THE RESULT

"12% cheaper"? 6.4% on panel price alone. And she's right about deliveries and the rebate.

A VP Sales at a 15,000-person electrical equipment maker prepares for a 45-minute meeting with his largest customer's head of procurement, with any AI chat his company allows.

THE RESULT Sam's one-page plan for Thursday. Fictional company.

OSTRANDER ELECTRIC · NORTHFIELD GRID SERVICES · THURSDAY, DEC 3

Meeting plan: 2027 pricing, with Karen Liu

45 minutes
Sam Okoye, for his own use

WHERE SHE'S RIGHT

DELIVERY

81% on time against our 95% target; 74% in Q3
Own it. Offer monthly on-time reporting once operations confirms it. · Input 2

REBATE

She earned the 3% rebate
1,240 panels against a 1,200 threshold. Due in Q1 2027; finance confirms the amount and date in writing this week. · Inputs 2, 5

WHAT DOESN'T HOLD

"12% cheaper"
6.4% on panel price
Their delivery cost and spec unconfirmed

Ridgeline volume
Up to 500 panels
She bought 1,240 this year

February delivery
Late April at 20 weeks
Ours: 10 weeks from order

Our "9% covers cost"
Cost up about 6.6%
Don't use that argument

MY ASK

Place the February order with us by the date operations confirms gives February delivery with time to spare. The price for that order is the one finance confirms before Thursday; I don't offer current prices until then. We agree the rest of 2027 separately by January 15. · Inputs 1, 2, 4

CAUGHT ON REVIEW

1. Ridgeline's price **leaves out delivery and commissioning**
2. Ridgeline can supply **at most 500 panels** and **can't deliver by February**
3. Her points on **late deliveries and the earned rebate** are fair

UC-002 · SC-02 · REV B	
FOR **VP Sales, Key Accounts**	SECTOR **Electrical equipment manufacturing**
COMPANY **15,000 people · 14 sites · US, Mexico**	TASK **Prepare for a price-increase meeting with a customer threatening to switch**
WRITTEN FOR **ChatGPT · Claude · Gemini · Copilot**	
AI TEST **Claude, Nov 13, 2026 · 6 of 6 found**	

STEP 0 · THE MESS

What landed on Sam's desk

A sharp email from his largest customer, the account history, a confident line from his own pricing team, a competitor quote, and an email his predecessor sent. Both sides have overstated something.

EMAIL · CUSTOMER [1]

Your 2027 price increase

"Ridgeline has quoted us 12% below … you promised us a 3% loyalty rebate … we'll move our 2027 volume."

1 **Four claims to test.**

CRM SUMMARY [2]

Northfield

1,240 panels, $18.6M. $900 of each $15,000 is delivery. On time: 81%; Q3 74%.

2 **Some of it supports her.**

NOTE · PRICING TEAM [3]

The increase

"Costs up 11% … Materials are 60% … The 9% increase covers our cost increase."

3 **Our own claim.**

COMPETITOR QUOTE [4]

Ridgeline

$13,200, excludes delivery. 2-year warranty. 20 weeks. Up to 500 panels.

4 **Not the same offer.**

EMAIL · LAST JANUARY [5]

Rebate

"If 2026 volume exceeds 1,200 panels, we'll pay a 3% loyalty rebate … in Q1 2027."

5 **She qualified.**

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

58%

of buyers who made a B2B purchase in the past six months also switched vendors in that time.

Google and National Research Group survey of 2,063 senior US business leaders, reported by Digital Commerce 360, December 2025. Source

STEPS 1–3 · HOW IT WORKS

Three steps, one chat

Here the AI helps you prepare to negotiate. The prompt asks it to check your side as hard as the customer's.

1 Open a new chat

Use the AI tool your company approves: ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini or Copilot.

2 Paste the prompt and the inputs

Copy the prompt and the five fictional inputs from the appendix into one message.

3 Decide your ask

Check the like-for-like comparison yourself. Then pick one ask she can say yes to on the day.

THE PROMPT, PART BY PART

COPY-READY VERSION IN THE APPENDIX

I'm VP Sales for key accounts at an electrical equipment maker. We're raising prices 9% from January 1, and our largest customer is threatening to move volume to a competitor. I'm meeting their head of procurement for 45 minutes on Thursday, December 3. Today is December 1. Below are her email, our account summary, a note from our pricing team, the competitor quote she forwarded, and an email my predecessor sent her in January.

1 Who you are, who you're meeting, how long you have, and what you were sent, including your own team's note.

Please help me prepare:

1. **What each of us needs** from this meeting.
2. **Her arguments**: which ones hold, which don't, and how I answer each one honestly.
3. **Where she has a point**: what we should concede or fix.
4. **My one clear ask**, and the point where I'd stop and take it back to my team.
5. **An opening** I can say in under a minute.

2 What each side needs, her arguments, where she has a point, your ask and stopping point, and an opening.

Be fair to her. Check her claims and ours with the same rigour, compare the two offers like for like, and don't guess at her motives. Don't add facts that aren't in the inputs.

3 The heavy lifting: be fair to her, check both sides with the same rigour, compare offers like for like, and don't guess her motives. It found all six problems.

WHERE TO PASTE

Every tool has one message box. Paste the prompt, add a blank line, paste the inputs, send. Quotes and emails can be attached as files if your tool allows it.

SAFE TO TRY

Practise with the fictional inputs first. Real customer pricing and competitor quotes are confidential: use only your company's approved tool.

THE AI'S FIRST ANSWER

What Claude actually wrote

Exactly as it came back, not edited. Read it the way Sam did: check each point against the source it cites.

UNEDITED Claude · fresh session, no other context · Nov 13, 2026 · one run

Prep for Thursday 3 December: Karen Liu, Northfield Grid Services C: one page

First, the numbers checked (hers and ours)

Claim	Source	Check	Verdict
"Ridgeline is 12% below your current price for the same panels"	[1], [4]	$15,000 x 0.88 = $13,200. The 12% is right as arithmetic, but it compares our price, which **includes** $900 delivery and commissioning [2], with Ridgeline's price, which **excludes** it [4].	Overstated. Like for like, panel only: $13,200 vs $14,100 = **6.4% below**, not 12%. found
"Same panels"	[1]	Nothing in the inputs confirms the specification is the same. The terms are clearly different: warranty 2 years vs our 5, lead time 20 weeks vs our 10.	Unverified on spec. Not the same offer on terms.
Ridgeline can take "our 2027 volume"	[1], [4]	Ridgeline's price is firm for up to 500 panels. Northfield ordered 1,240 in 2026. 2027 volume isn't given.	The quote covers about 40% of 2026 volume. Pricing for the rest is unknown. found
"We need our first 2027 panels in February"	[1], [4]	Ridgeline: 20 weeks from order. An order placed today (1 Dec) arrives around 20 April. One placed on 3 Dec arrives around 22 April. Ours: 10 weeks. An order on 3 Dec arrives around 11 February. To arrive by the end of February, the order has to be placed by about 20 December.	Ridgeline's quoted lead time can't meet February. Ours can, if the order is placed in December. found
"Deliveries have been unreliable all year"	[1], [2]	81% on time for 2026 against our own 95% target. Q3 was 74%.	**Holds.** We have no quarter-by-quarter data to dispute "all year", and the annual figure supports her. found
"You promised a 3% loyalty rebate we've never seen"	[1], [5]	The condition was 2026 volume over 1,200. Orders were 1,240, so it's met. 3% of $18.6M = **$558,000**. If it's calculated on panel value only (1,240 x $14,100 = $17.48M), it's $524,520. The letter says payment comes "in the first quarter of 2027".	**She's owed it.** It isn't overdue yet. One wording point: the email was January 2026, so "last year" is really "this year". found
"The 9% increase covers our cost increase"	[3]	Materials rose 11% and are 60% of cost, so total cost rose about **6.6%** per panel (0.11 x 0.60), assuming other costs stayed flat. The inputs don't say whether they did.	Our own claim is overstated. 9% is more than the materials increase alone justifies. Margin and other costs aren't in the inputs. found
Value of 9%	[2]	If applied to the all-in price: $15,000 becomes $16,350, which is $1,350 a panel, or about $1.67M on 1,240 panels. If applied to the panel only: $14,100 becomes $15,369, which is $1,269 a panel, or about $1.57M.	Unknown which way it applies. Confirm before Thursday.

Honest like-for-like price comparison (per panel)

	Panel	Delivery and commissioning	Warranty	Lead time	Firm volume
Us, 2026	$14,100	$900 (included)	5 years	10 weeks	Not stated
Us, 2027 at +9% all-in	$16,350 total	included	5 years	10 weeks	Not stated
Ridgeline	$13,200	**Not included, cost unknown**	2 years	20 weeks	Up to 500

Even with delivery added, Ridgeline is probably cheaper on price. Against our 2027 all-in price, it stays cheaper unless its delivery and commissioning costs more than $3,150 a panel. We don't know that figure. Our real differences are the 3 extra warranty years, half the lead time, and no 500-panel cap. None of these has a dollar value in the inputs, so don't put one on them.

1. What each of us needs from this meeting

Karen / Northfield (stated or directly evidenced, not guessed):

- First 2027 panels delivered in February [1]
- A price she can defend against the 9% increase and the Ridgeline quote [1]
- Deliveries she can rely on: 81%, and 74% in Q3 [2]
- The $558K rebate she qualified for [5]
- Supply for her full 2027 volume. Ridgeline's quote is capped at 500 panels [4]

Us:

- Keep Northfield's 2027 volume (2026: $18.6M)
- Recover the real cost increase (about 6.6% of cost on the inputs given)
- Rebuild credibility on delivery and on the rebate
- A December order date that makes February possible

2. Her arguments: what holds, what doesn't, and an honest answer to each

a. "Ridgeline is 12% cheaper for the same panels." Partly holds. Answer: "You're right that Ridgeline is cheaper on the panel. Like for like it's about 6% below our current panel price, not 12%. Our $15,000 includes $900 of delivery and commissioning, and their $13,200 doesn't. It's still a real gap, and I'm not going to pretend otherwise. The terms also differ: 2 years of warranty against our 5, and 20 weeks against our 10." Ask her what Ridgeline charges for delivery and commissioning, and whether the spec has been confirmed as identical.

b. "We'll move our 2027 volume to Ridgeline." Doesn't hold as stated. Answer: "Their quote is firm for up to 500 panels. You took 1,240 from us this year. How are you covering the rest?" Ask this as a question, not a gotcha.

c. "We need February panels." Holds as a need. Ridgeline can't meet it on the quote you have. Answer: "At 20 weeks from order, a Ridgeline order placed this week lands around late April. At 10 weeks, we can deliver in February if the order is placed by about 20 December." Don't overclaim here. Our Q3 on-time rate was 74%, so offering February is a promise she has reason to doubt (see section 3).

d. "Your deliveries have been unreliable all year." Holds. Answer: "You're right. We hit 81% on time against our own 95% target, and 74% in Q3. That isn't good enough." Don't explain causes. The inputs give none.

e. "You promised a 3% rebate we've never seen." Holds on the entitlement, not on timing. Answer: "You qualified. You ordered 1,240 panels against the 1,200 threshold, and the rebate is $558,000 on $18.6M. The letter says it's paid in Q1 2027, so it isn't late yet. I'll confirm the payment date in writing." Before Thursday, confirm whether the 3% applies to the full $18.6M or to panel value only.

f. "9% is unacceptable." Partly holds. Our own note says 9% "covers" the cost increase. On the numbers given, materials add about 6.6% to cost. If she pushes on how we arrived at 9%, we have a weak spot. Don't claim 9% equals our cost increase.

3. Where she has a point: what to concede or fix

1. **Delivery performance.** Concede it plainly. Offer something concrete only once operations has confirmed it, for example monthly on-time reporting to her or a named contact for her orders. Don't promise a target or penalties in the room.
2. **The rebate.** Confirm it's owed ($558K, or $524.5K if calculated on panel value only) and put a payment date in writing. You could offer to pay it early, but only if finance agrees.
3. **The size of the increase.** The inputs show a cost increase of about 6.6%, not 9%. There's room to move between the two, but the exact floor depends on margin and other costs that aren't in the inputs. Get it from the pricing team before Thursday.
4. **Her 12% figure.** Correct it respectfully. Correcting it isn't a concession, but it does show you checked her numbers and ours the same way.

4. Your one clear ask, and where to stop

The ask: "Place your February order with us by 20 December, and keep your 2027 volume with us on revised terms that we agree in writing before 1 January: a confirmed price, a delivery reporting commitment, and the rebate payment date." `B: an ask she can take`

Before Thursday, get from your team: the lowest increase you're authorised to offer, whether the 9% applies to the delivery and commissioning element, the rebate basis and payment date, and what operations can commit to on delivery.

Stop and take it back to your team if she asks for:

- A full price hold at 0%. This is below even the 6.6% materials-driven cost increase.
- Any increase below the floor your pricing team has confirmed.
- Financial penalties or a guaranteed on-time percentage that operations hasn't signed off.
- Changes to the rebate beyond the written terms in [5].
- Guaranteed volumes or lead times beyond what's been confirmed.

Close with: "I can't agree that today, but I'll come back to you by [date]."

5. Opening (about 45 seconds)

"Karen, thanks for making the time, and thanks for being direct in your email. I want to start with where you're right. Our deliveries this year haven't been good enough: 81% on time against our own target of 95%, and worse in the third quarter. And you did qualify for the 3% rebate. You ordered 1,240 panels, so that's $558,000 due in the first quarter, and I'll confirm the date in writing. I've also looked hard at the Ridgeline quote. I want us to compare it like for like, because there are real differences in delivery, warranty, lead time and volume. What matters most is getting your February panels to you on time and keeping your 2027 supply secure. I'd like to agree a way to do that before we leave today." `A: no number yet`

Not in the inputs (don't fill these in during the meeting): Ridgeline's delivery and commissioning cost, whether the spec is identical, Northfield's 2027 volume, our margin and non-material costs, causes of the delivery shortfall, and whether the 9% applies to delivery and commissioning.

`found` caught a planted problem `A–C` Sam changes it; see the next section

THE HUMAN PART

What Sam changed, and why

Claude found every planted problem, checked its own side as hard as hers, and kept the competitor's delivery cost as unknown. Sam's edits fix one slip and narrow the ask.

WHAT CLAUDE FOUND: 6 OF 6 PLANTED PROBLEMS

One run

- ✓ "12% cheaper" isn't like for like
- ✓ Competitor capped at 500 panels
- ✓ Competitor can't make February
- ✓ Our late deliveries are real
- ✓ The rebate is owed
- ✓ Our "9% covers cost" is weak

THREE EDITS, ONE CATCH AND TWO JUDGMENT CALLS

	CLAUDE WROTE	SAM'S VERSION	WHY · ACCURACY
A	Opening: "that's $558,000 due in the first quarter"	**"You qualified for the rebate. Finance is confirming the amount and date in writing this week."**	The AI itself says the base could be $18.6M or panel value only ($524,520). Naming a number in the opening commits to one before finance confirms it.

	CLAUDE WROTE	SAM'S VERSION	WHY · DECISION
B	"Place your February order with us by 20 December, and keep your 2027 volume with us on revised terms … before 1 January."	**"Place the February order by a date operations confirms, at a price finance confirms. We agree the rest of 2027 separately by January 15."**	One ask she can say yes to on Thursday. Bundling the whole year with an unknown price floor invites a no. And December 20 is a Sunday that leaves no delivery margin, so the date and price are checked internally first.

	CLAUDE WROTE	SAM'S VERSION	WHY · LENGTH
C	A briefing of several pages, with two tables and five sections.	**One page: where she's right, what doesn't hold, and one ask.**	In a 45-minute negotiation Sam needs his position in his head, not a document on the table.

What only you can do Admit what your side got wrong, don't put a number on the table you can't stand behind, and make an ask she can accept today. The AI did the comparing. You keep the customer.

YOUR TURN

Make it yours

Use it before any negotiation where someone is pushing back on price, terms or a decision.

YOUR PROMPT: FILL IN THE BRACKETS

I'm the **[your role]** at a **[industry]** company. **[The situation]**. I'm meeting **[who]** for **[length]** on **[date]**. Today is **[date]**. Below are **[their email, our account history, our own rationale, the competitor offer and anything we promised before]**.

Please help me prepare: **1. What each of us needs** from this meeting. **2. Their arguments**: which ones hold, which don't, and how I answer each one honestly. **3. Where they have a point**: what we should concede or fix. **4. My one clear ask**, and the point where I'd stop and take it back to my team. **5. An opening** I can say in under a minute.

Be fair to them. Check their claims and ours with the same rigour, compare the offers like for like, and don't guess at their motives. Don't add facts that aren't in the inputs.

FIVE CHECKS BEFORE YOU WALK IN

1. Both offers are compared on the same basis (what's included, warranty, lead time, volume).
2. You've found anything your side promised before.
3. Your own team's claims hold up as well as you expect theirs to.
4. You don't name a number you haven't confirmed.
5. Your ask is one they can say yes to on the day.

MAKE IT REPEATABLE (OPTIONAL)

Save the prompt once and reuse it before every tough customer meeting: a custom GPT in ChatGPT, a project in Claude, a Gem in Gemini, or an agent in Copilot. Some companies switch these off; copy and paste always works.

WITH REAL DATA

Customer pricing, contracts and competitor quotes are confidential. Use only the AI tool your company approves, and follow its rules.

WHAT THIS EXAMPLE SHOWS

One run of this prompt in Claude found all six problems planted in fictional inputs, including one in the seller's own pricing note.

WHAT IT DOESN'T SHOW

That every tool, setting or run will do the same, how much time it saves you, or how the negotiation will go. Ostrander Electric, its customer and its people are fictional.

APPENDIX

Copy-ready: the prompt and the five inputs

Copy the prompt, then all five inputs, into one message in a new chat. Everything here is fictional and safe to paste.

THE PROMPT

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Be fair to her. Check her claims and ours with the same rigour, compare the two offers like for like, and don't guess at her motives. Don't add facts that aren't in the inputs.

[1] EMAIL FROM KAREN LIU, HEAD OF PROCUREMENT, NORTHFIELD GRID SERVICES

Subject: Your 2027 price increase

Sam, a 9% increase is unacceptable. **Ridgeline has quoted us 12% below your current price** for the same panels. Your deliveries have been unreliable all year. And you promised us a 3% loyalty rebate last year that we've never seen. We need our first 2027 panels in February. Unless you hold prices, we'll move our 2027 volume to Ridgeline.

[2] NORTHFIELD ACCOUNT SUMMARY, FROM OUR CRM

2026 orders: 1,240 panels, $18.6M ($15,000 a panel, delivery and commissioning included; $900 of that is delivery and commissioning). On-time delivery in 2026: 81% (our target is 95%). Third quarter: 74%. Our lead time: 10 weeks. Our warranty: 5 years.

[3] NOTE FROM OUR PRICING TEAM

Steel and copper costs are up 11% a panel. Materials are 60% of a panel's cost. **The 9% increase covers our cost increase.**

[4] RIDGELINE QUOTE, FORWARDED BY KAREN

Panel price: $13,200. Excludes delivery and commissioning. Warranty: 2 years. Lead time: 20 weeks from order. Price firm for up to 500 panels.

[5] EMAIL FROM MY PREDECESSOR TO KAREN, JANUARY 2026

If Northfield's 2026 volume exceeds 1,200 panels, we'll pay a 3% loyalty rebate on 2026 orders in the first quarter of 2027.