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***How do negotiation practitioners prepare  
B2B negotiations, and is this according to  
the academic literature?***

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## Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is twofold; first, to examine what the academic literature state about the preparation of negotiation in a B2B setting. Second, checking whether actual practitioners use and apply these academic findings in their real-life negotiation preparation. The methodology is a literature review and 15 semi-structured interviews with practitioners representing five different industries and different seniority and experience in negotiation. The researcher found a similarity in academically proven preparation elements and real-life preparation. The findings are the need for clear goals and a well defined BATNA. Though, practitioners could benefit from structuring their preparation more. Modern tools like ERP systems could help modern negotiators prepare. The finding also increases our understanding of negotiation preparation and the focus practitioners apply in their preparation.

*Keywords: negotiation; preparation; B2B; Structuring goals; defining limitations; BATNA; Relationship; win-win negotiation.*

## Preface

I could not have achieved my current level of success without a strong group of supporters. First of all, I would like to thank my parents, who have supported me unconditionally throughout my life so far. Secondly, my girlfriend and my closest friends who provided me with feedback of the thesis as well as my life. And thanks for sometimes not inviting me to social gatherings so I could focus on my study. Thirdly, the University of Twente and, in particular, my two supervisors: Aldis G. Sigurdardottir and David van der Griend for their flexibility, high standards and coaching throughout this process.

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## List of abbreviations and terms

BATNA	Best alternative to a negotiated agreement	A plan B, an alternative
B2B	Business to business	A business selling to another business, not to a consumer.
B2C	Business to consumer	A business selling directly to the consumer.
ERP-system	Enterprise Resource Planning - system	Software that integrates several business processes. Like purchasing, delivery, and stock levels.
FTE	Full-time equivalent	One FTE is equivalent to a full-time worker
Other party		The people you are negotiating with/ the other side of the table

## 1. Introduction

Negotiation is the process that leads to a voluntary agreement. This written or spoken voluntary agreement between parties whereby a promise, or set of promises, is granted in exchange for something of legal value, like a contract (Mallor & Barnes, 2010). Alternatively, Roger Fisher, William Ury, and Bruce Patton (1991) defined negotiation as "a process of communicating back and forth for the purpose of reaching a joint decision." Both definitions say the goal of a negotiation is to reach an agreement. For purposes of this article, the first definition by Mallor and Barnes is used.

Negotiation is a big part of management, managers, dedicating about 20-25 per cent of their workday to negotiation (Hendon et al., 1999; Sigurðardóttir et al., 2019). Purchasers reported spending up to 50 per cent on negotiation (M. Kumar et al., 2009). This significant portion of professional's time suggests the need for more research on how purchasers negotiate and optimise this.

Due to the impact a negotiation has on a firm's business performance; it is important to know which behaviour is helpful to get a satisfactory agreement (Zachariassen, 2008). Satisfaction with the negotiated agreement is a decisive factor in developing future business transactions and affects resource efficiency (Sigurðardóttir et al., 2019).

According to Kumar and Reinartz (2012), the transaction volume on business to business (B2B) market is much greater than in the business to consumer (B2C) market. There are also fewer subjects on the B2B market, making the value of each transaction and amount in purchase bigger. Another difference between B2B and B2C is the degree of independence between buyers and sellers; fewer sources in the B2B market mean each source is more valuable (Gummesson, 2008). This research will therefore focus on the B2B negotiation.

For the past decennia, scholars have acknowledged the importance of negotiation, and research on the negotiation process suggests it consists of three different stages; (1) planning or preparation, (2) negotiation, bargaining, or interaction, and (3) making the deal and implementation (Adair & Brett, 2005; Filzmoser & Vetschera, 2008; Zohar, 2015). Most of the research focuses on the second and third stages, and several models and taxonomies have been made for these stages, even though both practitioners and negotiation researchers emphasise the need for good preparation if the ensuing negotiation is to be a success (Lindholm et al., 2018; Tomlinson & Lewicki, 2015). However, there is a scarcity of research into this first stage of negotiation: the preparation stage. This study seeks to help fill that gap by interviewing negotiation practitioners on their preparation and priorities.

When negotiating, negotiators can show multiple different behaviours in order to reach their goals. Consider, for example, integrative negotiation versus distributive negotiation—arguably one of the better-known negotiation behaviours. Integrative negotiation refers to a negotiation behaviour whereby both parties seek to maximise joint gain. This process stands in contrast to distributive negotiation, where the process aims to reach an agreement to distribute resources such that the value achieved by one negotiator comes at the other's expense (Tomlinson & Lewicki, 2015). Distributive can be seen as the split the pie example: win-lose, whereas integrative strategy aims to enlarge the pie together before splitting it. Which results in a net increase for both parties, often referred to as win-win.

If negotiators are to benefit from an interdependent relationship, they must avoid reaching a standstill. There is no contractual agreement without mutual consent. Integrative negotiation tactics help avoid or resolve impasses (Tomlinson & Lewicki, 2015). However, reaching an agreement simply for the sake of reaching an agreement is in no one's interest. Tomlinson and Lewicki (2015) say both negotiators should strive to reach a *good* agreement, optimising the value both parties derive. Integrative negotiation is suited for this purpose as well. The benefits of integrative negotiation behaviour are known within the academic literature; this research seeks to check whether practitioners do so and how they apply this in their preparation.

To structure their preparation, negotiation practitioners have created checklists and 'things to do' for their preparation. However, academics tend to focus on the process as a whole or the deal-making competencies and less on the preparation part of the negotiation (Agndal et al., 2017; Herbst et al., 2011; Jang et al., 2018; Lindholst et al., 2018) even though researchers agree on the importance of preparation (Balachandra et al., 2005; Peterson & Lucas, 2001). This research will aim to create comprehensive, systematic, and practical standards for the preparation phase of a negotiation.



In summary, within the research, the goal is to create insight into how negotiation practitioners are taught and checked to prepare for B2B negotiation deals and how this compares to academic literature. The research question is therefore formulated as follows:

***RQ: How do negotiation practitioners prepare B2B negotiations, and is this according to the academic literature?***

The research aims to fill a part of the gap in the literature on negotiation preparation and vital elements in this preparation. The results of this research are especially relevant for negotiators to increase their preparation efficiency and for management to set up a checklist or workflow that will ensure all steps will be taken to prepare well. Increased efficiency in the preparation phase can possibly save time and money. Lewicki et al. (1997) go so far as to suggest that – other things being equal, the negotiator who plans better does better.

To be able to answer the research question correctly, the following sub-questions are answered through a literature review:

- SQ1: Which elements contribute to good preparation?
- SQ2: How should B2B negotiators prioritize their preparation?

The following sub-questions are answered through field research:

- SQ3: How do negotiation practitioners prepare for B2B negotiations?
- SQ4: Are practitioners actively improving their negotiation skills? If so, how?

This paper will start with a literature review, followed by field research. The results will be discussed, and the paper ends with a conclusion and recommendations for practitioners and their managers.

## 2. Literature review

The literature review explains the field of negotiation preparation. It is based on the seven-element framework of Fisher and Ertel (1995b) and will address each element in its paragraph. Two extra paragraphs are added to give background on other topics discussed in this thesis.

Both practitioners and negotiation researchers emphasise the need for effective preparation if the ensuing negotiation is successful (Tomlinson & Lewicki, 2015). In 1981 Roger Fischer and William Ury published the book "Getting to Yes" (Fisher et al., 1991), and after getting reprinted several times, it became the bestselling book in negotiations, with over 2 million copies sold. In their book, they list seven elements necessary to getting ready for a negotiation. Later Fisher and Ertel (1995) improved on this with their seven elements framework. Over the years, the Harvard program on negotiation has done further research and created a negotiation preparation checklist that is even more extensive (Harvard PON, 2020). It shows that the seven-element by Fisher and Ertel (1995) is still the foundation on which negotiation literature is built. This chapter will keep their seven elements framework as a basis and add recent literature on top of that.

## 2.1. Goals of negotiation and uncovering the interests of the other party.

The first element by Fisher and Ertel (1995b) is 'Goals of negotiation', or interests. What do negotiators want, and what are their short- and long-term goals? According to Fisher et al. (2011), all negotiators have interests, but it is unclear what that particular interest in the negotiation is.

Fisher and Ertel (1995b) also distinguish between stated interests and underlying interest: the fact that the other party might have an interest that they will not say out loud. This can be of strategic nature or might even be unknown to them themselves (Tomlinson & Lewicki, 2015). For example, a small business owner will be reluctant to sell his business for less than ten times its actual worth, not because the owner thinks he is not paid enough, but because he wants to retain control of the company he has built and does not really want to sell in the first place (Tomlinson & Lewicki, 2015). Asking the question of *why* the other party wants what they say they want is vital simply because the underlying interest can be different from the stated interest (Fisher & Ertel, 1995a).

Holmes and Yarhi-Milo (2017) show that taking the perspective of others and understanding their cognitive and affective states without necessarily sympathizing with them is critical in overcoming biases and increases the likelihood of cooperation. They show that empathy and searching for the *why* can be effective in negotiation (Holmes & Yarhi-Milo, 2017) because empathy is perceptual in nature. It can be conveyed through both words and expressive behaviour in face to face interactions and can be used to derive whether the other party is willing to negotiate in good faith (Holmes & Yarhi-Milo, 2017).

According to Fisher and Ertel (1995a), many negotiators prepare for negotiations by focusing on position instead of interests. They figure out an initial demand and sometimes a private bottom line they deem acceptable. Insisting their position is correct, the battle for dominance can hurt the relationship and stifle creativity (Fisher & Ertel, 1995a). A famous negotiation literature example is an orange that needs to be split between two sisters, one of them taking the position of wanting the entire orange whatever the cost. There may be more options to reach the same goal; maybe one party want the juice, and the other wants the peel. Negotiators should explore the interests underlying the positions because this can lead to win-win situations and satisfaction for both parties (Fisher & Ertel, 1995a).

The objective of any negotiation is not only to obtain an agreement but to obtain a *good* agreement. A set of conceptual tools help a negotiator define in advance what a good agreement would look like and develop specific plans to achieve it (Tomlinson & Lewicki, 2015).

Because negotiators often have different preferences among their group of issues, it is helpful to identify as many of these issues as possible in advance. For example, one negotiator may place a high value on the first issue in a two-issue negotiation and little on the second. The second negotiator may place little value on the first issue and high value on the second. Identifying multiple issues and relative priorities allows the negotiators to reach an agreement to achieve their most valued outcome and concede the other issue to the opponent. This method in order to reach an agreement is called logrolling (Tomlinson & Lewicki, 2015).

As the negotiation continues, both negotiators should express their interests and their particular priorities among these interests. This exchange of information makes it much more likely to achieve an integrative agreement (Thompson, 1990). As obvious as this advice may seem, research has shown that very few negotiators do this; reasons can be: lack of trust, knowledge or urgency (Thompson, 1990; Tomlinson & Lewicki, 2015).

This expression of interests and priorities assumes that there is trust between both parties, and both parties are willing to negotiate; unfortunately, while fostering such norms is desirable, it is not always possible. Ury (1991) wrote a book on precisely this topic, in which he addresses the issue and suggests several strategies to create trust and get the other party to negotiate in the first place. Some of the suggestions he makes are abstaining from reacting, disarming them, and reframing their perspective (Ury, 1991).

Generally, a negotiator may be hesitant to overshare information and their interests to maintain a position of strength, make sure the negotiator has some wiggle room, and not make the other party any wiser (Chen et al., 2020). Negotiators may withhold information about production costs, packaging, and design, influencing and shaping their negotiation position. Under conditions of unequal power and unequal access to information, a powerful party is more likely to dictate the terms, win concessions and increase their margin (Dwyer & Walker, 1981).

According to Pulles and Hartman (2017), being likeable and having a relationship with the other party increases the willingness to collaborate and creates an environment in which both parties share more information. The topic of creating a long-lasting relationship will be addressed in the paragraph on relationships.

To conclude the goals of the negotiation paragraph: Both parties should overcome the hesitation to share information and define both interests and refer back to the orange splitting example: sharing information on what both parties want can lead to a win-win (Fisher & Ertel, 1995a).

## 2.2. Options of agreement, creative solutions that create value.

The second element of Fisher and Ertel (1995b) second element is 'Options of agreement' — possible solutions to the negotiation effort that satisfy the negotiators and create value. An often heard assumption is that if both parties value something, the only thing left to do is divide it in a zero-sum way: more for you means less for me. This assumption ignores the power of working together and expanding the pie: great negotiators focus on creating a win-win scenario (Fisher et al., 1991).

Parties with similar skills and resources can work together to achieve economies of scale; they can also opt to combine purchasing power and get a bigger discount than each could separately (Caniëls & Gelderman, 2005). With different skills and resources, parties can be complementary to each other; think of the two sisters with the orange example (Fisher & Ertel, 1995b). It is a joint venture where both parties get something different that is of more value to them and less value to the other.

Valuing something differently or seeing a deal differently is an opportunity for value-creating in itself, according to Fisher and Ertel (1995). The difference in perceived risk will influence a negotiation. The same goes for timing, delivery and payment times. A delayed shipment could delay an entire project, potentially costing more time and money. Paying more upfront but knowing the shipment will be on time can be a more beneficial option (Ha et al., 2003), and organisations use this delivery speed and reliability as a competitive advantage (Ha et al., 2003). These topics are essential points of negotiation and therefore deserve attention in preparing for that negotiation.

### 2.3. Alternatives and defining reservations and aspirations.

The previous paragraph is about options within the negotiation, but the negotiator can also seek their agreement elsewhere. The third element is 'seeking alternatives and defining limitations'. Sometimes, it can be better to walk away and pursue another route. In negotiation literature, this is defined as your BATNA, your best alternative to a negotiated agreement. To consider the negotiation a success, the outcome should be better than your BATNA, or you should walk away (Fisher et al., 1991).

A negotiator with two offers has more leverage to negotiate the first offer because he has another to fall back on. Identifying and strengthening one's BATNA beforehand and communicating the BATNA during a negotiation can help maximise the likelihood of reaching an agreement. It encourages the counterpart to cooperate and keep the other party deferring to his BATNA (Pinkley, 1995).

Pinkley (1995) stresses that the other party also has a BATNA, which should always be considered when negotiating. It is also advisable to research the other party's BATNA beforehand to understand better their position and willingness to walk away.

The point at which the best BATNA is more attractive than the current negotiation is called the reservation point. If the negotiation terms cannot meet or exceed the reservation point, the negotiator may walk away from the negotiation. The negotiator also has an aspirational target beforehand; this aspiration point is the outcome that meets the negotiator's objectives or desires (Gordon, 2021). Each party's reservation point establishes the zone of possible agreement (ZOPA), as seen in figure 1. In theory, any point in this zone is a potential outcome of the negotiation. Any adjustments or concessions in the negotiation will take place within this range (Gordon, 2021).

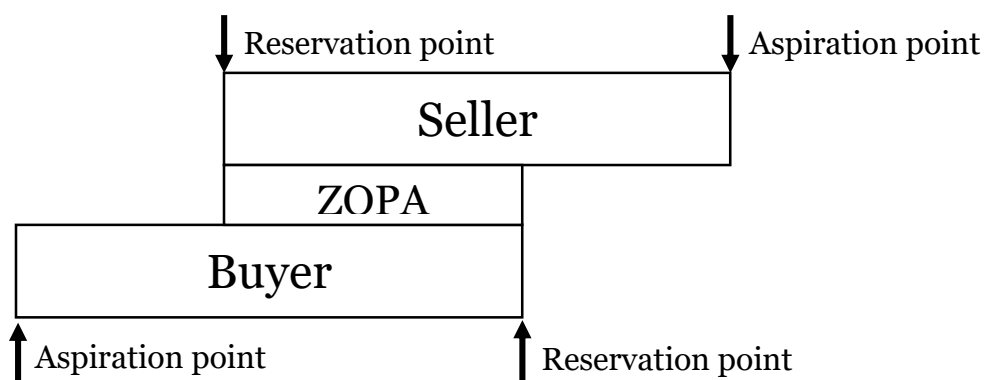


Figure 1. Reservation, aspiration point and ZOPA.

Establishing these points before a negotiation helps ensure that one does not achieve an agreement merely for the sake of having one. In other words, it prevents negotiators from voluntarily agreeing to terms that amount to a bad agreement. Setting a target before the negotiation provides a benchmark by which the negotiator can gauge his performance. Meeting or exceeding one's target (aspiration point) indicates that a good agreement has been reached. Similarly, a walkaway (reservation point) is defined as the least acceptable settlement for an issue or the entire set of issues. (Tomlinson & Lewicki, 2015).

Most people understand that negotiation is a matter of give-and-take: You have to be willing to make concessions to get concessions in return (Malthora, 2006). It is advisable to make a concession plan beforehand, in which the negotiator will write down where and when it would be possible to give in. Malthora (2006) suggests making the concessions in instalments because it will be more positively received. The negotiation is expected to go back and forth several times; when giving away everything in the first offer, the other party might think the negotiator is holding back even though they were as generous as they could be (Malthora, 2006).

## 2.4. The power difference should be known in advance.

As mentioned in the goals paragraph, a powerful party is more likely to dictate the terms, win concessions and increase their margin (Dwyer & Walker, 1981). A widely known model for determining one's power, from a purchasing perspective, is Kraljic's matrix, as seen in figure 2 (Kraljic, 1983). Refined models typically recommend a purchasing strategy for each quadrant, and the fundamental assumption in the matrix is the difference in power and dependence between the buyer and supplier (Caniëls & Gelderman, 2005). The matrix can be used to determine one's power and leverage this into exploiting this power by demanding more because the other party is dependent on the deal.

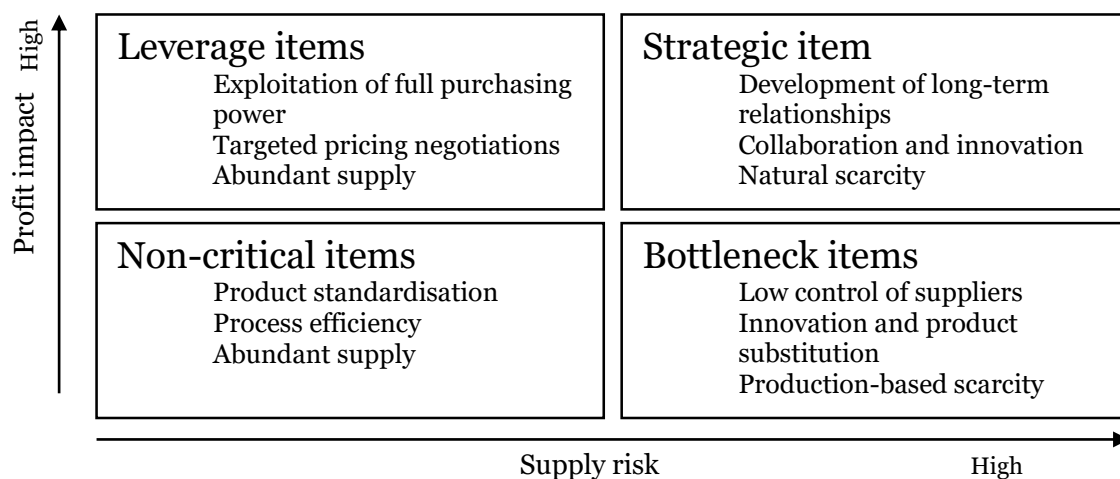


Figure 2. The Kraljic matrix.

Knowing how the negotiator relates to the other party beforehand is expected to be an element in choosing a negotiation strategy and should be considered in the preparation phase (Caniëls & Gelderman, 2005; Kraljic, 1983). Caniëls and Gelderman (2005) encourage negotiators to be aware of their position and shift themselves more to a 'buyer dominance' position in the matrix, which is more towards the top-left of the matrix.

Whether or not a negotiator has a viable alternative will play into the negotiation. How important the deal is for the other party also plays a role. For example, a company has an annual turnover of €1.000.000, and the deal on the table is worth €400.000. The success of this deal will be of utmost importance to the other side since it is almost half their annual turnover. The same deal of €400.000 is perceived to be significantly less important when the other party has a turnover of €50.000.000 annually. Knowing your position and importance in the other party's eyes is critical (Caniëls & Gelderman, 2005).



## 2.5. Ethical guidelines and legitimacy.

Fisher and Ertel (1995b) named their fourth element: Legitimacy. They reason that an effective negotiator will persuade their counterpart rather than being stubborn and not give in the longest. Being pro-active and willing to have a conversation will result in the reasoning: "Being fair will produce a fair agreement".

Fisher and Ertel (1995a) note that few negotiations have only one right answer, and those well prepared should consider a wide variety of objective criteria that might help figure out what is appropriate under the circumstances. They continue by saying that negotiators should prepare several standards to put forward the most beneficial standard. Standards can be standardized legal methods like Incoterms for (international) transport (ICC, 2020).

According to Çoban Çelikdemir and Erdilek Karabay (2018), Fischer focuses exclusively on what they call "being fair" within the negotiation itself, which fits in the time the seven elements framework was conceived in the 90s. However, according to Latapí Agudelo et al. (2019), the social expectations of corporate behaviour has changed since then. Corporates now also focus on being fair to society and other outside factors instead of just focussing on themselves and creating value for just themselves. The Harvard PON checklist has included the "Is an agreement likely to create net value for society?"-question to check for this (Harvard PON, 2020).

## 2.6. Relationship, willingness to keep working together and its influence on negotiation.

The quality of the working relationship with the other party is a critical element. A good relationship enables one to handle differences efficiently and create value for both. Building an effective working relationship requires effort from both parties. It is not something that happens. Both valuing and building the relationship should increase mutual understanding, build trust and respect, encourage mutual persuasion (rather than coercion), and keep both reason and emotion in balance (Fisher & Ertel, 1995b).

As mentioned in the alternatives chapter, concessions have to be made in a negotiation. Malthora (2006) notes that when someone refuses to reciprocate the concession, the refusal often hurts them as much as the party who made the concession. Nonreciprocity sours the relationship, making it difficult for negotiators to trust each other or risk further concessions. Thus, effective negotiators ensure that their own concessions are reciprocated and that they acknowledge and reciprocate the concessions of others (Malthora, 2006).

Hurt feelings cannot be cured with substantive concessions, and more than a significant loss of money can be solved with an apology (Fisher & Ertel, 1995b). Substantive and relationship problems are two separate elements and should be seen and handled differently from one another. Fisher and Ertel (1995) advise to; prepare to take unconditionally constructive steps to improve the relationship. Focus on what *we* can do to improve the relationship, instead of feeling powerless because *they* are negative — ensuring a relational foundation by being constructive about it.

Other research agrees, for example, the wounded pride/spite model (Straub & Murnighan, 1995) is based on the obvious consideration that rude behaviour of the counterpart can arouse emotions of anger, envy, sadness and resentment. In parallel, feelings of joy, pleasure and happiness diminish (Bediou & Scherer, 2014). Bediou and Scherer (2014) say the emotional reaction to the perceived fairness or unfairness of the other may be much more influential than the immediate reaction to a single offer, as these emotional reactions are likely to affect trust and liking toward the other and thus determine future interactions, decisions and outcomes.

Pulles and Hartman (2017) find that likeability in interpersonal business interactions is positively related to the willingness of both sides to collaborate in the future. They say likability is an essential prerequisite for building relationships. Organisations with negotiators with a strong focus on monetary indicators could benefit from training interpersonal skills such as likeability (Pulles & Hartman, 2017).

An emotional reaction is influential in a negotiation, as is explained above, so pausing the negotiation, for example, in the notion of 'going to the balcony' (Ury, 1993) and taking a timeout, is a widely known method by which to cool off and to avoid reacting to one's immediate natural impulses and emotions (Martínez-Moreno et al., 2015). Adjournments can be called for when one of the teams feels the need to hold an internal discussion and regroup. This break can be several minutes, but rescheduling for another day is also possible. Note, however, that requesting a break might be perceived by the other party as a signal of weakness to be exploited (Behfar et al., 2011).

Showing integrative distributive behaviour can be used as a tactic in negotiations, and choosing and using a tactic directly affects the negotiation and the relationship with the other party. The integrative negotiation seeks to maximise the resource pool and use information exchange as a mechanism for establishing trust, understanding opponents' needs and preferences and retaining flexibility until the close of negotiations (Olekalns et al., 1996). Integrative outcomes are more likely to occur when individuals adopt a collaborative orientation, characterised by more proposals and counterproposals, problem-solving, discussions about the workability of solutions and a greater level of agreement with opponents' proposals (Olekalns et al., 1996). According to Zachariassen (2008), this integrative negotiation is not often used with "arm's length relationships" but is prevalent when parties have a longer-lasting relationship or strategic alliance.

Conversely, negotiations characterised by a distributive, more competitive orientation emphasise differences and are associated with more coercive processes to maximise own gain while influencing opponents' resistance points (Olekalns et al., 1996). Consequently, information exchange becomes tactical, with negotiators being concerned to maximise the information they receive while minimising the information they give (Walton & McKersie, 1991). Distributive outcomes, which are likely to result from such tactics, are characterised by positional and irrelevant argumentation, personal attacks, and high demands and concessions. These tactics result in reduced information exchange, more significant positional commitment and increased hostility (Carnevale & Lawler, 1993).

Zachariassen (2008) described distributive behaviour in an “arm’s length relationship” as a “ritual”: something both parties agreed on that should take place. It would almost be offending if the negotiator would not in some way try to manipulate the other party during negotiations in arm’s length relationships. The negotiation tactic is more ambiguous when speaking of negotiations in a strategic partnership setting. Ramsay (2004) concluded that the use of an integrative negotiation tactic normatively speaking should be utilised in this situation, but Zachariassen (2008) sees distributive behaviour in longer-lasting relationships as well. Zachariassen (2008) notes it is subtler, and the subtlety lied in the buyers’ sophisticated approach to bargaining where they would use “we are in this together” and “we want what is best for the final consumer” as manipulations to reduce the price. Zachariassen (2008) agrees with Ramsay (2004) that even though integrative negotiation behaviour is favourable and desired, negotiators should prepare for the possibility of the other party using a distributive negotiation approach; however, this distributive behaviour of the other party is less expected when the relationship is longer lasting or strategic.

Regardless of what tactic is chosen before a negotiation, negotiators should strive for good communication. It tends to reduce misunderstanding and makes the process more efficient (Fisher et al., 1991). Good preparation can help accomplish these goals since a well-prepared negotiator will think carefully about how the other side might see the situation and is ready for potential differences. The focus should be on being an active listener and bringing the parties together rather than driving them further apart (Fisher et al., 1991).

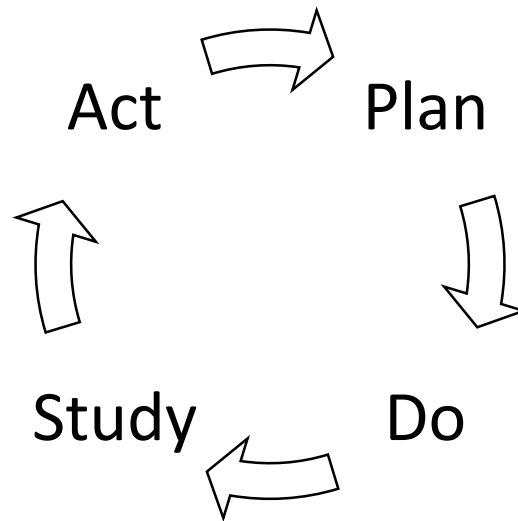
## 2.7. Commitment and the ability to close the deal.

According to Fisher and Ertel (1995a), negotiators often prepare for a negotiation by thinking of where to begin and not thinking about where to end even though understanding the end goal and commitment ensures a better path for getting there. Unless a party walks away, a negotiation will end with a commitment; an agreement of what both parties will do. Having a clear notion of what is expected should be the desired end product of any meeting; therefore, commitment is essential (Fisher & Ertel, 1995).

The only thing one can ever assume in negotiation is that everything is negotiable (Durst & Stanfbrth, 1996). So assuming everyone knows what the meeting is about is a pitfall in negotiation. The structure can be ensured by using a meeting agenda, a pro-forma contract, or simply writing a few talking points down. The structure will also enable planning ahead and getting consent from other stakeholders like managers, the board, or the legal department on time (Fisher & Ertel, 1995).

## 2.8. Evaluation and improvement

Getting better requires reflection (Fust et al., 2018), even if it is as simple as one of the most basic, fundamental improvement strategies: the plan, do, study, act (PDSA) cycle by Deming, as seen in figure 3 (Moen & Norman, 2009). The simple 4 stage improvement cycle has roots in the scientific method and philosophy of science and has evolved for more than 400 years (Moen & Norman, 2009).



*Figure 3: Plan Do Study Act cycle by Deming (1993) in (Moen & Norman, 2009).*

Self-monitoring and self-reflecting are proven strategies for improving skills, but this is more effective when done systematically and organised (Fust et al., 2018). Learning tools such as the lean start-up (Ries, 2011) or business model canvas (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010) could significantly improve the efficiency of which one can increase their skills, especially during the opportunity identification and exploitation phase (Fust et al., 2018).

## 2.9. Process of negotiation, adapting to a changing context

Negotiation is an ongoing process, and the assumption that the negotiation moves unidirectionally from initial requirements to result is ill-fitted to modern, large-scale negotiations in which processes and outcomes are intertwined; in reality, a project usually breaks down into several sub-issues (Fleming & Hawes, 2017; Lindholst et al., 2018). A typical B2B negotiation will involve financial, technical, and legal aspects, each requiring different negotiated solutions before a comprehensive agreement can be achieved. As a result, the focus and expertise of the negotiation will shift during its course.

Just as the entire focus of negotiation, according to Lindholst et al. (2018), the focus in preparation will shift over time, from themes such as goal realisation to detailed expertise and implementation. Because a more complex negotiation takes substantial time, during which progress must be monitored and the overall goal kept in mind, meso-level preparation should be expected to change in nature over time. Preparation activities occur before, after, in-between and during negotiation sessions, by taking a break or rescheduling the meeting, suggesting that preparation is genuinely an ongoing and multi-layered activity (Lindholst et al., 2018).

Lindholst et al. (2018) propose a more nuanced view of where and how the preparation activity by negotiators interacts with a dynamically changing negotiation. They see preparation for negotiation as an ongoing, fluid process. Current negotiations, especially in a B2B environment, span multiple sessions and span multiple weeks or months. Preparing once for the entire negotiation is not enough; the variables change, and so should the preparation (Lindholst et al., 2018). Fleming and Hawes (2017) introduce the concept of adaptive negotiation, which describes this. They note that negotiators should analyse the situation and shift the appropriate orientation along the negotiations to achieve an optimal outcome.

### 3. Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology used in the field research and addresses validity, reliability and ethical considerations.

#### 3.1.1. Selection of data

From the elements of the literature part, an interview guide (Appendix B) is made and examined by the two examiners. These professionals will be interviewed on the themes/categories in the proposed taxonomy. Professionals from purchasing and sales departments of Dutch (branches of) companies will be asked to remember a negotiated deal they have done in the past. They will be selected based on experience in negotiation and that they operate in a B2B setting.

This research will interview Dutch purchasers with at least two years of purchasing experience. Their primary profession is purchasing, and they negotiate in a B2B setting regularly. The research focuses on purchasing rather than sales to narrow down the scope. The level of experience will be asked in the interview. Accounting for talent goes beyond the scope of this research. Whether a negotiation is successful is determined by the perception of the respondent. They will label a negotiation as successful when their goals are met or exceeded, and these goals can differ from deal to deal. Gender does not play a role in answering any research question and will not be considered. The industry and size of the organisation they work for will be asked since it could have explaining value.

A semi-structured interview of around 45-50 minutes is conducted to indicate which items were considered in their preparation and how the respondents felt these items influenced the deal's outcome. (Louise Barriball & While, 1994) name flexibility as one of the main benefits of a semi-structured interview, it allows for the clarification of interesting and relevant issues raised by the respondents. A semi-structured interview can also help respondents recall information for questions involving memory (Louise Barriball & While, 1994), which is a big part of this interview guide.

A semi-structured form allows to guide the conversation and keep the interviewee on the topic and allow more in-depth information. It also gives the interviewee room to answer on-topics that might be sensitive to the company instead of not answering at all (Louise Barriball & While, 1994). These interviews will be held in Dutch because the interviewee will be able to express themselves better in their native language. The interviews are interpreted by the researcher in Dutch and direct quotes in this thesis are translated into English (Appendix E). Another researcher translated these English quotes back to Dutch and compared them to the original text in order to make sure nothing gets lost in translation.



### 3.1.2. Analysis of data

The coding of the 15 transcriptions will be done in ATLAS.ti according to the grounded theory proposed by Wolfswinkel et al. (2013). This theory uses three stages of coding; open coding, axial coding and selective coding. Open coding means that the researcher conceptualises and articulates the often-hidden aspects of a set of excerpts. The goal is to identify a set of categories of the study's findings (Wolfswinkel et al., 2013).

Through axial coding, the interrelations between categories and their subcategories, including their properties, are identified. These higher-order categories are often described as core categories and aim to be mutually exclusive.

The selective coding phase is used to integrate categories and refine the categories. The researcher is continuously comparing, relating and linking the identified categorisations with each other. The researcher will go through the phases multiple times until the categories are refined and exclusive (Wolfswinkel et al., 2013). This process refined the 117 codes into ten categories.

The researcher will ask for feedback during the initial coding and check the codes with two other researchers. According to the field research, the number of items mentioned will be combined with the emphasis interviewees put on certain items to list a ranking of central themes.

When the researcher coded all the interviews, three randomly selected interviews will be coded again by another researcher. This other researcher will use the same codebook provided by the researcher but will not see what the first researcher coded. The double coded interviews will be compared to measure the inter-code agreement according to Krippendorff's alpha (Krippendorff, 2011, 2018), which can be done in the ATLAS.ti software.

### 3.1.3. Presenting the data

Lastly, the field research will be compared with the literature research, which will link the theory of preparation to the real-life experiences of practitioners who prepare for negotiations daily. This comparison will try to answer the final two research questions: Where do practical preparations overlap with recommendations from academic literature? And how can negotiators improve their preparation practice?

### 3.2. Validity and reliability

To ensure validity and reliability in the research, four criteria were taken into account (Shenton, 2004). These criteria are internal validity, external validity, reliability, and confirmability. Different strategies were used to ensure the fulfilment of the criteria in this study.

Firstly, internal validity was ensured by the use of chains of evidence and triangulation. A chain of evidence was maintained by paying attention to the link with the research question during the collection and analysis of the data and the description of the results and conclusions. These checks are helpful since they let participants verify the researcher's emerging theories. Triangulation is applied by the collection of data from multiple sources. Triangulation is valuable since it can verify the data from more than one source (Jonsen & Jehn, 2009).

Secondly, external validity was improved by a clear and thick description. The researcher's thick description and clear reasoning made it possible to compare the interviews and other studies (Shenton, 2004).

Thirdly, reliability was ensured using an interview guide, checked by two other researchers. All findings are coded according to the grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Wolfswinkel et al., 2013). This structure helped to draw from previous knowledge systematically and to reduce misperceptions. The inter-coder agreement will be measured using Krippendorff's alpha (Krippendorff, 2011), as described above, further increasing the reliability of the research.

Lastly, confirmability or the study's objectivity was improved by recognising the shortcomings and describing the possible effects on the findings. Besides, several measures were taken to reduce the effect of predetermined possible biases. When doing interviews, the researchers always play a role. However, because the researcher is aware of this beforehand and during, it will hopefully reduce this bias. Other limitations are the limited number of interviews due to the time restrictions; this was known from the start. The most important measure taken to reduce the negative effect on the findings is that multiple (N=15) data sources were used and analysed.

The researcher clarified that answers would not be shared with their management directly when contacting the respondents. Also, they will receive no compensation for their answers in any way. Their answers will be used for research purposes only and are not intended to boost or halt their career in any way. This clarification is to increase the likeliness that the respondent will answer truthfully.

### 3.3. Ethical considerations

The following ethical aspects were considered during the research: consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymity. Each respondent in the study was informed before they gave consent to participate.

It was shared what the research goals are, how confidentiality and anonymity of the information about the respondent were considered, that participation in the study was voluntary and that everyone could withdraw from the study at any time without explanation. The basics were explained in the first email (Appendix A), and further explained at the start of the interview verbally with all respondents. They were asked, after the recording started, to indicate their willingness to participate in the research and that they were okay with being recorded. Each respondent was also informed about the public availability of the final version of the thesis. The company name will not be mentioned, so specific information can be linked to the respondent but not to the actual company.

After collecting the data, participants received the researcher's contact details which they could use for questions or remarks. The respondents also received a summary of the research results once the research was completed. In addition, the research proposal is assessed by the ethics committee for Behavioural, Management and Social sciences (BMS) of the University of Twente. This sharing of ethical guidelines was done to confirm that the research is ethically responsible.

## 4. Results

The results from the field research are discussed per paragraph in their code groups. The inter-coder agreement scores are shown in table 1. The table is based on three randomly chosen interviews, coded by a second researcher, compared to the codes of the primary researcher.

### 4.1. Inter-coder agreement results in table

Code group	Krippendorff's alpha (c $\alpha$ binary)
BATNA and limits	0.982
Communication media	0.957
Ethics and fairness	1.0
Improvement of skills	0.901
Legal implications	0.941
Negotiation strategy	0.973
Negotiation topics	0.556
Relationship	0.875
Structure and goals	0.924
Team and internals	0.728

Table 1: Krippendorff's alpha inter-coder agreement.

#### 4.2.1. BATNA and defining limitations and aspirations.

Respondents 5 and 11 talk more about BATNA and limitations than the other respondents; both respondents work for big corporations in a market with few other competitors. Both talked about trying to get a BATNA before a negotiation because the market conditions and the costs of entering the market are high, and they did not have that many alternatives.

Respondents 1, 4, 7, 8 and 12 stressed the importance of having a BATNA before negotiating. All the respondents search for an alternative before a meeting. Respondent 7: "I find it very difficult to negotiate without having a clear alternative. I need a plan B to have an escape". Respondents 1 and 4 have clear instructions from their organisation to always have an alternative when negotiating. These respondents say they operate in markets with big projects consisting of millions of euros.

All respondents define their limitations within the negotiation beforehand. Usually, a calculation is made, often by another department, which is leading in the negotiations. This calculation will dictate when the respondent would walk away from a negotiation, the reservation point, and what the negotiator aims for: the aspiration point. Respondents also base the amount of 'wiggle'-room they have on these calculations.

Respondents 6, 13 and 15 do not always have an alternative, most of the time voluntarily. The respondents consider it easy to find an alternative in the market, and the other party also knows that. All three do not always feel the need to have a BATNA beforehand; they will search for an alternative after the negotiation fails.

Most of the respondents write their BATNA down before negotiating. Respondent 1: "And based on that... I make a list for myself with alternatives..." Sometimes this is required by the organisation in ERP software, or it is part of their personal preparation. Respondents 2, 6 and 13 explicitly say they know their BATNA but do not write it down before every negotiation.

#### 4.2.2. Communication media, where face to face is still preferred.

All respondents prefer face to face meetings over meetings online, except one who prefers online meetings. Respondent 5: "I can make notes... and share these with my team, without the other party knowing".

Respondents 3 and 7 say they focus a lot on the other person. They research the other person and try to get a sense of their negotiation style in some of the first meetings. They both stress the importance of meeting in real life. Being able to see the other person and especially their body language is vital to their negotiation.

Email as a form of communication is mainly used to send meeting agendas and offers after the meeting. Three respondents noted that they sometimes use email as a negotiation strategy. The receiver of an email has more time, and this time can be used to let them reconsider or recalculate their offer. One respondent uses this to let the other party save face because of a calculation mistake. Two others use it as a pressure method. Respondent 7: "I use it to give them homework... send the message that I will not engage in conversation before they recalculate".

Respondent 11 explicitly likes direct communication, like face to face, online meeting or call. This direct communication forces the other party to answer right away, and the respondent feels like they get a more honest answer that way.

Respondents 3, 4, 7, 10 and 12 prepare differently for an online meeting than a face-to-face one. The small talk that usually happens around the meeting in real life is absent when meeting online. However, this small talk is considered necessary by the respondent to strengthen the relationship with the other party. Being able to see the inside of the factory of the other party gives valuable information on how busy the other party really is.

#### 4.2.3. Formalizing ethical guidelines and fairness in negotiation.

Respondents 4, 5, 10 and 12 explicitly say that ensuring the deal is fair for the other party is the other party's responsibility. Respondents 4 and 8 explicitly say that the deal should be fair to both parties and that both parties should profit, and these respondents calculate a profit margin for the other party in their offers.

Respondent 15: "if he feels that he is not being treated fairly, he will not be fair to you either". Respondents 2, 5, 8, 10 and 14 share this reasoning and list this as their main reason for being fair themselves.

The three large (1000+ FTE) firms all have strict ethical guidelines. The respondents working for these firms all say the ethical constraints are being enforced by management. Within the medium firms (100-1000 FTE), four out of five respondents have ethical guidelines, and the five small firms (<100 FTE), one out of the five respondents has.

Some respondents have vivid examples of a deal where the other party did something that violated their ethical guidelines, often offering private gifts in order to make the deal. All respondents recalling such an event say they did not engage further with that party and ended the negotiation right away.

#### 4.2.4. Improvement of skills, experience and real-life learning.

The category improvement of skills contained 7.48% of total coding. It is split into two subcategories: how does a respondent actively improve their skills? While the other category is more focused on how a respondent made choices? The answer is often: experience. Both are in this category, but there is a distinction.

Respondents 4 and 10 said their "*gut feeling*" helped them a lot. Respondent 4: "it has to feel right; if it does not, do not do business". Both senior (>5 years) purchasers think their experience helped them shape this gut feeling. Both state that "*learning by doing*" taught them the most.

To improve negotiation skills, purchasers often use external training. Especially NEVI 1 is expected in the purchasing industry (NEVI, n.d.). NEVI is a knowledge network for purchasing, contract and supply management and offers business training. NEVI 1 focusses on: Professionally organizing and successfully executing a purchasing process, achieving an optimal negotiation result and increasing personal leadership skills (NEVI, n.d.). All but one junior (2-5 years) purchasers have completed NEVI 1 or are enrolled in the training now by the time of interviewing. Four out of the eight senior respondents completed NEVI 1. Respondent 10 named one of the teachers in the NEVI program as one of his role models. All Respondents who completed the NEVI 1 training say they benefitted from the training and prepare differently, using the structure the NEVI 1 training taught them. A few respondents are currently enrolled in or planning to do NEVI 2, a more strategy-oriented purchasing training.

Three respondents explicitly state they read books on purchasing in their free time to increase their negotiation skills. Not necessarily as preparation for a specific negotiation, but more on a general level, constantly improving their skills. Authors like Chris Voss, Robert Fischer and William Ury are some examples given.

Not all respondents actively try to improve their negotiation skills to prepare better for the next negotiation. Reasons for this vary from having enough experience to not structuring their improvement: reflecting afterwards but not writing it down or entering a formal reflection cycle. The bigger firms all have formal reflection cycles and will log these reflections. All the smaller firms do not have a formal system, but the respondents see the importance of reflection and improvement. Lack of structure or time is the reason for not doing it already. Two respondents acknowledge that not writing it down did mean they forgot some details sometimes.



#### 4.2.5. Legal implications and the role of superiors.

This coding category is split into two subcategories: legal restrictions and reducing legal risk. Often the respondent is limited by the legal guidelines in what can be negotiated. Most of the respondents are approved to sign a deal until a certain amount. When the deal is more significant than this amount, the respondent needs extra approval from a supervisor. Five respondents work with a stepped system that goes all the way up to the board or CEO. Others have a less structured way of getting approval of a deal that goes beyond their authority to sign.

Respondents 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10 and 12, who have a senior position, say getting the higher hierarchy approval is part of their preparation. However, this is usually not the main reason for including their supervisor. The main reason can be getting an opinion on a potential deal or wanting feedback from the offer on the table; when the supervisor agrees, they can sign off at the same time. They usually will approach their supervisor after they have started the negotiations but before the actual signing of the contract.

Most interviewed junior purchasers state that their direct superiors are usually at the table when the final deal is being signed. If not, all respondents make sure the required signatures are given before the negotiation. Only one respondent checks for the authority to sign the other party. Others assume the other party does the same steps as they do and see it as the other party's responsibility.

When negotiating, one of the topics will be liability and the reduction of risk. Both parties usually want to reduce their risk as much as possible. Respondent 12 notes that risk reduction is a significant factor in the negotiations in their market. Therefore, the respondent will prepare this topic thoroughly and will ask for legal advice from internal consultants. The respondent does note that this is an ongoing process, not every meeting requires this thorough preparation, and the legal document usually bounces back and forth a few times between both parties before a final contract is signed.

#### 4.2.6. Negotiation strategy depends on the context and situation.

Most respondents have some sort of negotiation strategy, but it is not written down or very structured. Four respondents explicitly say their strategy depends on their goal in the negotiation at that moment in the process. They could open the meeting aggressively but hold back as soon as the other party gets annoyed. This strategy can be a delicate game and should serve the primary goal of the negotiation.

The overarching goal of a negotiation is usually to reach an understanding. A strategy helps to get a better agreement, but not at all costs. As respondent 8 put it: "I do not have to win. I want to come to an understanding ... When I win, someone else loses, and that loser will always want to make up for that loss." Implying that in order to keep the relationship healthy in the future, a win-win strategy is preferred.

Respondent 4 goes even further: "If you do not have a win-win scenario, you do not have a perfect deal." This respondent's negotiation strategy aims to create a win-win scenario and will not settle for less. Thirteen respondents prefer the win-win outcome and prepare to reach this outcome by creating a win-win focused negotiation strategy. Two respondents, both juniors, reject that strategy. They opt for a more 'claiming the most' strategy since they expect the other party to do so as well. Respondent 5: "I want to claim the most; a win-win means I could have pushed harder."

Four respondents look at the power difference between the other party and themselves. This power difference is an explicit priority in their preparation. Usually, the annual turnover of the other party is compared to the worth of the deal on the table. With those two metrics, the respondents feel like they can estimate the deal's importance to the other party. Moreover, when the deal is vital to the other party, the negotiator can go for a more aggressive strategy. The other party is less likely to walk away, and better terms can be negotiated.

#### 4.2.7. Negotiation topics and specific knowledge needed.

Topics that are discussed during a negotiation need preparation beforehand. The respondents talk a lot about delivery terms, lead times and deliveries not being on time. Also, the price is often talked about within a negotiation, though not the most important topic of all. No respondent ranks price as the most critical topic; It is either delivery or quality of work, usually followed by price.

Respondents 3, 9, 10, 14 and 15 focus a lot on quality and often purchase items that require specific knowledge to produce. One of their tasks in the negotiation is to determine whether the other party can supply the parts and the quality they are looking for. This determination usually requires preparation, and often an internal technical consultant is weighing in. This level of quality can sometimes require suppliers to have specific certificates and, in turn, reduces the number of suppliers able to source from.

Respondents 2, 6 and 13 focus on price and delivery times. Usually, they can source from multiple suppliers and identify these in their preparation.

When asked, all respondents say COVID-19 has a significant impact on sourcing and delivery times. Transport became more of a topic during the pandemic than it was before. Especially organisations that source from the middle- and far east have encountered many delays.

#### 4.2.8. Relationship as a critical factor in every meeting.

All respondents list the relationship with the other party as very important. The respondent's relationship with the other party dramatically influences the way the respondent prepares for the negotiation. Respondent 15: "People do business with people, not with companies."

Respondent 4 aims for a very integrative relationship with most of their partners. Their organisation manages big construction projects but do not employ their own workforce. They work with subcontractors, leading to the respondent stressing the importance of having good long-lasting relationships. This focus on the relationship leads to the respondent being very open and honest when negotiating. By being transparent about the costs and warning each other of potential pitfalls, the respondent believes this will yield the best projects. When projects do not go as planned, the respondent says the partners will share the financial burden and profit when times are good.

The desire to keep doing business with each other is critical. This desire influences both the relationship and negotiation strategy. An often-heard phrase was: "Hard on the problem, soft on the people." This strives to keep the relationship healthy and ready for future ventures together. One respondent compared it to a family, saying it is okay to fight sometimes, but they want and must work together in the end.

Respondents 1, 7, 9, 11, 12 and 14 mention the importance of giving and taking in a relationship. Sometimes you must give something to the other party because they will give you something later in a project. Respondents 3, 4, 10 and 13 go a step further and actively help their suppliers. Respondent 10 gave the example of helping a foreign supplier getting certified in the Netherlands. The respondent saw potential in the supplier because of their work ethic and decided to help them. Securing a long-lasting relationship and reduce costs in the process.

Respondent 14 say they have one strategic alliance partner with whom they share all their information. This partner is their preferred supplier and has far-reaching access to their production facilities. Both software systems are linked, and certain parts get ordered automatically in the partner's system. The respondent prepares differently for negotiations with this partner because both parties have a lot of information, and the negotiation is much more about continuing and improving the relationship. At annual contract deals, top management of both firms is involved.

All levels of integration with partners are based on mutual trust and honesty. Respondents 4, 10, 13 and 14 explicitly say they appreciate an honest partner who is open about setbacks. Respondent 10: "Accidents and setbacks happen. Just be open about it so that we can fix it together." Respondents who prepare for a meeting with a known and appreciated partner do not expect surprises and focus in their preparation on efficiency for both parties rather than price reduction for themselves.

#### 4.2.9. Structure and goals should be starting points.

When asked what elements of preparation the respondent prioritises when they have little time, applying structure to the meeting is the most given answer. This structure can be in the form of writing down a meeting agenda like respondent 10 explicitly stresses: "I always make an agenda and ask the other party whether they have points to add." Or come up with a preliminary quotation which can be the foundation of the meeting. This structure in the negotiation is crucial and relatively easy to prepare.

When preparing, respondents use historical data of past deals with the other party. Some respondents do market research to find out what the market average is, dependent on the topic they are about to discuss. Not all respondents do this in a structured way. They consider their experience and *'feeling for the market'* as good enough for a meeting. Juniors do more market research this way than seniors.

Respondents 10 and 12 say the goals of the meeting should be known in advance. The goals are communicated to the other party when setting up the meeting. Respondent 12 stresses the variability of these meetings: "goals of meetings, and therefore my preparation varies a lot related to the context." However, knowing the goals, both short and long-term, of the meeting is crucial.

Respondents 1, 2, 3, 5, 10 and 11 have their preparation structured in an ERP system. These are all big or medium-sized organisations. The software forces the respondents to do specific steps before the negotiation and can be seen as a compulsory checklist. All respondents working with software like this see the value of it and like working with it. A few respondents have a checklist that they use before a negotiation, but they do this at their initiative – the organisation does not impose it. This checklist is not necessarily written down; it can be in their heads.

#### 4.2.10. Team and internals, other people involved in preparation.

Bigger firms rely more on internal consultants simply because their size enables them to have internal consultants that specialise in specific topics—primarily technical, legal or calculation.

No negotiator works entirely by themselves; all respondents make use of internal consultants. Primarily technical and legal consultants are asked to give their advice on some aspects of a contract, however, this advice varies in the negotiation context, and sometimes the consultant is brought along to the meeting. Other times the expert is consulted before the meeting takes place.

Bigger organisations make more use of internal consultants than smaller organisations do. Respondent 1: "because we are a big firm, we have our own insurance advisor...this is a luxury." No respondent said they used an external consultant for their negotiation meetings.

Respondents 1, 3, 7, 9, 10 and 14 say they sometimes pause the negotiation and reschedule to another week to buy time and have another internal department evaluate the proposed offer. Usually, this is because it requires knowledge the respondent feels they lack themselves.

Respondents 5, 8, 13, 14 and 15 say the offer calculation is leading in their negotiations. In some cases, another department has calculated the limitations of the negotiation and the respondent has to stay within these calculations. This influence of the calculating department means the respondent usually prepares the negotiation together with the calculation department.

## 5. Discussion

In this section, the results from the research will be further discussed. In the subparagraphs, the scope of the research will be addressed, the limitations this had, and which suggestions for future research this opens. The main findings will be discussed and their implication both theoretically and practically. This will formulate the answers to the research question, which will be elaborated upon in 6. Conclusions.

### 5.1. Scope of this research, limitations and suggestions for future research

This research focused on Dutch purchasers who negotiate in a B2B environment and have different experience levels. It does not necessarily mean other cultures prepare in the same way, but it is expected to be very similar in the western business world. Two respondents explicitly talked about negotiation with non-western cultures and how that was a very different experience from their regular meetings and preparation. Expanding the scope could lead to interesting findings, especially when cross-cultural negotiation is taking into account.

This research also did not focus on the respondents' industries (Appendix C), but similarities did occur. For example, respondents working in the construction industry stressed the importance of delivery times over price. Most likely because a delay in their big, multimillion-euro construction projects would cost a lot of money, so paying a bit more up front and have no delays made sense to them. However, this topic was not an issue with respondents working in wholesale, where a delivery delay would have less impact. This difference in the impact of delay did influence their preparation a lot; just the time spent on risk reduction and making sure there will be no delays is evident.

This research is conducted by one researcher only, and even though the researcher tried to be as objective as possible, the results can be biased by the researcher's subjectivity — this bias applies to both the interviewing and the coding and interpretations of the coding. The grounded theory (Wolfswinkel et al., 2013) has been used to make the results as reliable as possible, and the inter-code agreement scores suggest good reliability; it can be better when using more respondents and more coders.

This research found anecdotal evidence that structuring the preparation of a negotiation yields better results—both in the preparation phase and the logging of how the negotiation went afterwards. Further research can be done where the core of the research looks into this distinction. For example, with two research groups, one is forced to write and log everything and one that is free to do as they please. This research proposal could further investigate the importance of writing information down.



When recalling past negotiations and describing their own strategies, the respondents paint themselves as collaborating and compromising negotiators. Several other researchers indicate that negotiators use more competing strategies than they think of themselves (Sigurðardóttir et al., 2019). This self-evaluation could be an overestimation by the respondents on how collaborative they really are. Further research should be considered in this discrepancy between the way someone thinks they act and actually does.

## 5.2. Main findings of this research

When reviewing existing literature about negotiation preparation, it is found that the seven-element framework proposed by Fisher and Ertel (1995b) in the 90s is still very relevant today. Therefore, the core of negotiation and its preparation did not change that much; however, the context did change. The changing context and therefore changing negotiation was described by Lindholm et al. (2018), and this research agrees. This context was stressed by multiple respondents, the context in which the negotiation takes place matters a lot and is ever-changing and implicates the perfect negotiation preparation is a utopia and will never be reached because no one can account for *all* variables. The next best option, also considering limited time and resources, would be *good* preparation, and there are clear elements that will contribute to this good preparation.

One of the main elements would be having the goal of the negotiation clear. This encompasses the short and long term goals and comes down to the question: “why are we in this negotiation? What do we want?” which is a simple question at first, but there are many layers underneath this question. One should keep asking the why question to narrow it down to the core. Understanding *why* is vital in preparation because all other elements will build on top of this negotiation goal. This is not new information, nor will it likely change in the future, so this research reiterates the importance of having these goals clear for both yourself and the other party.

Defining good preparation is hard; it likely comes down to a feeling of being prepared enough for the situation that a negotiator will be in. Moreover, one will never precisely know in advance what will happen and will never be perfectly prepared, but *feeling prepared enough* is vital here. Multiple respondents hinted at this when discussing having a BATNA; the most often heard answer was that having a BATNA feels safe and secure because the negotiator can walk away. This gives back control in an uncertain situation, which negotiation is. This security is probably also why having a BATNA is just as important as having the negotiation goals clear, but it resonates more personally. Do I feel safe and confident? - level. This suspected link of

confidence and negotiation preparation, or even negotiation outcome, could be a research topic to investigate further.

Respondents described the negotiation as an ongoing process of multiple meetings and different focuses within those meetings. It influenced their preparation because each meeting had a different goal and required different information. It also showed that no negotiator works entirely by themselves; all respondents have an internal consultant for specific topics, primarily legal or safety. The negotiator is the project owner who has the helicopter view and ties all interests together in a deal, including the other party's interests. Because one of the goals of most negotiations is likely working together and creating value for both parties, it shows again how socially oriented people are and the benefits and importance of working together.

Apart from the two elements mentioned above, goals and BATNA, the importance of the relationship with the other party was stressed a lot by all respondents. The willingness to do, or keep doing, business with the other party is seen throughout all interviews. “Sometimes you give, and sometimes you take” was the most heard quote in the interviews, that it almost seems like this is a universal code or rule within the purchasing industry. The fact that so many practitioners believe in this quote likely shows that it works; they would not do it if it did not.

### 5.3. Theoretical relevance

The general findings are consistent with the general acceptance that negotiators favour a compromising and collaborating negotiation style (Thompson, 1990; Tomlinson & Lewicki, 2015). They are focussing on long term relationships which are highly valued in B2B settings. The respondents prefer this integrative strategy, and some deem it the only option. However, as mentioned above, other researchers indicate that negotiators use more competing strategies than they think of themselves (Sigurðardóttir et al., 2019).

This research also acknowledges the view that negotiation is an ongoing and fluid process proposed by Lindholm et al. (2018). The context is important and constantly changing; a good negotiator adapts to this changing environment in B2B negotiations that require adaptation in every preparation phase over weeks or months. Negotiation should be seen as a multi-stepped process where the focus shifts over time. The focus of the conversation shifts, and so does the preparation. The preparation is also under the influence of the context in which the negotiation takes place. All respondents agree that preparation is vital, but what element to prepare differs per phase, relationship and importance.

## 5.4. Practical relevance

In general, negotiators want to benefit from structuring their preparation as much as possible. This leads to critical managerial implications, with two main propositions as a result: 1) force purchasers to structure their preparations, when possible in an ERP system and have them list their goals for each meeting; and 2) force purchasers to write their BATNA down before negotiating in order to subconsciously communicate they can walk away, thus increasing their negotiation strength and leverage.

Most purchasers know what they are doing but can benefit from having more structure in their preparations. Unless management forces them to structure and log their preparations, they will overestimate their memory and will enter the meeting less prepared than they are potentially able to. A checklist could help the negotiator apply structure in the preparation, and for example, software could assist by offering historical data on the other party and can archive all meeting notes. Knowing what has been said and promised in the past can help create an effective negotiation strategy for that meeting.

Bigger firms make more use of a checklist, usually connected to their ERP systems. This software forces purchasers to take several steps in preparation for a negotiation. It is not uncommon for other departments within the company to add to this process. The calculation, risk and purchasing departments all work together in this checklist, focusing on their discipline. Smaller firms should look into the possibility of also using software, considering the substantial implementation costs.

A formal evaluation cycle could help the negotiator in improving their negotiation skills. Just like the preparation checklist, this can be done in software. Logging thoughts right after a meeting is done can help to prepare for the next meeting. A formal cycle could force the negotiator to write their thoughts down and evaluate them for future benefit.

## 6. Conclusion

This chapter will address all sub-questions, answer them, and answer the main research question: How do negotiation practitioners prepare B2B negotiations and is this according to the academic literature?

### SQ1: Which elements contribute to good preparation?

The broad and quick answer to these sub-questions would be the seven elements proposed by Fisher and Ertel (1995b), which are: Goal setting, defining limitations, search for compatibility of interests, ensure legitimacy, know what to listen for, knowing the relationship and being clear of what kind of commitment is desired. All contribute to good preparation, and when a negotiator has infinite time and resources, they should address all elements.

### SQ2: How should B2B negotiators prioritize their preparation?

The second sub-question is more practically relevant because usually, a negotiator does not have infinite time and needs to prioritize their preparation. Two elements within Fisher and Ertels (1995b) framework stand out as most important: Goal setting and defining the limitations.

Having clear goals is crucial to any negotiation. The goals are about what the negotiator wants to achieve with the meeting, and it is common to communicate the goals when setting up a meeting with the other party. These goals will create topics of conversation and apply structure, which can be through an agenda or a preliminary quotation.

The second crucial element is knowing the limitations of the negotiation. The aspiration and reservation points should be clear before the meeting, and the negotiator or another department can set these points. The negotiator should always strive to have a BATNA, an alternative if no agreement can be made, which must be clear before the meeting because it will subconsciously communicate a position of strength.

All other preparation elements rest on these two and should be considered, but only after setting goals and limitations.

### SQ3: How do negotiation practitioners prepare for B2B negotiations?

According to the interviews in this field research, all respondents prepare for their negotiations, but the extent of the preparation varies and is dependent on the context and phase the negotiation is in. All respondents deem goal setting and having a BATNA is very important and make sure they do this in their preparation. Practitioners seem to focus a lot on the relationship with the other party, and this influences their preparation. The nature of the negotiation meeting is also relevant, and practitioners make a clear distinction between a contract negotiation, which they prepare a lot for, and a regular meeting that is just about ordering certain parts again.

Most practitioners approach the negotiation as one of many to come. A long-lasting, mutually beneficial relationship is one of the most prevalent goals. Both parties should assume the other is willing to work together and strive for a win-win situation, and this win-win also implies that one should not always claim the most; it should be balanced and sometimes give more than one receives.

The practitioner thinks they should know what topics will be discussed and should have enough knowledge to be able to talk about these topics. The amount of time spent on this in preparation differs and is dependent on the context. Topics can include but are not limited to delivery, quality, price, lead times, payment conditions and future deals.

### SQ4: Are practitioners actively improving their negotiation skills? If so, how?

Most practitioners are actively trying to improve their negotiation skills. The most common method is external training paid for by the employer at a training program like NEVI. Learning by doing and by observing other colleagues is also often used by practitioners and can be effective. The external training programs are often encouraged or even required by employers for specific positions within the organisation.

More experienced negotiators feel like they need less training because they are already at a certain level. They will not *actively* search for skills improvement but acknowledge that one can always learn and should be aware of learning opportunities.

## RQ: How do negotiation practitioners prepare B2B negotiations and is this according to the academic literature?

Negotiation practitioners prepare for their negotiations by defining the goals of the negotiation, knowing their limitations and usually have a plan on how they think the negotiation will go. This plan will determine how much wiggle room they have and what their aspiration and reservation point is. Practitioners focus a lot on relationship and try to keep this relationship long lasting and prefer to meet face to face with their counterpart. This is in line with the current academic literature on the topic which encourages making a plan beforehand and include the seven elements mentioned above.

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## Appendices

Appendices referred to in the thesis are listed here. The researcher has the audio files of the interviews, complete transcripts, atlas.ti file and other files in an archive. These were not included in this document to save space and ensure confidentiality.

### Appendix A Describe my proposition to a business I am going to contact:

I am a master student of business administration at the University of Twente and I am writing my master thesis on the preparation of negotiating business deals in a business to a business environment.

I am offering you some insights according to the latest academic literature. My thesis is supervised by Dr. Sigurdardottir and Drs. Van der Griend, both specialise in negotiation and have decades of experience and several published articles in leading negotiation and business journals. During my research, I will be talking to several other companies in this region about their negotiation preparation. I can also offer you some general insights on how others prepare their negotiations.

I need 60 minutes of your time to interview you about a negotiated deal in the past that you remember vividly. This interview can be done online or by phone and will focus on your preparation for a negotiation deal. All data will be anonymised and only be used for academic purposes. I will not need specifics like names or other traceable information, just information that will give a general overview of the deal and especially its preparation.

Geachte,

U wordt met deze mail uitgenodigd om mee te doen met een onderzoek van de universiteit Twente, waarin u een benchmark krijgt van onderhandel effectiviteit.

Als master student aan de universiteit Twente doe ik mijn afstudeeronderzoek naar de voorbereiding van business deals in een B2B setting.

Ik kan u onafhankelijk, wetenschappelijk onderbouwd en direct toepasbaar advies geven over uw voorbereiding van onderhandelingen. Mijn onderzoek wordt begeleid door Dr. Sigurdardottir en drs. Van der Griend, beiden gespecialiseerd in onderhandelingen met decennia ervaring en publicaties. Naast kosteloos advies, spreek ik natuurlijk ook met andere bedrijven en kan ik u een inkijkje geven in hoe zij hun onderhandelingen aanpakken.

Uw deelname betreft 45 tot 50 minuten en zal online of telefonisch worden gedaan op een tijdstip dat u uitkomt. Ik ben vooral geïnteresseerd in de manier waarop u zich voorbereid op een onderhandeling en heb geen traceerbare namen of kenmerken nodig, enkel de context waarin de deal plaatsvond. Verder houd ik mij aan de ethische richtlijnen voor onderzoek van de UT.

Help uzelf en doe mee!

Met vriendelijke groet,

Tom Kamphuis

## Appendix B Interview guide

### General

- Is it okay that I record this conversation to use for my thesis?
- What is your position in the company?
- How many years of negotiation experience do you have?
- What is your definition of a negotiation?
- Could you walk me through what you do before a sales meeting?
- Could you give me a timeline; how much time do you spend on elements?
- What do you think is important to do before a meeting?
- In percentages, how many times do you prepare for a negotiation?
- Do you have a checklist?
- Do you prioritise certain elements in your preparation? Why? Which elements?

### Interests + underlying interests

- How do you assess your own interests?
- Did you think about the interests and goals of the other party? How?
- Did you feel like you understood those well enough?
- What is the most important to you before you negotiate?
  - What information?
  - What knowledge do you seek?
- How important is winning to you?
- Do you prioritise the negotiation issues, if so, how?

### Alternatives + BATNA

- How do you set certain minimum requirements and negotiable limitations?
- Do you have a clear plan B, should negotiation fail? When do you make this plan b?
- How do you make decisions?

### Legitimacy

- How do you make sure the deal is fair to you?
- To what extent do you care if the deal is also fair to the other party?
- What is your aim? Fairness? middle grounds? Claim the most? Etc.
- Do ethics and corporate social responsibility play a role in your prep? How?

### Communications

- What is your preferred way of communication? Why?
- Does that differ from one deal to another? Why?
- Do you make the first offer or do you prefer the counterpart to make the first offer?

## Relationship

- The last deal you remember vividly, how is your relationship with the counterparty?
- Do you prepare differently for a counterparty you want to keep doing business with? As opposed to a one-time deal.
- How important is the relationship to you in general?

## Commitment

- Are you authorised to make the deal?
- Are your counterparts always authorised to make a deal?
- When do you make sure you are/ they are?

## Improvement

- Are you actively trying to improve your negotiation skills? if yes, why are you improving it? How?
- Do you prepare on your own or in a team? Why? How? How do you feel about that?
- Do you seek feedback from other people (colleagues, mediators, consultants)? When? Why them?
- Do you have any kind of advisor? What is the role of the advisor or consultant? Do you follow up on his/her advice? Explain.
- Do you reflect on your own performance after the negotiations? If so, how? do you change anything following that reflection? Do you discuss that with your superiors or co-workers? Can you elaborate?
- have you been caught by a surprise during a negotiation by the other party? If so, how?
- Why were you surprised? Elaborate on that and did you change anything following that? What?
- How much important do you think preparation is? Or, to what extend do you think preparation has a part in your performance? (or outcome even)?
- Do you prioritise certain elements in your preparation? Why? Which elements? Do you have a role model in deal-making? If so, what do you like about their performance or methods?
- Is it okay that I email you in a few weeks if I have other questions?
- Can you recommend me to any of your colleagues that I can interview?

## Appendix C Respondents and their industry and firm size

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Size in fte</b>	<b>Industry</b>	<b>Main take-away</b>
1	21500	Construction	Structure is key
2	150	Wholesale	
3	600	Manufacturing	Quality is key
4	370	Engineering	Relationship is key
5	3400	Power	Winning/claiming is key
6	60	Wholesale	
7	1300	Engineering	
8	27000	Engineering	Safety is key
9	30	Manufacturing	Future is key
10	200	Manufacturing	Structure is key
11	87000	Power	Efficiency is key
12	30	Consultancy	Helicopter view is key
13	2	Wholesale	Quality is key
14	400	Manufacturing	
15	20	Manufacturing	



## Appendix D Codebook

Code	Code group
(formal) guidelines	Legal implications
(more) volume	Negotiation topics
acquiring information	Negotiation strategy + Structure and goals
aspiration point	BATNA and limits
apply some pressure	Negotiation strategy
applying structure	Structure and goals
approved until a certain amount	Legal implications
ask for extras	Negotiation strategy + Negotiation topics
ask for their thoughts	Relationship
BATNA	BATNA and limits
body language	Communication media
budget/calculation is leading	Negotiation strategy + Team and internals
calling	Communication media
checklist	Negotiation strategy + Structure and goals
claim	Negotiation strategy
clear documentation	Structure and goals
context	Structure and goals
continuity is key	Negotiation topics
correct certificates	Legal implications
costs a lot of time	Negotiation topics
cultural difference	Relationship
deadlines	Negotiation topics
delays	Negotiation topics
delivery	Negotiation topics
do i know people there	Relationship
dont want to lose	Negotiation strategy
duration of agreement	Negotiation topics
end user	Negotiation strategy + Relationship
escalating to superiors	Negotiation strategy + Structure and goals
ethical constraint	Ethics and fairness
experience	Improvement of skills
extent of preparation	Improvement of skills
external books	Improvement of skills
external consultant	Team and internals
external factors	Negotiation topics
external training	Improvement of skills
extra work/costs	Negotiation topics

face to face	Communication media
fairness is their responsibility	Ethics and fairness
force them to recalculate/reconsider	Negotiation strategy
Formal reflection cycle	Improvement of skills
friendly	Relationship
future projects	Relationship + Structure and goals
getting to agreement	Negotiation strategy
give each other something	Negotiation strategy + Relationship
gut feeling	Improvement of skills
have an extra move	Negotiation strategy
helicopter view of project	Structure and goals
help your suppliers	Relationship
historic data	Structure and goals
history with other party	Relationship
honesty	Relationship
i need more time	Negotiation strategy + Relationship
importance of making the deal	Negotiation strategy
informal reflection	Improvement of skills
innovation	Structure and goals
Interest	Negotiation strategy + Negotiation topics
internal consultants	Team and internals
internal training	Improvement of skills
involvement of press	Communication media
know your limits	BATNA and limits + Legal implications + Structure and goals
lead time	Negotiation topics
learn by doing	Improvement of skills
learn from experienced colleagues	Improvement of skills
legal restriction	BATNA and limits + Legal implications
liability	Legal implications
limitations	BATNA and limits + Structure and goals
Long term goals	Structure and goals
long term relationship	Relationship
mandate	Legal implications + Relationship
margin	Negotiation topics
market conform	Structure and goals
more market share	Structure and goals
my superior	Legal implications +

	Team and internals
need for structure	Structure and goals
negotiation strategy	Negotiation strategy
not able to deliver	Negotiation topics
not one role model	Improvement of skills
on site at supplier	Relationship
online meeting	Communication media
payment terms	Legal implications + Negotiation topics
power difference	Relationship
previous projects	Improvement of skills + Relationship
price	Negotiation topics
price quality ratio	Negotiation topics
purchasing strategy	Negotiation strategy
quality of work	Negotiation topics
Reduce risk	Legal implications
relationship	Relationship
reservation point	BATNA and limits
RFQ	Structure and goals
secret communication with team	Team and internals
share information	Improvement of skills + Negotiation strategy + Relationship
share the burdens	Relationship
shelf life	Negotiation topics
Short term goals	Structure and goals
sign off	Legal implications
specialism	Negotiation topics
specific knowledge	Negotiation topics
strategic alliance	Relationship
sunk costs	Negotiation topics
suppliers capacity	Relationship
sustainability	Negotiation topics
take a breath	Communication media + Relationship
team build and hierarchy	Team and internals
technical support	Negotiation topics
tidyness	Negotiation topics
transition costs are high	BATNA and limits
trust	Relationship
turnover	Negotiation topics
underlying interest	Structure and goals
understanding the other party	Relationship
want to keep doing business	Structure and goals

want to make a deal	Negotiation strategy
willingness to move	Negotiation strategy + Relationship
willingness to walk away	Negotiation strategy
win-win	Negotiation strategy

## Appendix E Quotes from interviews quoted in the thesis.

First in Dutch, then translated to English.

Respondent 7:

Ik vind ik het zelf altijd heel moeilijk onderhandelen als je geen alternatief hebt, dus ik zocht eigenlijk altijd wel dat dat echt, als de belangen groot zijn, moet dan zeggen ze belangrijk zijn, zoals ik altijd wel dat ik dat ik een escape heb, anders kan ik er ook echt totaal niet had invliegen dan. ik ben niet iemand die meteen voor de knieën gaat, maar maar als ik. Maar ik wil wel graag mn machtspositie uitbuiten.

I always find it very difficult to negotiate if you don't have an alternative, so I was always looking for that really, if the interests are great, then I have to say they are important, as I always know that I have an escape, Otherwise I really wouldn't have been able to fly in there at all. I'm not someone who immediately goes to the knees, but if I do. But I do want to exploit my position of power.

Respondent 1:

Maar als onderaannemer is en ze komen dingen monteren of wat dan ook, dan heb je een overeenkomst, ... die is best uitgebreid en dat is dan ook eigenlijk wel een leidraad om doorheen te lopen. Oké, wat hebben we afgekaart en wat? Waar moeten we het erover eens worden? En op basis daarvan, maar kwam in in in wat er ook een lijstje voor mezelf ook met alternatieven, maar eigenlijk ook altijd wel een contract en zeker bij de grotere dingen, het contract van tevoren in concept maken

But if you are a subcontractor and they come to assemble things or whatever, then you have an agreement, ... it is quite extensive and that is actually a guideline to walk through. Okay, what have we mapped and what? What should we agree on? And based on that, but came in in whatever there is also a list for myself with alternatives, but actually always a contract and certainly with the bigger things, making the contract in concept in advance

Respondent 5:

... ik moet wel zeggen dat digitaal heel makkelijk is, want je kunt schermen, zeg maar een aantal schermen en naast een aantekeningen maken en die. Let erop, dus heel onopgemerkt kun je al die aantekening maken. Ondertussen kun je met je collegas praten en dat valt niet op in een zakelijke omgeving.

... I must say that digital is very easy, because you can screen, say a number of screens and make notes next to one and that. Pay attention, so you can make all that note very unnoticed. Meanwhile you can share these with my team, without the other party knowing

Respondent 7:

... maar is het ook wel eens juist via de e mail lekker onpersoonlijk... Ja, dat zit achter. Als ik mensen echt met huiswerk wil sturen, als we onderhandelen en niet meteen uit wil komen, bijvoorbeeld ik wel wat tijd winnen, ofzo ik vind dat ze dat de hele prijs al helemaal opnieuw berekenen, .... Dan wil ik juist dat ze erover na gaan denken voordat ik door ga.

... but is it sometimes just nice and impersonal via e-mail... Yes, that's behind it. If I really want to send people with homework, if we negotiate and don't want to come out right away, for example I do gain some time, or I think they calculate the whole price all over again, .... send the message that I will not engage in conversation before they recalculate.

Respondent 15:

Als je een win-lose doet, dus voordat ik een, maar als je een en ander die voelt, zich alleen kunt, bijvoorbeeld, ja, daar win je in de toekomst niks mee, want dan gaat ie vanzelf op zoek naar andere leveranciers. als hij het idee heeft dat hij niet fair behandeld word, zal hij ook niet fair zijn naar jou.

If you do a win-lose, so before I do one, but if you feel something that can be alone, for example, yes, you won't gain anything in the future because then it goes automatically looking for other suppliers. if he feels that he is not being treated fairly, he will not be fair to you either.

Respondent 4:

...En het lef op kunnen brengen door te zeggen: maar luister, zonder goed gevoel maken wij geen deal. Wat voor een voordeel je dr ook aan hebt, ook al haal je tonnen binnen qua inkoop resultaat. Geen goed gevoel, geen deal als je en en ja menen, maar één stap verder, dan doen.

...And being able to muster the guts by saying: but listen, we won't make a deal without feeling good. Whatever advantage you have, even if you bring in tons in terms of purchasing results. it has to feel right; if it does not, do not do business. And mean it.

Respondent 8:

Ik hoef niet te winnen. Ik wil tot overeenstemming komen waarbij ik tevreden ben en waar de leverancier ook tevreden over is, en ik mag zelf ja of nee zeg met de leverancier omhoog, ja of nee zeggen, en dat vind ik veel belangrijker en dat vind ik belangrijk, omdat als je wint, heb je ook een verliezer en en verliezen zal altijd proberen om iets weer terug te winnen.

I don't have to win. I want to come to an understanding where I am satisfied and what the supplier is also satisfied with, and I can say yes or no myself with the supplier up, say yes or no, and that is much more important to me and that is important to me, because when I win, someone else loses, and that loser will always want to make up for that loss."

Respondent 4:

Als je geen win-win hebt, heb je geen perfecte deal.

If you do not have a win-win scenario, you do not have a perfect deal.

Respondent 5:

Ja, wij proberen altijd rekening te houden met belang van tegenpartij maar we proberen wel onze eigen belangen na te streven. Dus het is niet zo dat we een fiftyfifty of een win win situatie, dat willen we eigenlijk niet. Dat is ook heel slecht als je dat probeert na te streven. Je hebt altijd gewoon meer te nemen dan te geven. Bij een win-win had ik meer kunnen pakken. Dat is ook je doel als inkoper.

Yes, we always try to take into account the interests of the counterparty, but we do try to pursue our own interests. So it's not like we want a fifty-fifty or a win-win situation, we don't really want that. That's also very bad if you're trying to aspire to that. You always have more to take than to give. A win-win means I could have pushed harder. That is also your goal as a buyer.

Respondent 15:

Mensen doen zaken met mensen, niet met bedrijven. met mij zaken doen en met verleden, de gunfactor heb je zeker wel nodig.

People do business with people, not companies. doing business with me and with the past, you definitely need them to give you something.

Respondent 10:

Ja, ik ben rechte doorzee en dat is ik heb een paar keer andere meegemaakt. Dat mensen iets achterhouden heb ik gewoon een hekel aan. Je kunt beter gewoon eerlijk en open zijn, dan krijg je meer voor elkaar. Shit happens, je moet gewoon eerlijk en open zijn zodat we het kunnen oplossen.

Yes, I'm straight forward and that's I've been through a few others. I just hate people holding back. It is better to just be honest and open, then you will get more done. Accidents and setbacks happen. Just be open about it so that we can fix it together

Respondent 10:

En want als je weinig tijd hebt, kun je het niet goed genoeg nadenken over een target. En dan maak ik altijd een agenda, heb je nog punten, ja en en laten we gewoon is van start gegaan kijken: hoe ver we komen?

And because if you're short on time, you can't think hard enough about a target. I always make an agenda and ask the other party whether they have points to add, yes and let's just get started: how far do we get?

Respondent 1:

... de luxe is natuurlijk groot bedrijf. Ik heb en we hebben een verzekeringsadviseur gewoon zelf in dienst. Hun eigen medewerkers hebben diverse juridische legal afdeling. We hebben natuurlijk veiligheid. waar je vragen over kan krijgen, duurzaamheid, dat gaat binnen bam hebben overal afdelingen voor. Dus dat is dan een luxe

... because we are a big firm, we have our own insurance advisor. Their own employees have several legal legal department. We have security, of course. what you can get questions about, sustainability, that is everything within bam have departments. I know this a luxury.