Whether the negotiation is a formally scheduled meeting or an informal “Let’s talk about this” event, before you start, prepare for what’s ahead.

If you have a negotiation opportunity soon, use this checklist to remind you of what you need to do during the preparation.

**The Negotiation**

- Determine your goal.
- Identify your BATNA: Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement.
- List any creative alternatives, trades, or additional value you could use.
- Make notes about the history of the two parties: positive and negative.
- Study past negotiations; list the areas of agreement.
- Identify past precedents and outcomes that may set the tone.
- How will this knowledge help you build rapport?

**The Logistics**

- Take time to prepare point by point.
- Where will the negotiation occur? Can you visit it in person?
- Who will be there?
- Who will be the principal negotiator? What is this person’s communication style?
- When exactly is it scheduled, and is there anything you need to know about the time, for example, heavy traffic?
- Recognize the strengths and drawback of your communication style.
- Brush up on your communication skills—especially listening.