



Strategic Insights from Equipment Rental Negotiations in Brazilian Construction Projects

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ABSTRACT

This article examines a real-world negotiation for the rental of a hydraulic excavator in a construction project in Campinas/SP. The situation shows how budget constraints, strict payment terms, short project timelines, and low supplier inventory levels make negotiations more challenging. The negotiation began as a dispute over the position between the company's budget limit and the supplier's high proposal, but both sides eventually revealed their core requirements, leading to an integrated solution. The parties established their Zone of Possible Agreement (ZOPA) as ranging from R\$45,000 to R\$50,000 through their evaluation of three creative solutions that eliminated moving costs, added protective measures, and created potential future commercial partnerships. The final contract agreement for R\$47,000 fulfilled all requirements while demonstrating that procurement success depends on maintaining open communication and showing respect to all parties involved in the negotiation process. The case demonstrates how evaluating BATNA and using interest-based negotiation techniques enable teams to transform opposing positions into collaborative solutions that construction managers and supply chain specialists can apply.

Keywords:

Negotiation; Real Estate; Brazil.

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1. Introduction

Negotiation is a critical element in construction management, where procurement decisions directly affect costs, schedules, and compliance. Scholars emphasize that managerial judgment in negotiations often involves balancing rational analysis with contextual pressures (Bazerman & Moore, 1994; Fisher & Ury, 1981; Geiger, 2017). In Brazil, construction negotiations are further complicated by regulatory requirements and the scarcity of specialized equipment (Dias & Panzarini, 2025; Dias, 2025).

This study presents a case of equipment rental negotiation under pressure, involving the hiring of a hydraulic excavator for earthmoving and drainage trench excavation. The negotiation illustrates how positional bargaining can evolve into integrative solutions when interests are clarified and creative options are explored (Cunha & Dias, 2021; Dias, 2020; Dias et al., 2020).

The case analyzed in this article illustrates such a scenario. A construction company in Campinas/SP needed to rent a hydraulic excavator to perform earthmoving and drainage trench excavation. The team needed to start work right away because their budget limited them to R\$47,000. The local supplier remained the only option because all other cheaper suppliers did not have their machines available for immediate delivery. The payment terms of the business required them to create invoices which needed 30 days for processing while they banned all premature payment transactions and the project needed its own PCMSO for safety purposes. The negotiation process reached its highest point because both parties did not have powerful backup alternatives (BATNAs) which forced them to accept the agreement yet the agreement stayed unstable (Delgado & Dias, 2025; Dias, 2020d; Geiger, 2017).

The negotiation started with a positional approach when the company maintained its budget limit while the supplier sought to increase the price to R\$58,000 which included operator and fuel costs but required additional fees for mobilization and demobilization. This reflects what Dias (2020) describes in the Four-Type Negotiation Matrix as a competitive and structured approach, where parties cling to predefined positions and rules. The discussion between the two parties started with unclear goals but they eventually revealed their actual needs to each other. The organization needed to start immediate action while maintaining all budget rules and following every regulatory requirement. The supplier wanted to maintain their service operations through the use of their current equipment resources. The negotiation process moved toward situational and integrative approaches after the parties expressed their interests (Dias et al., 2020).

The research data supports the changes which occurred during this process. Fisher and Ury (1981) recommend that people should focus on understanding each other's interests rather than their current positions because this method enables them to discover creative solutions. The research by Dias and Lopes (2021) shows that trust acts as a negotiation transformer because organizations which demonstrate transparency and respect will change their communication approaches. The situation required three different solutions which involved two options to eliminate mobilization costs and two alternative solutions that included a 45-day contract with extension possibilities and PCMSO compliance and future business partnership development for establishing a business partnership. The agreement process started through these minimal concessions which research shows that small changes in position can lead to mutual

understanding (Dias, 2020d; Geiger, 2017).

The situation shows that procurement negotiations require developers to establish relationships with their stakeholders. Dias and Panzarini (2025) establish trust as the core element which civil construction requires because this sector depends on partners to build lasting business partnerships. The research by Domingues and Dias (2025) shows that consumer dispute resolution through strategic negotiation requires open communication and shared comprehension which also applies to construction projects. The company and supplier achieved their R\$47,000 contract through the implementation of these relational strategies which operated within their ZOPA range of R\$45,000 to R\$50,000.

The introduction links the case to established negotiation theories and practical applications to establish its foundation. It also underscores the relevance of negotiation frameworks such as the Four-Type Negotiation Matrix (Dias, 2020), situational versus structured approaches (Dias et al., 2025). The research investigates how digital transformation affects organizational performance through the application of Dias & Lopes (2021) digital transformation model and trust framework. The article establishes its case through these theoretical frameworks which help researchers understand negotiation processes in construction management while providing essential guidance for construction professionals who handle difficult procurement situations during urgent situations.

2. Methodology

The research employs qualitative case study methodology to study negotiation processes which occur in the Brazilian construction sector. The research method of case studies works best for studying intricate situations which depend on specific environments because various elements affect each other (Yin, 2018). The Campinas/SP excavator rental negotiation became a vital business situation because it demonstrated how organizations used their bargaining positions and interest-based methods and relationship-based trust to handle their pressing emergency with limited funding. The research team observed the negotiation process directly while they recorded all proposed terms and contractual requirements and internal team communications. The combination of data sources through triangulation improves construct validity because it makes findings less dependent on any one evidence source (Yin, 2018). The research design follows the “research onion” framework proposed by Saunders et al. (2009) requires researchers to establish their philosophical approach followed by their methodological decisions and their selection of data collection methods. The research uses interpretivist philosophy because it understands that negotiation results depend on how people view things and their connections with others and the specific circumstances they face. The research used a mono-method qualitative approach which analyzed negotiation stories through narrative analysis. The research design uses Yin's case study approach together with Saunders' structured research design to develop an effective method which studies negotiation practices and generates strategic construction management insights.

3. Case Description and Analysis

3.1. Case Context

The negotiation under study took place in Campinas/SP and involved the rental of a hydraulic excavator for earthmoving and drainage trench excavation in a new construction project. The procurement team faced an urgent situation: they needed to start immediate excavation work to prevent foundation construction from stopping and to avoid additional costs and project timeline extensions. The R\$47,000 budget covers all expenses for mobilization and demobilization, operator costs, maintenance requirements, and fuel consumption.

The project faced major challenges that affected its entire execution process. The company operated with payment terms requiring customers to settle their bills within 30 days, yet it enforced a complete ban on customer prepayments in line with its financial guidelines. The supplier needed to deliver a PCMSO that met the project requirements, but this standard prevented smaller rental businesses from participating. The local supplier remained the only option because all other cheaper suppliers did not have their machines available for immediate delivery. The situation evolved into one in which the supplier gained greater control over the relationship.

The supplier's initial proposal was R\$58,000, including operator and fuel, but charging mobilization and demobilization separately. The justification was the machine's relocation from another city and its assembly at the site. The negotiation reached an impasse because the company maintained its fixed budget while the supplier demanded additional payment.

3.2 Initial Negotiation Dynamics

The negotiation began with competitive behavior because both parties maintained their initial positions throughout. The organization revealed its financial limitations to the supplier, who explained that equipment delivery was constrained by other projects competing for the same resources. The Four-Type Negotiation Matrix (Dias, 2020) indicates that this situation falls into the competitive quadrant because both parties maintain rigid stances to achieve their individual goals. The supplier's requirement to bill separate costs for mobilization and demobilization demonstrates their use of a structured method, which Dias (2020c) identifies as a quadrant in which rules govern all activities and leave little room for adjustment. The situation showed no signs of agreement, as both parties refused to make any concessions.

3.3. Identification of Interests

The two parties reached their peak when they began to reveal their core reasons for existing. The organization needed to take immediate action while adhering to all budget limits and existing organizational rules. The supplier sought to maintain service continuity and utilize idle equipment. The negotiation process shifted to a situational approach after the parties established their interests, as strategies in this method change based on the situation (Dias et al., 2020). The transition follows the principle established by Fisher and Ury (1981) to focus on interests rather than positions. The parties identified vital components that they applied to develop new solutions during their negotiations.

3.4. Options on the Table

The negotiation process showed different possible solutions which the parties could use as options, including:

- The supplier's local presence eliminated the need to incur mobilization and demobilization expenses.
- The agreement includes a 45-day initial period, with an optional extension on identical terms.
- The package needs to include PCMSO compliance information to streamline regulatory compliance.
- The agreement provides assurance about upcoming business collaboration opportunities, demonstrating that operations will continue as normal.

The proposed solutions use integrative negotiation methods, which generate value by creating new solution alternatives (Geiger, 2017). The elimination of mobilization costs is a small concession that helps parties reach an agreement (Dias, 2020d).

3.5. ZOPA and BATNA

The negotiation process showed that both sides agreed to prices ranging from R\$45,000 to R\$50,000. The final contract was closed at R\$47,000, within this range.

The BATNAs were weak:

- The company needs to decide between two alternatives: selecting a cheaper supplier. However, this choice would raise two major issues: the supplier cannot deliver products right away and fails to meet PCMSO requirements, which could result in delayed deliveries and non-compliance with regulations.
- The supplier has two options to handle the situation: either send the machine to Sorocaba for another project, which would result in high transportation expenses and damage their business relationship.

Conversely, the parties should accept agreements because their remaining options seem unappealing, as they lack strong BATNAs (Delgado & Dias, 2025; Dias et al., 2021). The evaluation of BATNA is a vital component of creating negotiation plans, according to Bazerman and Moore (1994).

3.6. Follow Through

The Four-Type Negotiation Matrix (Dias, 2020) outlines the complete negotiation process, from start to finish. The company faces market competition from its supplier because the supplier demands payment terms that the company cannot afford, given its financial constraints. The supplier demands payment for all work involving site preparation and cleanup. The process requires students to determine their personal interests while they investigate different possible choices. The two parties created a cooperative agreement that outlines their future collaboration plans, along with their current concessions. The negotiation process shows how different matrix quadrants become accessible over time, leading to cooperative outcomes as parties develop trust and become more flexible (Dias & Lopes, 2021).

3.7. Role of Trust and Relationship-Building

The negotiation process depended on trust as its primary determinant. The supplier earned the company's respect through their display of financial constraints and their ability to understand supplier needs, resulting in cooperative work rather than conflict. The authors Dias and Panzarini (2025) establish trust as an essential element that enables success in civil construction, as this sector requires stable business relationships with partners. The research by Dias and Lopes (2021) demonstrates that trust is a key factor that produces different negotiation outcomes. The company demonstrated its dedication to future business relationships through its promise of ongoing partnership opportunities. The organizational method that Domingues & Dias (2025) demonstrate in their research about strategic negotiation requires parties to maintain open communication and mutual understanding.

4. Discussion

The excavator rental negotiation case provides an excellent opportunity to study how procurement choices change in urgent situations and how negotiation approaches shift with limited resources. The situation demonstrates how parties moved from using their power to negotiate to working together toward a mutually beneficial solution, which aligns with the negotiation approaches described by Fisher and Ury (1981), Dias (2020), and Geiger (2017). The construction company maintained its budget limit while the supplier fought to keep their higher price, which they based on delivery expenses. The Four-Type Negotiation Matrix (Dias, 2020) illustrates this behavior because it occurs in the competitive and structured quadrants, which emphasize personal benefits and established guidelines. The organization needed to take immediate action while staying within its budget, but the supplier wanted to keep operating using its current manufacturing capacity. The organization now uses a situational approach, as described by Dias et al. (2025) in their research. The 2020 model allowed researchers to test new solutions, removing mobilization expenses while ensuring all solutions complied with PCMSO rules. The concessions enabled the parties to work together, leading to a final agreement within the Zone of Possible Agreement (ZOPA), thereby demonstrating that interest-based negotiation methods are effective. The supplier's flexibility to change and the company's transparent disclosure of limitations established a relationship-based system that helped both parties reach an agreement. The research conducted by Dias and Panzarini (2025) confirms this result, as they show that trust is a vital element in civil construction business negotiations between companies that need to work together for long periods. Organizations need to perform a BATNA analysis because this case demonstrates how essential it is to their business operations. The two parties faced limited options because the company needed to choose between an unattainably affordable supplier who would cause delivery problems, and a supplier who needed to move the machine to another project, which would result in transportation expenses and damage their business relationship. The matrix shows that organizations need to move from competitive, structured approaches to success through flexible responses to situations and trust-based collaborative relationships. The parties reached a successful negotiation outcome by agreeing to make limited concessions to one another. The organization demonstrated its willingness to collaborate through two restricted financial changes: fee elimination for mobilization and fee addition for PCMSO compliance. Geiger (2017) explains that B2B negotiations using issue-based tactics require organizations to make small changes that benefit all parties.

5. Research Implications

The research adds value to construction management negotiation studies by demonstrating how theoretical frameworks can be applied in real-world settings. The research demonstrates that procurement negotiations under time constraints shift from adversarial positions to team-based solution development through the process of interest disclosure and trust-building. The research results match previous studies which examined Brazilian negotiation mediation success rates (Dias, 2020d) and the comparison between situational and structured negotiation methods (Dias et al., 2025; 2023). The study examines how trust-based relationships impact construction project success according to Santos et al. (2020) and it explores trust mechanisms in civil construction projects (Dias et al., 2023). The research results support the methods outlined by Fisher and Ury (1981) for handling interests, by Bazerman and Moore (1994) for managerial decision-making, and by Geiger (2017) for creating an issue-based tactics model. The case demonstrates to practitioners that they should use complete solutions that involve both BATNAs and ZOPA analysis and relationship development as their main focus. The lessons learned from construction work apply to all procurement negotiation processes across different business sectors.

The research provides useful findings, though they may not apply across different business sectors or social environments. The study failed to examine how organizational culture interacts with market conditions and personal characteristics to shape negotiation behavior. The case relies on retrospective narrative analysis, which can yield results influenced by individual prejudices. The analysis of interests, concessions, and trust development is from the perspective of a single participating entity. The research needs to collect data through multiple methods, combining participant interviews with observations from all stakeholders and their witnesses to enhance research precision.

The Four-Type Negotiation Matrix proved useful in this situation, yet researchers need to conduct more studies to verify its effectiveness in different negotiation contexts. The model presents clear quadrants, but its transition points between these sections depend on specific situations. The research needs to determine which factors drive negotiators to move between quadrants and identify the specific events that trigger these transitions.

The research maintains its ability to demonstrate the application of negotiation theory in real business settings despite its specific limitations, which do not affect its results. Research findings from business operations help academics expand their knowledge base.

9. Conclusion

The negotiation process began with established positions and monetary constraints, but it evolved into a method for understanding interests, evaluating alternatives, and achieving gradual concessions. The situation demonstrated that BATNA analysis, combined with small concessions and contextual adaptation, was a vital element in successful procurement negotiations. The specific situation in this case provides valuable insights for construction management and supply chain professionals. The process requires negotiators to grasp both negotiation methods and numerical data, as well as to build relationships, select appropriate moments for negotiation, and create strategic frames. The research combines theoretical knowledge with practical application to develop a better understanding of negotiation, which is a complex process that depends on relationships and specific situations.

Future research

Future research is encouraged to examine the operation of the Four-Type Negotiation Matrix across various business sectors and international commercial settings. Research needs to investigate how negotiators move between quadrants and which factors, including time limits, relationship strength, and power differences between parties, prompt them to change their negotiation approach. Scientists require multiple years of research to identify which relationship-building methods generate superior negotiation results throughout different time spans. The research would achieve better results through multi-party perspective analysis and mixed-methods research, which would help develop more effective negotiation models for complex procurement situations.

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