

SALLY SOPRANO PART 1

Full materials for the scenario are available from the Harvard Law School Program on Negotiation [Clearinghouse](#). The following abstract is taken from this website.

SCENARIO: Sally Soprano is a distinguished soprano who is now somewhat past her prime. She has not had a lead role in two years but would like to revive her career. The Lyric Opera has a production scheduled to open in three weeks, but its lead soprano has become unavailable. Lyric's representative has requested a meeting with Sally's agent to discuss the possibility of hiring Sally for the production. Neither knows much about the other's interests or alternatives. There is a wide range of possible outcomes.

NOTE: This exercise is a modified version of the exercise Sally Swansong I, developed by Norbert S. Jacker and Mark N. Gordon. Sally Swansong I is still available upon request. The Spanish, Swedish, and Dutch translations are based on the original Sally Swansong exercise. See also *Theotis Wiley*, a variation of this simulation set in the context of a potential endorsement contract between a basketball player and an athletic shoe company.

PROCESS THEMES: Anchoring; Attorney/Client relations; Authority; BATNA; Bluffing; Confidentiality; Constituents; Fairness; Information exchange; Interests, dovetailing; Lawyering; Legitimacy; Meaning of "success"; Misrepresentation; Objective criteria; Offers, first; Options, generating; Pareto optimization; Precedents; Risk aversion; Risk perception; Systems of negotiation; Trust

MAJOR LESSONS:

This exercise is an excellent vehicle for comparing principled negotiation and positional bargaining.

The knowledge that one's BATNA is weak often leads people to negotiate much less vigorously than they otherwise would. Is this ever justified? If so, under what conditions? The case affords a good opportunity to point out that any such analyses should be based on a consideration of the parties' relative BATNAs.

The available data allow a number of more or less equally persuasive arguments about what a "fair" salary would be. This is at a minimum good practice in developing and using objective criteria. Beyond that, the case presents the more difficult challenge of finding an objective basis with which to judge the applicability of alternative objective criteria.

Good negotiators put the distributive issues in this case in perspective and reduce their importance by dovetailing interests with creative options that expand the pie. This case has an enormous potential range of such creative options.

Since the case does have a strong competitive element, there is ample opportunity to explore techniques for indirectly and directly extracting information from the other side. Likewise, techniques of protecting oneself from "giving up" the possibility for gains that were unforeseen can be explored and discussed.