AI Negotiation Challenge: Framework and Guidelines

Backgrounder for Partners and Participants
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Objectives of the Project

This note outlines the objectives of the AI Negotiation Challenge, an international competition designed to explore and enhance the role of artificial intelligence in negotiation planning and managing complex relationships.

The advancement of AI is poised to revolutionize the craft of negotiation, transitioning it from an individualized, case-by-case practice to a more systematic and ambitious profession. With AI tools offering unprecedented capabilities for complex analysis, negotiators can achieve deeper insights into party positions, stakeholder dynamics, and areas of influence. This systematic approach fosters not only a higher standard of professionalism but also accountability to defined processes and rules, ensuring fairer and more effective outcomes. AI enables negotiators to broaden their scope, moving beyond immediate problem-solving to crafting collaborative solutions for global challenges. The AI Negotiation Challenge aspires to contribute to this shift by shaping the future role and skills of negotiators, establishing a new craft that is analytical, rigorous, and attuned to the evolving demands of an interconnected world.

In this context, the AI Negotiation Challenge has three primary objectives:

1. **To promote the fair, effective, and responsible use of AI in negotiation** by engaging both practitioners and graduate students—the next generation of professionals—in a practical and friendly competition to test their skills and fluency in AI tools.
2. **To draw broader attention to the transformative potential of AI as a platform for collaborative negotiation**, fostering innovative solutions to pressing global challenges such as migration, climate change, social conflict, and humanitarian crises.

3. By leveraging AI's advanced capabilities in analysing complex environments, assessing stakeholder positions, and identifying areas of compromise. Doing so, the initiative aims to explore and demonstrate the technology's ability to augment traditional negotiation expertise.

Organized as a multi-year project, the challenge will evolve in terms of tools, methods, and competition formats. The objectives for the initial three to four events include building a foundation for the long-term success of the initiative and refining approaches based on the outcomes and insights gained.

More Than a Competition; a Transformative Process

The *AI Negotiation Challenge* is far more than a competition or a singular event; it is an evolving process designed to build the capacity of individuals and transform the practice of negotiation. Participants begin by crafting their own AI assistants using accessible GPT technologies, gaining hands-on experience with tools that enhance their negotiation strategies. They then join a vibrant community of practice where they can share experiences, develop their skills, and stay updated on advancements in AI tools and methods. This journey includes opportunities to collaborate with peers, engage in monthly online simulations of real-world negotiation challenges, and prepare for competitions held multiple times a year—either online or on-site in partnership with leading academic institutions.

The process includes the formation of teams, guided by expert coaches with advanced knowledge in AI-assisted negotiation. Participants delve into domain-specific challenges, such as migration, climate change, and humanitarian crises, exploring how AI can be used to address these complex issues. Beyond the competition, they can contribute further by joining facilitator teams, coaching future participants, and collaborating with academic researchers to advance the field of AI in negotiation.

Therefore, the *AI Negotiation Challenge* provides a dynamic and interactive platform where individuals not only build technical proficiency but also refine their agility in using AI for negotiation through monthly simulations and peer exchanges. They can expand their expertise by teaching these tools in their own environments, thus contributing to a global effort to redefine negotiation as a systematic, impactful, and transformative practice. By engaging deeply with the AI Negotiation Challenge, participants become part of a pioneering movement that seeks to reshape negotiation for a new era.

Step-by-Step Approach to Engaging in the AI Negotiation Challenge

Step 1: Exploring the Use of AI in Negotiation

Interested participants are invited to begin their journey on an open-access platform that introduces key modules for crafting and utilizing AI assistants in negotiation. Developed by Frontline Associates in collaboration with researchers at the Harvard School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, this platform offers essential foundational resources, including:

- **Video Tutorials**
  - *Setting Up Your GPT*: A step-by-step guide to configuring and personalizing your AI assistant using GPT technologies.
  - *Crafting Your AI Assistant*: Techniques for tailoring AI capabilities to enhance negotiation planning and strategies.
  - *Introduction to Artificial Intelligence for Negotiators*: An accessible overview of AI principles and applications specific to negotiation contexts.

- **Live Tutorials**
  Participants who complete the video modules gain access to live tutorials facilitated by AI and negotiation experts from the Frontline Associates Community of Practice. These sessions, offered several times a month, provide opportunities to refine AI models, test new functionalities, and ask questions in real time.

Step 2: Practicing with AI Models through Case Studies

The open access platform also offers interactive case studies where experienced practitioners, known as "super users," demonstrate the planning and execution of negotiations in contentious domains such as climate change, migration, or social and humanitarian crises. These walkthroughs provide participants with insights into real-world applications of AI in negotiation and allow them to practice their skills and test their models in simulated environments.

Step 3: Joining the Community of Practice

Upon completing the foundational modules and live tutorials, participants are invited to join the Frontline Associates Community of Practice. Membership provides access to advanced peer exchanges, monthly simulations, expert-led discussions, and collaborative problem-solving opportunities, enabling members to deepen their skills and actively contribute to the evolving field of AI-assisted negotiation.

Step 4: Building Agility and Capacity in AI-Assisted Negotiation

The next step is to develop their agility and capacity in effectively using AI models in real-world negotiation contexts. This practical step focuses on deepening participants' understanding of the underlying mechanisms of AI models, including their strengths, weaknesses, limitations, and potential risks. Through regular contact with experts in AI and negotiation, participants gain insights into both the opportunities and challenges of employing these tools in complex scenarios.

A key component of this step Is participation In monthly simulations that replicate high-stakes negotiation environments across various challenging domains, such as migration, climate change, and humanitarian crises. These simulations are the training grounds for the AI Negotiation Challenge and serve as the core activity of the

membership platform, enabling participants to test and refine their skills, collaborate in teams, and prepare for the AI Negotiation Challenge.

In addition to simulations, members engage in peer workshops to exchange strategies for crafting and improving their GPT models. These workshops offer opportunities to share experiences, discuss tailored instructions, and enhance AI model performance based on specific negotiation demands. By participating in these dynamic activities, members sharpen their negotiation capabilities, ensuring they are well prepared to excel in upcoming AI Negotiation Challenge events.

Step 5: Direct Preparation for the AI Negotiation Challenge

In the weeks leading up to the AI Negotiation Challenge, participants enter a focused phase of preparation, guided by a dedicated coach from the FA community of practice.

This step is designed to help teams refine their strategies and deepen their understanding of both the process and substance of negotiation. Coaches provide case-based materials tailored to specific domains of the upcoming *AI Negotiation Challenge* such as climate change, migration, or crisis negotiation. These resources allow teams to immerse themselves in the complexities of their assigned role and scenarios and develop informed approaches.

Coaches are available to answer questions about the negotiation process, ensuring teams are fully equipped to perform effectively. Team leaders have the additional opportunity to meet and coordinate their efforts, fostering collaboration and alignment. Since the challenge is structured as an amicable event with a mix of on-site and online participation, these coaching and coordination sessions are essential for seamless execution.

The coaching phase concludes one week before the event, ensuring teams are prepared to engage confidently in the AI Negotiation Challenge and demonstrate the transformative potential of AI in negotiation.

Step 6: The AI Negotiation Challenge as a Hybrid Event

The AI Negotiation Challenge is a two-day hybrid event, hosted by a partner organization and combining online and on-site participation.

Day 1: Presentations, Briefings, and Instructions

The first day focuses on setting the stage for the competition. Participants benefit from expert-led presentations on artificial intelligence and negotiation by machine learning specialists. These sessions highlight the latest advancements, tools, and challenges in this rapidly evolving field. Additionally, thematic briefings are provided on the specific challenge of the competition, such as climate change, migration, or other contentious global issues. Participants also receive the final instructions for the competition, ensuring they are fully prepared for the following day's rounds.

Day 2: The Competition

The competition is divided into three rounds:

- **Morning Sessions: Two Independent Rounds**
  In the morning, all teams engage in two successive negotiation rounds focused on specific objectives related to the event's theme. These rounds run independently, meaning outcomes from one do not affect the other. Each round is designed to test participants' agility, strategic thinking, and applications of AI tools. The jury evaluates team performances during these rounds to determine which teams will advance to the final round.

- **Afternoon Session: The Final Round**
  The final round is held in the afternoon and involves the top four teams negotiating a high-stakes issue tied to the event's theme. This round is public, allowing other participants to observe while remaining silent. This transparent setting enables all attendees to witness the best practices and innovative uses of AI in negotiation.

At the end of the final round, the jury meets to select the award-winning teams based on criteria such as agility and creativity in using AI, negotiation flexibility, and overall performance at the negotiation table.

Award Ceremony and Certificates

An awards ceremony concludes the event. All participants receive certificates of participation, signed by the governing members of Frontline Associates and senior representatives of the host organization. Selected teams demonstrating excellence receive additional certificates or medals in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the competition.

This hybrid format ensures an engaging and inclusive experience, offering participants the opportunity to learn, compete, and showcase their skills in AI-assisted negotiation on a global stage.

Step 7: Post-Event Reflection and Continued Engagement

Following the *AI Negotiation Challenge*, all participants are invited to complete a comprehensive survey to share their experiences during the event, as well as their reflections on the preparation and planning phases. The results of this survey are reviewed collaboratively by the organizing committee and team leaders to evaluate the event's outcomes and identify areas for improvement.

Participants interested in further developing their skills are encouraged to remain active within the Frontline Associates Community of Practice. Opportunities include joining

facilitators and coaching training programs, engaging in research with machine learning specialists, and contributing to the strategic direction of the initiative.

This initiative is designed to be an organic and dynamic process, welcoming continued contributions from all participants. Frontline Associates invites those who have taken part in the AI Negotiation Challenge to become voluntary collaborators, supporting the mission to transform negotiation practices through innovative tools, training, and community engagement.

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