing department, a recent situation which is totally unknown to Suzy O’Brien and her team to date… This privileged relationship provides Delissia’s Purchasing department with an invaluable benchmark.

3. **The Issues to be Discussed**

All in all, the issues described in the case gradually converge towards five headings that the actors will have to deal with:

− The latest issue on temperature control: it is the latest but perhaps the most urgent matter to solve, as short term manufacturing is at stakes;
− The cost breakdown issue: compelled to do so, Suzy has begun to open its cost information to Delissia, but the process is not complete as she has kept some information confidential…;
− The ingredient direct purchasing issue: Delissia’s request to directly negotiate fruit prep’ ingredients can hardly be accepted without compensation by Dair’Ing,
or this intrusive process will be endless and Dair’Ing will eventually be totally deprived from any negotiation power;

− The long term partnership between the two organizations: Dair’Ing does not know about the ongoing negotiations between Delissia and Akara... What will be the outcome? What level of confidence can be found between both organizations, based on past performance and competitive advantages?

− Eventually, the price and volume commitment on “Low Aw” solutions for next year: this will depend on all the above, given that Suzy faces strong requests from its Board of Directors in terms of Operating Profit.

Hence, many questions need to be addressed. Given that each party has private strategic information, unknown to the other, how much of that information will each party release? What are the ex-ante expectations on each side? How will they evolve through information exchange? How to bring enough confidence in the negotiation to favour information exchange? Is price reduction the only way out for Delissia? Is Delissia’s project to purchase raw materials directly from upstream suppliers totally unacceptable to Dair’Ing? Are there mutually beneficial gains that can be obtained? How will the parties’ perception of the competitive environment affect confidence and mutual investment in the relationship? Worst comes worst, will Dair’Ing, today a key supplier, remain the first “Low Aw” filling supplier for Delissia? Will corporate business objectives be met? A heated debate in perspective…

**Picture 1** – Lemon-based cream for lemon pies

**Picture 2** – Pies an light puff biscuits filled with bake-stable filling
Case-based BtoB Negotiation: What Value for Professional Training?

The field of Business-to-Business interaction is characterized by a high level of complexity, with many strong operational dimensions. This makes this field a particularly good candidate for a case-based approach when it comes to professional training. Here, we explore the reasons for such a choice.

1. Dealing with Situational Complexity

BtoB interaction is very often considered from the BtoB Marketing standpoint, where a supplier takes into account the procurement strategies of its customers in the formulation of its marketing strategy. The topic can also be seen from the opposite perspective where the supplier’s strategic situations (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) are used by an "intelligent" customer to formulate its procurement strategy. Each of these two orientations gives a partial account of an even more complex reality, probably better depicted by the “Key Account Management” (or “Strategic Account Management”) approach which, besides other organizational issues, focuses on how to optimize a durable business relationship between two organizations. Business-to-Business interaction is complex, because it encompasses a number of different approaches to which the students should be exposed, including the following:

- A large number of the issues generally covered in BtoB Marketing, including the notions of buying centre, buying situations, purchasing behaviour, derived demand, offering management and differentiation, competitive positioning, communication strategy, etc (Anderson et al., 2009, Hutt and Speh, 2010). Particularly critical are the notions of buying centre (the seller does not negotiate with a single person, but with a system made of several functions or characters, some visible, some not, some inside the organization, some outside, but all interacting with one another), buying situations (“straight re-buy”, “modified re-buy”, or totally new transaction, like in the case of a product innovation), and purchasing behaviour (how the complex purchasing process works).

- The main components of Purchasing Strategy, including purchased volume concentration, long term partnership development (involvement in new investments), supplier integration and product development control (for example,
sharing know-how on product formula), cost transparency and added value breakdown (information sharing on product cost breakdown), (Baily et al., 2008).

- Many key aspects of Negotiation Strategy, including information asymmetry, mutually beneficial options, the notion of Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement, long term mutual Investment and the issue of creating confidence for information disclosure (Ury et al., 2003).

- All the concepts, tools and techniques used in Key Account Management, including particularly customer portfolio analysis, customer performance measurement, customer loyalty and, more generally, market segmentation and other marketing tools (Capon, 2001, Cheverton, 2008).

These approaches are all useful to build primarily intellectual knowledge and skills. However, they represent a huge volume of knowledge which does not necessarily need to be totally understood before exposure to professional simulation occurs, all the more as this simulation will develop intuition, thus speeding up the learning process. They should rather early enough be imbedded into a “training formula” providing a “high-impact learning experience”, as proposed in “Mastering Executive Education – How to Combine Content with Context and Emotion” (IMD, 2005).

2. Ensuring “High-Impact Learning”

In the above-mentioned IMD Guide, the following are considered as the four drivers for “high-impact learning”: 1) Emotional highs, 2) Energizing roles, 3) Real-world context, and 4) Action-based application. Let us now see how the negotiation case introduced above actually ensures “high-impact learning”, clarifying at the same time what lies behind each of these drivers.

– Emotional Highs

Providing the students with the occasion to engage at the emotional as well as the intellectual level is a strong driver towards “learning that sticks.” The mere fact that the learning experience provided through our negotiation case is a role play fully addresses this first condition. Whether at ease or not with the exercise of playing the role they are assigned (which they have chosen), the students will engage emotionally when they express their positions, in a setting where what they say may affect the way they are perceived by their peers. What’s more, the discussion time is expected to last several
hours, and the students will be prompted to announce their decisions during the debriefing stages.

- **Energizing roles**
  All types of interactions such as “sharing, engaging, debating, imagining, experiencing and reflecting”\(^2\) emphasize learning. The important issue here is how each actor around the training activity interacts with the others. The case is conceived in a way which allows all actors (professor, students) to have a precise role to play, even if this role is not the one of Suzy or Victor, the “heroes” of the case. Depending on the setting chosen by the instructor (see below), a student can be either Suzy or Victor, but also a coach or an observer, knowing that each of these roles, at some point during the session, is prompted to engage into the discussion.

- **Real-World Content**
  Motivation in learning also comes with the feeling that, in some sense, «what you see is what you get.” The students need to feel the complexity of reality, even if it is harder to deal with. This is also part of the excitement. They don’t want to be cheated by an over-simplified story (unless at an introductory stage, provided it has been announced) if they are preparing for true professional involvement. In this respect, it is often better to tell them that there is not necessarily only one right answer to the case, because the other actors’ choices may lead you to different answers. It is one of the explicit objectives of the “Fruit Prep’” case to depict a true story, told by someone who has actually experienced it “for good.” The value of real world content in the case was nicely confirmed when one of our students, accepted into a new position, was convinced that she “had made it” during the last interview, giving the impression that she had actually lived through this experience, thus showing that she could perform in this kind of situations!

- **Action-based Application**
  This driver points out that building “hard, primarily intellectual knowledge” and “emotional intelligence and skills” is all about awareness, but not action. The third missing dimension is “action-based application.” In the “Fruit Prep” case, the students have to make decisions, and they are given tools to take such decisions. Besides the case text, they are provided with Excel files containing selected results that can be put

\(^2\) IMD, 2005
in perspective. On her side, Suzy receives a simulation sheet where she can enter the objectives requested by the Board of Directors and play with several assumptions. Victor, as for him, can use the offer from Akara as a benchmark to compare the different procurement options offered to him.

Ensuring Highest Learning Efficiency: Lessons from Experience

After running the case over a few years, both in continuing and first education, we have been able to test improvements to it. Experience shows that three types of conditions are important to ensure higher learning efficiency: case format and structure, preparation and teaching scenario, and facilitation and time management. These conditions are now briefly discussed in turn.

1. Case Format and Structure

A good negotiation case should ensure **asymmetry of information**. The case must be designed for two distinct groups with distinct sets of information, and lead to the negotiation play between the two parties. Each party receives its own set of information, with incomplete information on the other party, just like in real life... In the “Fruit Prep” case, the two groups are the “Purchasing” group (Victor du Thil, Delissia) and the “Supplier” group (Suzy O’Brien, Dair’Ing).

- The students’ package includes two separate text parts including pictures (each in Word format, close to 20 pages in total, including approximately 10 pages of appendix) and their respective electronic data sets and simulation tools (Excel format).
- On top of all students’ documents, the instructor receives the Teaching Note (11 pages) and a slide presentation (PowerPoint format, 68 slides), in order to facilitate case discussion.

Then, decision-making tools and/or business circumstances must be arranged so as to allow **decision making**. In the “Fruit Prep” case, an Excel-format P&L allows Dair’Ing to make simulations with different sets of production plans. On Delissia’s side, we have
overcome a true weakness existing in a former version. The company had no way to enforce demands to Dair’Ing, so that the latter could treat these demands just as wishful thinking (except for the mere threat to terminate business). The introduction of the confidential Akara benchmark solved the problem by bringing a trustable alternative to current business, and to illustrate the issue of “purchasing center”, namely the existence of strategic actors outside the customer company.

2. Preparation and Teaching Scenario

Identifying the proper teaching scenario is important for fruitful in-class negotiation. Of course, none of the “Supplier” part players should know the content of the “Customer” part, and vice-versa (according to our experience, the amount of work for understanding each part is heavy enough to discourage cross reading; still, students should be warned that breaking this rule would only ruin the interest of the game). Of course, the success of the case highly depends on the quality of preparation by the students. A good way to ensure active preparation is to have students (individually or in teams) hand-in a preparation assignment at the beginning of the session.

Two scenarios have been tested in turn through time: “Single Play with Coaches and Observers” (Scenario 1), and “Simultaneous Play with Benchmarking” (Scenario 2). Although the second scenario has shown more fruitful over time than the first one, we describe both of them below, underlining the respective pros and cons.

- **Scenario 1 – Single Play With Coaches and Observers**
  - Here, two teams (four people each is a good size) are selected for the play, one Supplier team, and one Customer team. The rest of the class is divided into Supplier Observers and Customer Observers, depending on what part they have prepared. Each team nominates its Champion (featuring Suzy O’Brien or Victor du Thil). The champions will negotiate at the central table, with their team members as Coaches (Fig. 1).
  - This scenario emphasizes the “show” dimension of the negotiation, putting pressure on the performing pair and on the negotiation dynamics more than on final outcome. The drawback is that there are really only two performers, and the others, although attributed observer or coach roles, may find it boring after some time into the negotiation play. This is the main reason why we have switched to the second scenario over time.
**Scenario 2 – Simultaneous Play With Benchmarking**

- Here, the whole class is divided into **teams of four students**, each of which is subdivided into a pair of Suppliers (representing Suzy O’Brien) and a pair of Customers (representing Victor du Thil). The classroom is set up in order to feature the required number of **negotiation tables** (Fig. 2). All teams will negotiate simultaneously. During the preparation sequences, all suppliers can regroup, standing in one corner of the room for a preparation briefing, while the customers can do the same in the opposite corner. During feedback sequences, all teams can share their experience.

- The major advantage of this scenario is that everyone gets involved into the negotiation. Here, the main focus is on the negotiation outcome more than on the behavior. The drawback is that it can become fairly noisy, but experience shows that students profit a lot from this setting, especially when all “Suppliers” and all “Customers” are openly benchmarked against each others across teams (the
instructor may use the front board to compare the different decisions and results).

![Fig. 2 – Scenario 2 Classroom Setup](image)

3. Facilitation and Time Management

The case was originally designed for a three hour session, including the final debriefing. However, more recent tests have shown that it is rich enough to fully justify six hours of face-to-face work, which allows deeper involvement. Facilitation work starts before the actual negotiation play, at the time of submitting the case assignment. Under the assumption that some time is left at the end for debriefing, we look here at facilitation and time management through the entire session. In what follows, we assume scenario 2.

- Before Class

Although this is not compulsory, the instructor may guide the preparation process by handing out a **Negotiation Preparation Form**, such as the one provided in Appendix. This preparation form indicates three negotiation rounds with the order in which the different issues will be raised. One may object that this overly simplifies decision making during negotiation. It does indeed, but this option was taken in view of the complexity of the issues to be solved, with respect to the time allotted for discussion. Of course, negotiation phasing as such being a key point in negotiation practice, it can be left to deal with by the students.
Rounds of Negotiation

Each of the three rounds covers the pre-identified topics in turn as follows (fig. 1).

1. Understanding the Strategic Environment
2. Validating Expectations
3. Solving the Quality Issue
4. Agreeing on Cost Transparency
5. Settling the Direct Purchase issue
6. Deciding on Long Term Involvement
7. Committing on Prices and Volumes for 2004

Fig. 1 – Negotiation agenda

The students are encouraged to follow the negotiation path shown below, which addresses the same series of points for each issue (fig. 2)

- The Issue
  - Where / what are the stakes for the actors and organizations?
  - Why is this important for the actors?
- Common Background
  - What do both parties know about the subject at hand?
  - What can be recognized as “common background”?
- Asymmetric Private Information
  - What does each party know about the issue, that the other doesn't?
  - This is likely to be strategic (or “hard-to-share”) information...
- Getting to an Agreement
  - What are reasonable / acceptable objectives?
  - How to get there?

Fig. 2 – The points to be addressed during negotiation

While students are role-playing, the instructor’s own role is to observe behaviour, arguments and the negotiation path.
Feedback and Preparation
During these breaks, suppliers and customers regroup (in opposite corners of the classroom or in breakout rooms) and confidentially share views and information to prepare the next round. The instructor’s role is then to ensure that maximum information exchange will occur during the next negotiation rounds between the actors. This can be obtained by challenging each group in turn by questions such as: “what did you learn from the other party?” or “what complementary information do you now need for making a sound decision?”

Final debriefing
After the actual negotiation, we strongly advise to review the case issues. It is important to keep in mind that the negotiation process and experience is more important than the negotiation outcome. Due to the limited time scheduled for negotiation (especially in the short, 3-hour version), students often express some frustration when they feel that they have not had the time to properly conclude. However, learning also largely occurs during the final debriefing, made fruitful by the negotiation experience. The discussion can then end with a “wrap up” question, asking “what have we learned?” where students may be invited to write a list of the most important keywords related to the case, with short comments about them.

Conclusion
Developing a pertinent case study for management training is a lot of work. Colleagues often recognize that it takes from ten to twenty, and even sometimes thirty days of work. On that account, the case described in this article was no exception, with its two case parts and associated Excel-format data sets, its teaching note, picture review and slide presentation. However, the complex nature of inter-organizational interactions more than justifies a case-based role play, as this teaching approach is able to ensure the emotional highs, energizing roles, real world context and action-based application which lead to “high impact learning”, as advocated by IMD in its 2005 Guide. Experience shows, however, that ensuring real learning efficiency also highly depends

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3 These points are spelt out in the instructor's Power-Point presentation provided with the case material.
on how the case-teaching process is driven, by mastering such dimensions as case format and structure, preparation and teaching scenario, facilitation method and time management.

Bibliography

Appendix

Negotiation Preparation Form

A good negotiation is a prepared negotiation…
This form aims at helping each Actor (Supplier or Customer) in the preparation of the negotiation to be played, particularly important since the latter will be time-constrained.

1. Suggested Negotiation Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10 minutes</th>
<th>First Round of Negotiation <em>(play)</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Actors</strong>: S. O’Brien, V. du Thil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Objective</strong>: Understand the strategic environment and validate expectations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>20 minutes</th>
<th>Feedback and Preparation <em>(two separate groups)</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Actors</strong>: everyone, according to attributed roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Objective</strong>: Prepare second round of negotiation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>20 minutes</th>
<th>Second Round of Negotiation <em>(play)</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Actors</strong>: S. O’Brien, V. du Thil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Objective</strong>: Solve quality issue and raise cost transparency and direct purchase issue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>20 minutes</th>
<th>Feedback and Preparation <em>(two separate groups)</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Actors</strong>: everyone, according to attributed roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Objective</strong>: Prepare third round of negotiation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>20 minutes</th>
<th>Third Round of Negotiation <em>(on stage)</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Actors</strong>: S. O’Brien, V. du Thil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Objective</strong>: Solve the direct purchasing issue and deal with the price / volume issue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Negotiation Objectives

- What are my negotiation objectives? What do I want to obtain?<br>*list the three most important items*

- What are my best alternatives, if I fail to achieve these objectives?<br>*list the best alternatives to above items*

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4 The durations indicated here suggest a 90-minute role play followed by 90 minutes of final debriefing. Obviously, other options may be tested.
3. Analysis of the Situation

For each item to be negotiated,

- What do I understand about respective stakes?
- What complementary information should I try to get?
- What are my organization's strengths and weaknesses (*internal analysis*)?
- What are the opportunities and threats it faces with respect to the environment at large and, more specifically, with respect to my partner's situation (*external analysis / partner-focused analysis*)?
- What mutually beneficial situation can I foresee in the future?

4. Listening

- Am I prepared to listen to what the other party has to say?

5. Arguments

Given my objectives and my organization's situation:

- What arguments can I bring forward in order to convince my partner to move to the desired directions?
  (When / in what order should I bring them? At what conditions should I use or forget such or such argument?)
- What proposal(s) can / should I make to my partner, attractive enough that it may be accepted, in a mutually-beneficial arrangement?

6. Negotiation Strategy

- How do I anticipate the negotiation dynamics in order to maximize its returns, in terms of addressing my objectives?