
Editor's Note

Negotiation Journal

Ran Kutner's contribution to this issue, "Striving to Fulfill the Promise," presented us with a small problem, although it is exactly the kind we always welcome.

Should we regard his submission as a theory piece, we asked ourselves, as it raises intriguing conceptual questions about the mediation process? Then again, should we not headline it as a teaching note because it offers creative ways in which instructors can use video in the classroom? When we flipped our well-worn editorial coin, however, it fell neatly on its edge, so you will find it instead in our review section. That is just as sensible, as it offers thoughtful assessment of video materials developed by Baruch Bush and Joseph Folger.

Such challenges of categorization go with the territory, because the *Journal* has always sought to bridge theory and practice. If that requires a bit more editorial work on our part when it comes to organizing an issue, so be it. It also means, however, that our readers should remember to meander beyond their normal professional and disciplinary boundaries. You will likely find some nuggets tucked away in what might first seem like unexpected places.

Speaking of reviews, we are also fortunate to have Howard Bellman's riff on Jeffrey Kravis's recent book, *Improvisational Negotiation*. I say riff because Howard is both a distinguished mediator and a long-time jazz aficionado. Howard describes the virtues of the Kravis book and also offers some of his own insights about what successful mediators and gifted jazz musicians have in common: the capacity to respond appropriately in the moment.

In our Teaching Note, Brooks C. Holtom and Amy L. Kenworthy-U'Ren describe how they prepare their students to negotiate long distance via the Internet. In practice, this medium can constrain communication. The authors have discovered, however, that electronic negotiation actually can facilitate a richer understanding in the classroom if instructors make creative use of student transcripts.

In turn, Stefano Mouzas's article entitled "Negotiating Umbrella Agreements" offers an elegant conceptual framework for a common — but understudied — aspect of both business and diplomatic negotiation. Careful drafting of framework agreements can establish the contours of a long-term relationship while allowing both parties the flexibility to work out details of shorter-term operational contracts. Failure to foresee how the

terms of the umbrella agreement will affect bargaining power and options going forward, however, can prove costly.

Jennifer Schulz's article, "Confectionary and Conflict Resolution?" falls neatly into our In Theory section, though in a way that is both provocative and playful. While other writers have variously analogized mediation to stage direction, teaching, and (more than once) psychotherapy, Jennifer invokes the film *Chocolat* to explore how mediators may also be seen as cooks. Her metaphor offers several novel insights, including the notion that mediation can be a celebration of emotion and pleasure. (She leaves it to us to reckon whether the process is best accompanied by a chilled chardonnay or a robust chianti.)

Larry Susskind's column, "Breaking Robert's Rules," recounts his long and ultimately successful attempt to persuade his congregation to try an experiment in governance. Although few of his fellow members were actually enamored with the parliamentary formalism of Robert's Rules of Order, many were skeptical about whether a consensus-based approach could really work. Ironically, Larry finally had to resort to the procedural quirks of the old rules to win the approval of the new ones. He promises to update us in a few years on how the consensus system has been received.

Columns like Larry's provide a bully pulpit for advancing new ideas about negotiation practice, theory, and teaching. We want to make them a regular feature of the *Journal* and thus welcome such submissions: the more provocative, the better.

We also hope readers will continue to alert us to current or forthcoming articles in other journals and publications so that we can highlight them in our research summaries. We have received enthusiastic feedback on this new feature. One consistent suggestion, however, has been "give us more." We will be delighted to do so, especially if you can tell us of work that should be brought to the attention of our readers.

Michael Wheeler