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Editor's  
*note*



Let's make a deal!

All of us learn to negotiate before we can even walk - babies screaming to be picked up and nursed, but settling for a few encouraging taps if that's all we can get. Whether we are good at it varies according to experience and training.

Negotiation skills are vital for lawyers, but not often seen to be so. We praise the good trial lawyer yet fail to see merit in the solicitor who quietly achieves good results for their clients through negotiation.

**“Negotiation skills are vital for lawyers, but not often seen to be so.”**

In mediation training I was introduced to the BATNA, which at first I thought was half the equipment you needed for a game of cricket. It is, in fact, an acronym for the Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement. As lawyers we have too often put off thinking about our clients' BATNA until the door of the Court.

Clients generally do not want to go to court. Clients want a quick outcome and a lawyer with good negotiation skills. A lawyer with a willingness to discuss claims at an early stage will have appreciative clients.

In this issue of *Plaintiff* we explore attitudes to negotiation and alternative dispute resolution and how to get the best out of it for your client. **PL**

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