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From Single Deals to Negotiation Campaigns

David A. Lax
James K. Sebenius

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David A. Lax and James K. Sebenius[*]

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***Abstract**: Negotiation scholars typically take the individual deal, or a few linked deals, as the unit of analysis. While analyzing one deal requires a familiar conceptual framework, doing the same for a broader "negotiation campaign" calls for a different focus and set of concepts: how to orchestrate a large number of subsidiary deals, often grouped into modular "fronts", in order to realize an ultimate "target agreement" with sufficient support to be sustainable. For example, generating the backing necessary from several organizational units for a proposed project to be approved may call for a small-scale "internal" negotiation campaign. A final cross-border merger agreement may represent the culmination of a massive negotiation campaign with multiple, related fronts: financial, shareholder, internal corporate, labor, supplier, political, and regulatory. Complex sales with long cycles and many influential parties as well as major diplomatic initiatives may call more for crafting negotiation campaigns for than doing solo deals. Analysis of negotiation campaigns builds on familiar concepts such as linkage and coalition building. In many cases, however, the parties relevant to a campaign as well as the fronts may not be obvious a priori and may represent choice variables rather than givens for the analysis. Beyond identifying and specifying parties and fronts, negotiation campaign analysis and design calls for assessing interdependencies among fronts, deciding on separation v. combination of fronts, parallel v. sequential tactical emphasis, as well as information revelation v. concealment at different stages of the campaign.*

Keywords: Negotiation, Dealmaking, Negotiation Campaign, Fronts, Sequencing, Linkage, Information Revelation

Say you've set your sights on a target deal. You seek "yes" on a complex sale, approval for an infrastructure project, agreement to merge, or go-ahead on an internal initiative. You'll prepare and negotiate based on the parties at the table along with their likely interests, positions, walkaway options, styles, histories, and so on. This at-the-table emphasis makes sense as far as it goes, but often ignores a

[*] David Lax (lax@negotiate.com) is the Managing Principal in Lax Sebenius LLC, a negotiation strategy firm. James K. Sebenius (jsebenius@hbs.edu) is the Gordon Donaldson Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School, Director of the Harvard Negotiation Project at Harvard Law School's Program on Negotiation, and a Principal in Lax Sebenius LLC. The authors thank Ron Fortgang for a number of insightful conversations on this topic as well as members of the Negotiation Roundtable for helpful feedback.

larger reality that can drive the outcome. For many important negotiations, both large and small, your focus should extend well beyond the table where you plan to hammer out your target deal. Instead, that table should represent the culmination of a carefully orchestrated "negotiation campaign," a series of related negotiations on different "fronts" that best set you up for end-state success.

For example, consider Boeing's $11 billion sale of 787 Dreamliners and other planes to Air India in late 2005. A naïve understanding of this transaction might envision two monolithic entities, Boeing and Air India, hammering out the terms, overcoming a price gap and cross-cultural differences. Yet the messy reality leading to that ultimate target deal involved an extended negotiation campaign: literally dozens of individual but linked negotiations, orchestrated on several fronts, involving an array of parties over time and across borders. Negotiations on *internal corporate fronts* garnered support and approval from the engineering, operations, finance, and marketing divisions, as well as top executives and boards of directors. Negotiations on the *external financial front* involved banks, export promotion agencies, and leasing companies. And given the Indian state's ownership stake in the airline, negotiations on the *political/national* front concluded with Boeing agreeing to partner with Indian manufacturers to supply a certain amount of domestic content and to create local maintenance and pilot training organizations. Successfully orchestrating these component negotiations on multiple fronts finally generated sufficient support for the record-breaking target contract.

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In contrast to the sweep of this example, negotiation scholars primarily study the individual deal as their "unit of analysis". Using lab experiments, mathematical models, and statistically controlled field studies, scholars tend to be preoccupied with the challenging process by which parties interact *at the table*, their stated positions, deeper interests, communication patterns, tactical choices, and other factors such as gender or culture that may influence the outcome of a single negotiation or class of similar transactions.[i] This "single deal focus" also characterizes most popular negotiation books.

While doing *one deal* well requires a certain set of skills, designing and executing a broader *negotiation campaign* calls for a more strategic approach: artfully putting a number of deals together, often on multiple fronts, to realize a larger result, typically an *ultimate target agreement* with sufficient support in the right quarters to make it stick. In other cases, negotiation campaigns aim to block undesirable outcomes or shore up negotiating weakness at the target table.

Negotiation campaigns come in many shapes and sizes. A small-scale "internal" campaign may seek to generate the support needed from many organizational units for a proposed project to be greenlighted. A mid-scale campaign may be required to get an industry association to adopt a highly contested technology standard, such as Blu-Ray or USB 3.0, that will favor different member firms, depending on who has "bet" on which technology. Massive campaigns may be required for major cross-border mergers, such as Mittal Steel's actions to take over Luxembourg-based Arcelor, Europe's largest steel company. Quarterbacked by founder Lakshmi Mittal, the acrimonious process leading to the final deal entailed multiple financial agreements as well as extensive shareholder and political engagement in Luxembourg, France, the Netherlands, and Canada, along with regulatory agreements in Brussels and Washington. And, of course, complex sales with long cycles and many influential parties as well as major diplomatic initiatives may call more for crafting negotiation campaigns for than doing solo deals.

Whether large-scale or in-close, when the "unit of analysis" shifts from the individual deal to the broader negotiation campaign, a distinct set of challenges arises. By analyzing and advising on a number of cases, public and private, large and small, we have identified special concepts and skills to help meet these challenges.[ii]

Effective negotiation campaigns build on familiar concepts such as linkage, sequencing, and coalition building or breaking. They derive some insights from military, political, marketing, and other kinds of campaigns. Yet their real power comes from distinctive classes of "3D negotiation moves" *away from the table*.[iii] Such coordinated actions seek to set up the most promising possible situation for achieving target deals and levels of support once you're at the ultimate negotiating table. We will focus on these kinds of moves in this article, assuming that more traditional negotiation skills—active listening, probing, framing, generating options, etc.--will be deployed to support campaigns.

Six Steps in a Negotiation Campaign

In headline form, designing a negotiation campaign normally calls for at least six key assessments and choices. While listed sequentially, these six factors often depend on each other. As you'll see from the more detailed examples that follow, you'll typically need to iterate among these factors them to settle on the most promising campaign design and execution.

1. Envision the ultimate target deal(s). What is the ultimate target deal or deals and which parties must be supportive to ensure its sustainability? Will a single authoritative "yes" do the trick, or does lasting success require weaving a larger winning coalition of support—even a network of linked agreements--perhaps across organizational lines? In such complex settings, the simpler "decision-maker and influencers" model, beloved of many sales executives, will often prove inadequate to the tangled reality.

2. Decide how your campaign will influence your target deal. Negotiation campaigns typically seek to improve your odds of achieving a target deal or deals. To do this, with the ultimate negotiation(s) in mind, will your basic campaign approach mainly seek to enhance the value of the target deal ("sweeten the carrot"), worsen the other parties no-deal alternatives ("enlarge and sharpen the stick"), improve your own no-deal options (a better walkaway for you), or a adopt a combination of these elements?

3. Identify and characterize key players on an all-party map. Mapping backward from the ultimate target deal, what internal and external parties must be involved, and which might possibly be involved in various supporting—or opposing—negotiations? Whose participation could be valuable to include--or seek to exclude? For each such party you've identified, assess the full set of their interests, their likely positions, their no-deal options, and their formal and informal relationships with the other parties. Which parties will probably favor you, oppose you, be subject to influence, or look to others to determine their views? While party mapping may sound like a mechanical task, this aspect of campaign design often requires great imagination and creativity. To "get the parties right"—to build a sustainable winning coalition and deal with potential blockers--goes far deeper than the usual circles-on-a-chart "stakeholder analysis".

4. Group the parties into "fronts". If there are many parties, the concept of "fronts" can prove vital to campaigners. A front consists of a set of parties that can usefully be grouped together and treated as a modular unit for purposes of organizing a campaign, allocating negotiating effort, and strategically relating the parts of the negotiation to the whole. In the brief Boeing-Air India example above, these included internal corporate fronts for each firm (across multiple divisions and units), national/political front, and the external financial front. While a front can consist of a single (important) party, it will more often be a collection of parties that, when grouped, simplifies strategic reasoning about the complex whole.

5. Assess interdependencies among fronts. Are the fronts largely independent of each other, or can they affect each other, either positively or negatively? For example, is provisional agreement at the corporate and political levels helpful or even necessary for successful financial negotiations, or vice versa? Does progress or backsliding in negotiations within one front change the odds of success for negotiations in other fronts? If so, how? If potential allies or blockers become aware of your activities on another front, are your overall prospects helped or hurt? If you deploy negotiating resources on one front, does that limit, the efforts you can deploy elsewhere?

6. Decide how to orchestrate the process among fronts. Negotiations *within* individual fronts draw on the usual concepts and skills of effective bargaining. Orchestrating the process *among* fronts--so they come together to best set up the ultimate target deal--moves beyond this familiar territory and directly depends on your assessment of interdependencies among fronts. For example, should the fronts be treated independently or combined? Should you primarily negotiate the various fronts sequentially or in parallel, or should a hybrid approach be used? If sequentially, what is the most promising order of emphasis? Should negotiations within one front be undertaken quietly and privately, or publicly? (When an individual front contains enough parties, you many consider mounting a "mini-campaign" within that front.)

To implement the campaign you must negotiate within fronts and orchestrate the overall process among them. Synchronizing a large-scale negotiation campaign can be done by one person or team, but often involves setting up the equivalent of the "war room" used to coordinate complex transactions such as mergers. Inevitably, new information, unexpected events, and opportunistic possibilities will occur, calling for updating and revising the campaign.

To flesh out these six steps and their implementation, we'll analyze several examples, starting with a fairly detailed case motivated by a familiar negotiating challenge: to overcome weakness at the table. For example, suppose the other side has a very strong walkaway option, while "no-deal" for you would be disastrous. The usual negotiation process advice--better communication, creativity, a persuasive style, and a win-win orientation, and the like--may not overcome the other side's determination and ability to extract maximum advantage. Instead, a negotiation campaign might provide the answer as we can see by analyzing a tough bargaining situation from the docks and boardrooms of the U.S. West Coast.

Example: A Campaign to Overcome Negotiating Weakness[iv]

In 1999, the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA), an association of 72 diverse shipping lines and terminal operators in West Coast ports from San Diego to Seattle, sought an agreement with the International Longshore & Warehouse Union (ILWU) to introduce new information technologies to enhance efficiency and capacity of often-clogged West Coast ports. The union feared job loss since containerization and other changes had drastically shrunk its ranks from approximately 100,000 members in the 1950s to about 10,500 in 2002.[v]

Wielding its power to stop U.S. seaborne trade flowing through the West Coast—then worth some *$6 billion per week*—the union said "no" and began an informal job slowdown. Loaded container ships soon backed up in West Coast harbors, causing massive supply chain disruptions nationwide. Firms dependent on ocean shipping, from Walmart, Dell, and Home Depot to time-sensitive agricultural interests, urgently pressured the PMA to make a deal. The PMA, a fragmented organization of both huge and minor shipping players, quickly caved.

Unfortunately for PMA's resolve to reintroduce technology issues three years hence in the 2002 negotiations, the union still had its slowdown/strike weapon. As labor expert Howard Kimeldor said, "In terms of economic muscle, [the ILWU] may be the strongest union in the country."[vi] ILWU member compensation reflected this power: by 2002, annual wages, including overtime, averaged $83,000 for longshoremen, $118,000 for clerks, and a princely $158,000 for foremen.[vii]

Consider the plight of Joseph Miniace, PMA's president and CEO, licking his wounds after his 1999 debacle. During the 2002 negotiations, he would again seek a new technology agreement but would still face the ILWU's credible threat to shut down $6 billion worth of U.S. foreign trade per week. Another slowdown or strike would quickly lead to virtually irresistible demands from his own PMA members and import-dependent businesses to get the cargo flowing and the supply chains operating.

Miniace needed an answer to the union's credible capacity to say "no" by a costly slowdown or strike. He embarked on a negotiation campaign to re-set the target table, so that, to the longshoremen, "yes" to Miniace's technology proposal would look better than "no".

The Internal Front. Miniace began a concentrated *internal* campaign, patiently visiting PMA's 72 member firms, negotiating to restructure its unwieldy board that traditionally had operated by consensus. This meant "fewer labor relations executives—who had a vested interest in making sure contract negotiations ran smoothly—and ... more operating executives who understood the economic consequences of repeated concessions. It also meant getting the biggest players on the board."[viii] With new, top-level executive members on the restructured board—whose votes would now be weighted by shipping tonnage, so the major players had decisive influence—and an extensive internal educational effort on the critical future importance of the new technology, Miniace began a three-front *external* campaign.

External Fronts. He first coordinated closely with Robin Lanier, former president of the International Mass Retailers Association. She brought the case to shippers, large importers, and retailers such as Walmart. All concurred:

> We had a congestion problem; we had an infrastructure problem...here were these very sophisticated importers who have web-based and EDI-based supply chain management systems, and you got to the port and it all kind of fell apart. . . . because of a lack of information technology.... [ix]

Second, Miniace and his team opened up a government front: they arranged visits to the Departments of Commerce, Treasury, Labor, Transportation, Homeland Security, and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. Miniace's message was consistent:

> We want you to understand what we are doing. We explained what happened to us in the last negotiations. This was the impact. This is what is on the table this time, and why it is important. We warned

> them that we could not take a slowdown this time. If [the union opts for a slowdown], we'll have to shut . . . down [the ports].[x]

Finally, the PMA hired public relations help to advantageously frame its message to the media and wider public. When push came to shove, a better-informed and restructured board along with energized business and political allies put the PMA in a far stronger position. In response to a union slowdown and port lockout by the PMA, President Bush felt he had sufficient backing to invoke the emergency provisions Taft-Hartley Act—for the first time in over 30 years. This forced the parties back to work, effectively blunting the union's slowdown/strike weapon.

With this boost, Miniace and his team negotiated a superior technology agreement. Given the union's power, a purely tactical approach by PMA at the table would have failed, just as it had for Miniace in 1999 and in earlier rounds of bargaining. Pressured by import-dependent businesses—and, likely, the government, which would have sought the quickest way for shipments to resume--the PMA would have caved and the union would have notched a still richer deal. By contrast, when Miniace patiently prepared for the 2002 talks by launching an internal and external negotiation campaign, his efforts proved decisive.

The outcome was not simply coercive; rather, a back-and-forth process, assisted by federal mediators, led to a more balanced package deal. Unexpectedly, as the deal crystallized, the parties agreed on a *six*-year term, rather than the *three* year period of previous contracts. Coast-wide container throughput increased sharply, and the union's longtime membership decline reversed. The PMA and

ILWU uneventfully negotiated *another* 6-year deal in 2008 to run through 2014. By 2010, both employment and tonnage through West Coast ports had shot up by almost 40% over 2002 levels.

Elements of the Campaign. In light of our six-step campaign approach, Miniace *envisioned the ultimate target deal* from the outset, but realized it would be unattainable without the support of many parties, internal and external. He *decided on a basic campaign approac*h that, when the 2002 union negotiations took place, would seek to blunt the union's main weapon (a slowdown or strike) and enhance the PMA's no-deal option (to keep goods flowing if the union said "no").

Mapping backwards from the target setup, he *identified key parties and grouped them into multiple fronts:* internal member shipping companies, import-dependent businesses, government agencies and the Executive Branch, as well as the broader public. His assessment of the *interdependencies among fronts* led him to *orchestrate the campaign sequentially and quietly*, starting well in advance of the 2002 talks with 1) with a carefully negotiated internal agreement among member firms to restructure PMA's formerly unwieldy decision process that had traditionally left it vulnerable to pressure plus divide-and-conquer tactics, 2) informing and activating potential business allies, 3) educating and shaping expectations of key Executive Branch agencies in Washington, as well as 4) taking public relations initiatives.

Old-school tales of labor negotiations often emphasize table-pounding and principals locked in a room until a deal emerges. New-age versions emphasize trust-building, creativity, and win-win solutions. Such at-the-table actions occurred, both old- and new-style, but Miniace's away-from-the-table campaign on many fronts made the difference. As the lead union negotiator ruefully observed, "It used to be that the negotiation took place at the table."[xi]

Negotiators in many domains far removed from union dealings would benefit from the broader message of this episode: the source of advantage in many negotiations can be found away from the table, often via campaigns.

Getting the Parties Right

Unlike negotiations in which your across-the-table counterparts are self-evident, campaigns often require you—like Miniace--to creatively "construct" the prior negotiations that, ideally, will culminate in your target deal. In some cases, even getting to the target table at all—if "they won't negotiate"--may present real challenges, solvable only by a campaign that sequentially builds on carefully chosen parties. Choosing the parties requires careful assessments and imagination: whose participation could be helpful in favorably setting the stage for my target deal? On what basis could I involve them? Whose participation should I avoid? We often find it helpful to brainstorm and sketch an "all-party map" of the full set of actually and potentially involved parties, both internal and external. On this map, you should indicate each party's interests, no-deal options, and relationships in order to assess potential winning (and/or blocking) coalitions among them. You'll construct your campaign from this all-party map.

In contrast to the large-scale longshoremen campaign, consider a much smaller and quieter campaign crafted by Sarah Talley, who at age 19 headed Frey

Farms Produce, her family business in Keenes, Indiana. At her initiative, Frey Farms began to sell watermelons, cantaloupes, and other agricultural products directly to Walmart. As Talley's business grew in the late 1990s, Walmart introduced the "co-management," concept for certain of its agricultural suppliers. Like "tiered" suppliers in the auto industry, designated co-management suppliers would partner with the giant retailer to directly manage contacts with a group of other, typically smaller, suppliers.

Failure of Direct Negotiation. Though Frey Farms itself was not large at the time, Talley actively sought co-management status from Walmart as a means to rapidly grow her business. Not only did her approach to Walmart completely fail to generate co-management status, with an explanation that this elevated status was for mega-suppliers like Del Monte, but Frey Farms was summarily "demoted" as a supplier. Henceforth, rather than selling directly to Walmart, Frey Farms would be co-managed by another firm, and would deal only indirectly with the retailer. Talley judged, however, that the firms now co-managing Frey mainly added cost and complexity to the products that Walmart was buying.

Party Identification via Backward Mapping and Existing Relationships. Talley's challenge: negotiate not only to regain her company's status, but elevate Frey Farms to become a co-managed firm. To do this, she would have to negotiate in Bentonville, where Walmart is headquartered, with senior people whom she did not know, to whom she had no ready access, and with whom she did not enjoy any credibility. Her response: a negotiation campaign leading to a deal with the Bentonville category manager. Like all campaigners, however, she needed to identify the right parties.

To do this, she identified the target table in Bentonville and mapped backward, in effect asking "whose support would we ideally have at target stage?" Then she asked similar questions about how best to get those supportive players on board. And so on. This led her to a bootstrapping process, starting with people with whom Talley had worked in the past and enjoyed credibility, and sequencing to more senior players. In this process, she consistently framed her approach in terms of Walmart's obsession with driving costs out of the system. In Sarah Talley's words:

> We started with the people we knew and had conducted business with over the years and then expanded to their contacts. . . .We first of all got the support of the team and regional buying team out in the field, and then we got the support of the buying team at the home office. . . .
>
> I had conversations with a few regional buyers, and there were new regional buyers out in the field, and everyone took the time to kind of listen when you say, "I know how I can save you money. We can do it better." These types of questions and statements will usually get someone's attention, especially those for whom everyday low prices drive their mentality. . . The regional buyers that we worked with over the years were certainly used as lobbyists for our co-manage campaign . . ..

In the course of this persistent campaign to negotiate a coalition of supporters, Talley uncovered the fact that Walmart had been in such a heavy growth phase that some Bentonville agricultural product category managers, who had been insulated from many "lower tier" suppliers, did not realize the extent of extra costs built into the system. Not only did her campaign result in agreement to elevate Frey Farms to co-management status, but a few years later, Walmart awarded its 2003 "Co-managed Supplier of the Year" award to Frey Farms, led by its then 26 year-old CEO, Sarah Talley. Unlike Miniace, whose campaign worsened the no-deal options of the union, Talley's campaign objective was to enhance the perceived value to Walmart of the target agreement.

When Getting the Parties Right is More Challenging: "Social Mapping." The contrast is striking between Talley's initial direct negotiating approach, which not only failed but backfired, and her later, well-orchestrated negotiation campaign, which succeeded. Getting the parties right, and understanding their interests, was a fairly straightforward mapping exercise, bootstrapping from well-known players onward. In other cases, especially involving quite unfamiliar settings, a more systematic approach may be useful to construct an all-party map.

Take the case of the Hong Kong & China Gas Company (HKCG), whose traditional, highly mature, business was to supply piped gas to Hong Kong's apartments and businesses. When China acceded to the WTO, HKCG decided on a long-term growth strategy to take over the natural gas distribution systems in select mainland Chinese cities, upgrade them, and run them in a highly efficient manner. With China growing at 9-10% annually, and placing increased emphasis on clean fuels such as natural gas, this appeared to be a compelling strategy.

To execute it, however, required HKCG to undertake challenging joint venture (JV) negotiations. Barriers included the multiplicity of governmental and other involved parties as well as the entrenched managers of existing Chinese gas distribution systems. These managers enjoyed considerable status and power over local system revenues and jobs and were natural opponents of "outsiders" running the system. To overcome these barriers via a negotiation campaign, HKCG Managing Director Alfred Chan indicated the importance—and difficulty--of getting the parties right:

> The negotiation process usually started with HKCG "testing the waters" by conducting due diligence on a local partner in order to get clearance from the local government for setting up a JV. Almost *fifty percent* [emphasis supplied] of our time and effort was spent on gaining an understanding of: (i) the market (city of operation), (ii) stakeholders (various city/provincial government officials) and (iii) other counter-parties (lawyers, other bureaucrats).

This "social mapping" process often involved befriending lower level target company personnel as well as using intermediaries—once HKCG could distinguish the genuinely connected from the bogus--who regularly offered their services and requested fees. As a JV team member observed, "Who could we trust and who really mattered to the decision? It was never obvious from the company's organization chart, we had to figure it out. In the end it was and will always be a judgment call. In China, you are always dealing with the people and not just the project." Several years into this new strategy, HKCG had completed over eighty such complex, multi-stage JV negotiations in the mainland. A negotiating team member evaluated the importance of accurate social mapping:

> . . . while negotiating the first several JVs, we tended to think of the project planning, engineering, and financing aspects as the "real challenges." As we gained more experience, however, we often found that—as difficult as the technical aspects could be – negotiating the "people" side of the equation right was often the most difficult and critical factor for project success.

Most negotiation advice simply takes the parties as an obvious given, a point of departure from which to craft strategy and tactics. Parties are merely those on the "other side of the table," right? By contrast, successful negotiation campaigners know that, given inevitable ambiguity, "getting the parties right" via an evolving all-party map takes real effort and creativity.

Defining and Orchestrating Fronts

A front consists of a set of parties that can usefully be grouped together and treated as a modular unit for purposes of organizing a campaign, allocating negotiating effort, and strategically relating the parts of the overall negotiation to the whole. Given an all-party map, fronts can be defined on the basis of a number of different characteristics, but the main criterion is usefulness in simplifying the strategic structure of an otherwise complex deal. For example, in the longshoremen-shippers example above, fronts included, among others, the internal (PMA's 72 member shipping companies) and external business allies; in the Frey Farms-Walmart case, field buyers and category managers.

More broadly, the parties may be of a similar kind or class or from similar sectors or locations (e.g. bank debt holders, "Brussels regulators"). They may be organizationally related (e.g., the Japanese division, staff from different agencies of a state government, "internal" corporate units of a target acquisition). They may share key interests or tight relationships to each other (e.g., environmental NGOs, members of the family with a controlling corporate interest, ENA alumni in France). While a front can consist of a single (important) party, it will more often be a collection of parties that, when grouped, simplifies strategic reasoning about the complex whole.

Three Broad Classes of Moves to Orchestrate a Campaign. While standard negotiation approaches are appropriate for individual parties *within* each front, a distinctive challenge for negotiation campaigners involves orchestrating the fronts with respect to each other to optimally set up the target negotiation. In broad terms, orchestrating the fronts of a campaign involves three major choices. First, you need to decide whether to *keep the fronts separate or whether (and when) to combine some or all of them*. Second, if some of the fronts are best pursued separately, you must decide *how best to sequence your negotiations* among them. Third, you must decide *how much information to reveal at each stage* about your activities or their results in one or more fronts.

Several observations are worth making about these classes of "orchestrating moves" to "combine/separate, sequence, and/or reveal." Most importantly, the nature of any interdependencies among the fronts—for example, whether progress on one front is influenced or impeded by progress or failure on another—will generally drive your choices about orchestrating the campaign. Moreover, the moves are rarely isolated, pure versions; hybrids and combinations of these moves are common. For example, decisions to separate and later combine fronts will normally involve sequencing choices. Further, you will not normally exercise sole control over these choices, especially in "competitive" campaigns, where you'll need to anticipate and react to countermoves by other players. Finally, each class of moves has a counterpart choice in more standard negotiation analysis from which you can draw insight; issue linkage and sequencing are important topics in their own rights. Nevertheless, a few remarks and examples illustrating each class of moves provide useful insight into orchestrating campaigns.

1. Combine or separate fronts? Since one purpose for thinking in terms of fronts is to simplify very complex situations, dealing separately with each front may make sense for purely logistical reasons. In many cases, keeping fronts apart is wise since progress on each front separately sets up the next front and there is no special value to combining them. In the shippers-longshoremen example, or the Frey Farms-Walmart case, each front served as a steppingstone for the next, with the negotiating focus on "easier" fronts first.

In other cases, linking or combining fronts at carefully chosen points in a campaign makes sense. (The best timing and conditions for linking typically call for sequencing judgments, which we discuss shortly.) Traditional negotiation-based reasons for combining fronts may involve joint gains from "package deals," where success on each front offers a resource (e.g., capital, intellectual property, a valuable customer) worth most when combined in the target result. Or leverage from success on one front may be useful in another.

When the situation calls for process transparency and consensus, all the various fronts may be combined from the outset, although smaller-scale, private interactions in advance may support the larger process. More commonly, doing the target deal often requires that some or all fronts be brought together. For example, when Richard Holbrooke served as the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., he embarked on a sixteen-month campaign to deal with U.S. dues to the U.N. body that had been in arrears for a decade. Holbrooke's ultimate target deal had multiple elements: by December 2000 it called for payment of U.S. arrears along with General Assembly consensus on a complete restructuring of U.N. member country financial obligations—requiring other countries to pay more while the U.S. paid less--all to be implemented through U.S. legislation.

While Holbrooke and his team undertook hundreds of individual negotiations that built toward the ultimate target deal, his negotiating campaign had three broad fronts: 1) "Washington" (with the U.S. executive branch and the Congress), 2) "New York" (at U.N headquarters and in various countries' U.N. missions), and 3) "abroad" (in national capitols worldwide). Not only did Holbrooke negotiate extensively within each front, but he and his team artfully orchestrated the fronts with respect to each other. Because the New York and Washington fronts could each in effect "veto" the deal, he intensively worked each front separately until they were ripe to be "combined" in critical meetings that set up the finale. The campaign fronts finally converged in New York during a brutal, all-night session at the deadline. (Remarkably, when Holbrooke described the resulting agreement on U.S. dues and U.N. finances at a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, Senators on both sides of the political aisle gave him a standing ovation.)

Combining fronts, however, can run risks beyond added complexity. When Conoco tried to build consensus over building a pipeline in Ecuador, it negotiated on several fronts. One front was composed of Ecuadorean and international advocates for indigenous people; a largely separate front consisted of environmental NGOs. Both groups opposed Conoco's plans but had mainly acted independently. However, when Conoco arranged a "consensus seeking" meeting of all stakeholders on a floating hotel on Amazonian river, the two hitherto separate fronts combined forces in even more formidable opposition to Conoco.

2. Sequence optimally? Once you've decided to treat certain fronts separately, sequencing your actions can become critical.[xii] If the fronts are completely independent of each other--in that progress or impasse on one front does not affect the prospects elsewhere—sequencing is irrelevant. However, when fronts are interdependent in different ways, you'll need to think through the most promising sequence.

Take a clear cut case in which there is a critical path to the final result; that is, progress on front A absolutely depends on progress or success in front B. Obviously, you should start with B. If a critical potential partner will only made a deal with you conditional on your financing being locked in, you'll need to concentrate on the financial front first.

When the probability or value of success on one front is greatly enhanced by success elsewhere, you should normally focus elsewhere first. For example, you may devote special attention to getting a highly reputed lead investor, a well-regarded anchor tenant, or a "name" donor early in the process. If you are successful, the limited partner front, the satellite tenant front, or the smaller donor front may join much more quickly and on much better terms. (By the way, concentrating on the "easier" fronts first in such cases may actually make the "harder" ones more difficult, since the prior terms may need to be renegotiated for success with the "harder" front.)

Suppose you've set your sights on signing up a potential high profile investor or name donor as the object of an initial financial campaign. Getting to that target player on board may require a campaign in itself, mapping backward to find the optimal sequence. When target Party A tends to defer to Party B, or when Party B enjoys credibility and influence with Party A, you may concentrate early efforts on the front containing Party B. For Sarah Talley, field sales people with whom she had successfully worked, and who enjoyed credibility with more senior category managers, were a natural bridge to the higher-level category managers. In preparing the ground for a financial transaction on which we once advised, we mapped backward from the target CEO to his trusted CFO, and to an analyst that had great credibility with the CFO. By expending significant early efforts at persuading the analyst of the merits, it was much easier to get agreement from the CEO, who, when presented with the proposal, immediately turned to his CFO for advice, and who, in turn, asked the analyst.

This is in line with the successful sequencing logic of Bill Daley, President Clinton's key strategist for securing congressional approval of the then-controversial North American Free Trade Agreement, and later President Obama’s White House chief of staff. As the critical and hotly contested vote neared, news would arrive in Daley’s office that a member of Congress who had been leaning toward “yes” had come out as a “no.” Daley’s response: *make more calls*: "Can we find the guy who can deliver the guy?” he’d ask his aides. “We have to call the guy who calls the guy who calls the guy."[xiii]

However, optimal sequencing decisions may not follow conventional wisdom or your first instincts. How often have you heard, for example, that you should "get your allies on board first?" Despite its initial appeal, this is not always good advice. When the United States sought to build a global anti-Iraq coalition following the 1992 Kuwait invasion, for instance, many observers would have argued that Israel was its strongest regional ally. Yet the Israelis were pointedly excluded from the growing coalition: Israel's formal membership would have greatly complicated, if not precluded, numerous Arab states' joining. An alternative sequence, starting with moderate Arab states, plus tacit Israeli membership avoided this problem. This antagonism toward the Israelis is the opposite of the deference or influence we’ve discussed above.

Your sequencing instincts may lead you astray for other reasons. For example, when Steve Perlman was getting WebTV up and running, he faced multiple fronts—financial, content provider, distribution, manufacturing, etc.--on which he could focus very limited negotiating time and effort. With his promising new venture running on financial fumes, his obvious immediate focus might have been the on the money front: possible funding sources such as venture capital (VC) firms, angel investors, or industrial partners. Unfortunately for the nascent WebTV entity, these potential funders were deeply skeptical of consumer electronics investments like Perlman's. Knowing this, instead of taking a direct approach, Perlman mapped backward from his financial target. He reasoned that the value of WebTV on the financial front would be greatly enhanced by first getting one or more prominent consumer electronics firm on board.

He took the risk of undertaking complex negotiations with Sony and Phillips. Only when these talks succeeded did Perlman refocused his efforts on the financial front. With Sony and Phillips committed to WebTV, he successfully negotiated for much more VC money than he could have secured had he concentrated first on the financial front. With this new money in hand, it was fairly straightforward for Perlman to thread a path of supporting agreements through the remaining fronts, including wholesale and retail distribution channels, content providers, ISPs, and alliance partners abroad. Unexpectedly, what Perlman viewed as a long-term campaign had a quick finale when Bill Gates expressed keen interest, and Perlman negotiated the sale of his young, thriving business to Microsoft.

3. Conceal/reveal information about separate fronts? A third class of orchestration choices involves the extent to which you reveal or conceal your activities and results on one front. Publicity or quiet are often natural extensions of sequencing choices. For example, you'll want it to be widely known that a savvy investor has signed on; just as obviously, you'll want to be careful with information on failures to sign players with strong reputations for astuteness. In both cases, signaling implications from one front to another are key. Classic cases in which revealing information about your activities on one front can cost you dearly elsewhere include negotiated land assembly for a real estate project, purchasing enough stock to reach a 4.9% stake in a target firm, or signing leases for oil development.

For some activities, such as fundraising efforts, you'll wish to be quiet for awhile until your campaign is well advanced with many pledges in hand. Then revealing your interim results may generate momentum or a sense of inevitability. An apparent bandwagon in other settings may persuade wavering allies to join and intimidate others who might oppose you if your campaign appeared vulnerable.

In situations where your activities might mobilize opponents who could block you, open consensus processes may be ill-advised. Consider the process by which Percy Barnevik brought about the merger of Asea and Brown Boveri, the Swedish and Swiss predecessors of global engineering giant ABB. According to Barnevik:

> We had no choice but to do it secretly and to do it quickly . . . There were no lawyers, no auditors, no environmental investigations, and no due diligence. Sure, we tried to value assets as best we could. But . . . we were absolutely convinced of the strategic merits . . . Why the secrecy? Think of Sweden. Its industrial jewel, Asea—a 100-year-old company that had built much of the country's infrastructure—

> was moving its headquarters out of Sweden . . . I remember when we called the press conference in Stockholm on August 10. The news came as a complete surprise . . . Then came the shock, the fait accompli. [Then] we had to win over shareholders, the public, governments, and unions.

By choosing to secretly discretely with a tiny group of each side's executives first, Barnevik generated an irreversible commitment to a preferred deal. This high-risk sequence was designed to prevent factions such as unions and the Swedish government from blocking the deal. Had Barnevik openly tried first for agreements on the union front, the government fronts, or with the shareholders, the process would have been thwarted, and ABB would not exist.

* * *

While the bulk of scholarly and popular negotiation analysis focuses on single transactions, many important situations call for orchestrating a number of related negotiations on multiple fronts toward a target deal with sufficient support among key parties. To wage negotiation campaigns, rather than to do specific deals, requires a number of steps beyond traditional bargaining skills. Effective campaigners envision the target deal and needed support, decide how the campaign will most effectively set up the target deal, identify and characterize key internal and external players on an all-party map, group the parties into fronts, assess interdependencies among fronts, then orchestrate the process among fronts be choosing which fronts to combine or keep separate, sequence optimally, and decide on appropriate information to reveal at each stage. Within and among fronts, the better you are at making great individual deals, the more value the logic of negotiation campaigns will add to your target results.

Notes

[i] In this vein, see for example Sebenius, James K. *"Six Habits of Merely Effective Negotiators." HBR* 79, no. 4 (April 2001): 87-95.

[ii] Because the term "negotiation campaign" is fairly new, and the concept has not been systematically developed, the principals in several examples that we analyze did not use the term. See Sebenius, James K. "Beyond the Deal: Wage a 'Negotiation Campaign'." *Negotiation* 13, no. 11 (November 2010): 1-4. However, in many cases where we've been involved as advisors, the parties did not initially think of their complex negotiations in campaign terms, but found this characterization both clarifying and useful.

[iii] Negotiation campaigns are a specific form of "setup" moves from "3D negotiation." See Sebenius, James K., and David A. Lax. *"3-D Negotiation: Playing the Whole Game." HBR* 81, no. 11 (November 2003): 65-74. More broadly, see our book, *3D Negotiation* (Harvard Business Press, 2006).

[iv] This example is adapted from analysis in our book, *3D Negotiation* (Harvard Business Press, 2006), which in turn draws on the detailed 2004 Harvard Business School case series, numbers 9-904-045 and 9-904-067, by Kathleen McGinn and Dina Witter, "*Showdown on the Waterfront: The 2002 West Coast Port Dispute.*"

[v] Steven Greenhouse, "The Nation: The $100,000 Longshoreman: A Union Wins the Global Game," *The New York Times*, October 6, 2002, sec. 4, p.1.

[vi] Larry Kanter, "On the waterfront: possible strike by longshoremen threatens L.A.'s economy," *Los Angeles Business Journal*, February 22, 1999.

[vii] David Greenberg, "Ports seek swap of job security for automation," *Los Angeles Business Journal*, July 15, 2002.

[viii] McGinn and Witter, case 9-904-045, p. 9.

[ix] *ibid*., p. 11.

[x] *ibid*.

[xi] *ibid*, p. 12.

[xii] The art and science of optimal sequencing in negotiation and coalition building is a major topic in and of itself, well beyond its application to negotiating campaigns. For more detailed advice, see for example, Chapter 7 of Lax and Sebenius, *3D Negotiation,* or Sebenius, James K. "Sequencing to Build Coalitions: With Whom I Should I Talk First?" In *Wise Choices: Decisions, Games, and Negotiations*, edited by Richard Zeckhauser, Ralph Keeney and James Sebenius, 324-348. Boston, Mass.: Harvard Business School Press, 1996.

[xiii] S. Blumenthal, "The Making of a Machine," *New Yorker*, November 29, 1993, p. 93.