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Make A New Plan, Stan (And Get Yourself Free)*

Although negotiations can be somewhat unstructured and spontaneous, the negotiator who plans her strategy in advance has an advantage. Subject matter preparation is a must. However, in some cases, involving the client in strategic planning can produce better results and greater client satisfaction.

The client usually knows more about the dispute or transaction and his own interests. Tap into that knowledge to develop negotiation proposals, arguments and other tactics. Be mindful of the fact that your choice of tactics can affect the client in ways other than simply reaching an agreement. If the parties anticipate an ongoing business relationship, cooperative or problem-solving bargaining tactics are usually preferred. However, a particular client may endorse competitive tactics to establish a strong bargaining image and discourage future exploitation. A mixture of these tactics is common. Discuss these options with the client to help him understand how your negotiating behavior may affect his relationships with other parties.

For competitive tactics, discuss the sources of leverage and power the client can use. For cooperative tactics, brainstorm about objective criteria to be used to resolve the dispute. For the problem-solving approach, formulate solutions that will satisfy the parties' underlying interests. Anticipate a "horse-trade" on various issues, and have the client determine her order of preferences among the issues.

While you cannot "script" a negotiation, planning your strategy and tactics with the client in advance can lead to durable agreements and satisfied clients.

**"50 Ways to Leave Your Lover" - Paul Simon*